Bedlam

Elvis Costello & The Imposters

I've got this phosphorescent portrait
Of gentle Jesus meek and mild
I've got this harlot that I'm stuck with
Carrying another man's childThe solitary star announcing vacancy
Burnt out as we arrived
They'd throw us back across the border
If they knew that we survivedAnd they were surprised to see us
So they greeted us with palms
They asked for ammunition acts
Of contrition and small almsI might recite a small prayer if I ever said them
I lay down on an iron frame and found myself in Bedlam
I wish that I could take something for drowning out the noise
Wailing echoes down the corridorsI've got this imaginary radio
And I'm punching up the dial
I've got the AC trained on the TV
So it won't blow up in my eyeAnd everything that I thought fanciful
And mocked as too extreme
Must be family entertainment here
In the strange land of my dreamsAnd I'm practicing my likeness
Of St. Francis of Assisi
For if I hold my hand outstretched
A little bird comes to meAnd I might recite a small prayer if I ever said them
I lay down on an iron frame and found myself in Bedlam
Escaping from the fingers that were stretching through the bars
Wailing echoes down the corridorsThe player piano picks out 'Life goes on'
The ring tone rang out 'Jerusalem'
Into the pit of sadness where the rank of wretched plunge
We've buried all the innocents we must bury revengeThey've got this scared and decorated girl
Strapped to the steel trunk of a Mustang
And then they drove her down a cypress grove
Where traitors hang and stars still spangleThey dangled flags and other rags
Along a colored thread of twine
They dragged that bruised and purple heart
Along the road to PalestineSomeone went off muttering
He mentioned thirty pieces
Easter saw a slaughtering
Each wrapped in bloodstained fleecesMy thoughts returned to vengeance
But I put up no resistance
Though it seemed a long way from my home

It really was no distanceAnd I might recite a small prayer if I ever said them
I lay down on an iron frame and found myself in Bedlam
Bowing like an actor acknowledging applause
Playing the crusader who was conquering the Mars
And he knew the consequences but he won't accept the cause
Wailing echoes down the corridorsFeel it, feel it

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