

Mr. Tanner

Harry Chapin

Mr. tanner was a cleaner from a town in the Midwest
And of all the cleaning shops around he'd made his the best
But he also was a baritone who sang while hanging clothes
He practiced scales while pressing tails and sang at local shows
His friends and neighbors praised the voice
That poured out from his throat
They said that he should use his gift instead of cleaning coats
But music was his life, it was not his livelihood
And it made him feel so happy and it made him feel so good
And he sang from his heart and he sang from his soul
He did not know how well he sang, it just made him whole
His friends kept working on him to try music out full
time
A big debut and rave reviews, a great career to climb
Finally they got to him, he would take the fling
A concert agent in New York agreed to have him sing
And there were plane tickets, phone calls, money spent to rent the hall
It took most of his savings but he gladly used them all
But music was his life, it was not his livelihood
And it made him feel so happy and it made him feel so good
And he sang from his heart and he sang from his soul
He did not know how well he sang, it just made him whole
The evening came, he took the stage, his face set in a
smile
And in the half filled hall the critics sat watching on the aisle
But the concert was a blur to him, spatters of applause
He did not know how well he sang, he only heard the flaws
But the critics were concise, it only took four lines
But no one could accuse them of being over kind
"Mr. Martin Tanner, baritone of Dayton, Ohio
Made his town hall debut last night
Be came well prepared, but unfortunately his presentation
Was not up to contemporary professional standards
His voice lacks the range of tonal color
Necessary to make it consistently interesting
Full time consideration of another endeavor might be in order"
He came home to Dayton and was questioned by his friends
Then he smiled and just said nothing and he never sang again
Excepting very late at night when the shop was dark and closed
He sang softly to himself as he sorted through the clothes
Music was his life, it was not his livelihood
And it made him feel so happy, it made him feel so good
And he sang from his heart and he sang from his soul
And he did not know how well he sang, it just made him whole

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