

A Better Place To Be

Harry Chapin

It was an early morning bar room
And the place just opened up
And the little man come in so fast and it
Started at his cups
And the broad who served the whiskey
She was a big old friendly girl
And tried to fight her empty nights
By smilin' at the world
And she said "Hey Bub, It's been awhile
Since you been around
Where the hell you been hidin'?
And why you look so down ?
The little man just sat there like he'd never heard a sound
The waitress she gave out with a cough
Acting not the least put off
She spoke once again
She said, "I don't want to bother you
Consider it's understood
I know I'm not no beauty queen
But I sure can listen good"
And the little man took his drink in his hand
And he raised it to his lips
He took a couple of sips
And he told that waitress this story
I am the midnight watchman down at Miller's Tool and Die
And I watch the metal rusting, I watch the time go by
A week ago at the Diner, I stopped to get a bite
And this here lovely lady she sat two seats from my right
And Lord, Lord, Lord
She was alright
You see, she was so damned beautiful she could warm a winter's frost
But she looked long past lonely, and well nigh kinda lost
Now I'm not much of a mover or a pick-em-up easy guy
But I decided to glide on over and give her one good try
And Lord, Lord, Lord
She was worth a try
And I was tongued-tied like a school boy

I stammered out some words

It did not seem to matter much 'cause I don't think she heard
She just looked clear on through me to a space back in my head
And it shamed me into silence, as quietly she said
'If you want me to come with you that's all right with me
'Cause I know I'm going nowhere and anywhere's a better place to be
Anywhere's a better place to be'
When I drove her to my boarding house and I took her up to my room
And I went to turn on the only light to brighten up the gloom
But she said, "Please leave the light off, oh, I don't mind the dark"
And as her clothes all tumbled 'round her, I could hear my heart
The moonlight shown upon her as she lay back in my bed
It was the kind of scene I only had imagined in my head
I just could not believe it, to think that she was real
And as I tried to tell her she said, "I know just how you feel
And if you want to come here with me that's all right with me
'Cause I've been oh so lonely, lovin' someone is a better way to be
Anywhere's a better way to be"
When the morning came so swiftly I held her in my arms
She slept like a baby, snug and safe from harm
I did not want to share her or dare to break the mood
So before she woke I went out to buy us both some food
I came back with my paper bag to find that she was gone
She'd left a six word letter saying, 'It's time that I moved on'
You know the waitress took her bar rag
And she wiped it across her eyes
And as she spoke her voice came out as something like a sigh
She said, "I wish that I was beautiful or that you were halfway blind
And I wish I weren't so goddamned fat, I wish that you were mine
And I wish that you'd come with me when I leave for home
For we both know all about emptiness and livin' all alone"
And the little man
Looked at the empty glass in his hand
And he smiled a crooked grin
He said, "I guess I'm out of gin
And I know we both have been so lonely
And if you want me to come with you that's all right with me
'Cause I know I'm goin' nowhere and anywhere's a better place to be'''

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