

# Birdland

## Patti Smith

His father died and left him a little farm in New England  
All the long black funeral cars left the scene  
And the boy was just standin' there alone  
Lookin' at the shiny red tractor  
Him and his daddy used to sit inside  
And circle the blue fields and grease the night  
It was as if someone had spread butter  
On all the fine points of the stars  
'Cause when he looked up, they started to slip  
Then he put his head in the crux of his arms  
And he started to drift, drift to the belly of a ship  
Let the ship slide open and he went inside of it  
And saw his daddy 'hind the control boards  
Streamin' beads of light  
He saw his daddy 'hind the control board  
And he was very different tonight  
'Cause he was not human, he was not human  
The little boy's face lit up with such a naked joy  
That the sun burned around his lids  
And his eyes were like two suns  
White lids, white opals, seein' everything  
Just a little bit too clearly  
And he looked around and  
There was no black ship in sight  
No black funeral cars, nothin'  
Except for him, the raven  
And fell on his knees and  
Looked up and cried out "No, Daddy, don't leave me here alone  
Take me up, Daddy, to the belly of your ship  
Let the ship slide open and I'll go inside of it  
Where you are not human, you are not human"  
But nobody heard the boy's cry of alarm  
Nobody there 'cept for the birds  
Around the New England farm  
And they gathered in all directions  
Like roses they scattered  
And they were like compass grass  
Coming together into the head of a shaman bouquet  
Slit in his nose and all the others went shootin'  
And he saw the lights of traffic beckonin' him  
Like the hands of Blake  
Grabbin' at his cheeks, takin' out his neck  
All his limbs, everything was twisted and he said  
I won't give up, won't give up, don't let me give up  
I won't give up, come here, let me go up fast  
Take me up quick, take me up, up to the belly of a ship"

And the ship slides open and I go inside of it  
Where I am not human I am helium raven and this movie is mine  
So he cried out as he stretched the sky  
Pushin' it all out like latex cartoon  
Am I all alone in this generation?  
We'll just be dreamin' of animation night and day  
And won't let up, won't let up and I see them comin' in  
Oh, I couldn't hear them before, but I hear 'em now It's a radar scope in all silver and all platinum lights  
Movin' in like black ships, they were movin' in, streams of them  
And he put up his hands and he said, It's me, it's me  
I'll give you my eyes, take me up, oh Lord, please take me up  
I'm helium, raven waitin' for you, please take me up  
Don't leave me here "The son, the sign, the cross  
Like the shape of a tortured woman  
The true shape of a tortured woman  
The mother standing in the doorway, lettin' her sons  
No longer presidents but prophets  
They're all dreamin', they're gonna bear the prophet He's gonna run through the fields dreamin' in animation  
It's all gonna split his skull  
It's gonna come out like a black bouquet shinin'  
Like a fist that's gonna shoot them up  
Like light, like Mohammed boxer Take them up up up up up up  
Oh, let's go up, up, don't hold me back  
Take me up, I'll go up, I'm goin' up, I'm goin' up  
Take me up, I'm goin' up, I'll go up, tell  
Go up go up go up go up up up up up up up  
Up, up, to the belly of a ship  
Let the ship slide open and we'll go inside of it  
Well, we are not human, we're not human Well, there was sand, there were tiles  
The sun had melted the sand  
And it coagulated like a river of glass  
When it hardened, he looked at the surface  
He saw his face and where there were eyes  
Were just two white opals, two white opals Where there were eyes, there were just two white opals  
He looked up and the rays shot  
And he saw raven comin' in  
And he crawled on his back and he went up  
Up up up up up up Sha da do wop, da sha da do way  
Sha da do wop, da sha da do way  
Sha da do wop, da sha da do way  
Sha da do wop, da sha da do way  
Shaman do wop, da shaman do way  
We like birdland

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