Baltimore

Kindest Lines

I know I've seen this place before
Lord can't you hear me screaming
As a young man long ago
When I was twenty-one
And I know I've seen this house before
With people all around it
With my baby cousin on the floor
And mama in the kitchen
And a woman lies upon the bed
I think she must be dying
And I recall the words she said
As she began to cry
She begged son please don't go to baltimore
And leave me where I'm lying
For you will son but I no more
Walk among the living
And if you go to baltimore
Then I'll see you in heaven
And as you breathe I'll breathe no more
And I will surely die
Well you know I went to baltimore
So confident and wise
And as I breathed she breathed no more
And she did surely die
And now as I lie upon my bed
I pray I must be dreaming

With faces all around my head
And strangers at my door
And a woman's voice calls out to me
Bring unto you your children
And let them see these things you see
And hear the words you say
Beg them to go to baltimore
And leave you where you're lying
Just like you did one time before
When you were twenty-one
And if they go to baltimore
Then I'll see you in heaven

And as they breathe you'll breathe no more
And you will surely die
And I know I've seen this place before
Lord can't you hear me screaming
And if I should awaken lord
Then answer me my plea
What makes the sun set in the west
And birds fly in the sky
And what makes a woman beat her breast
When her children start to cry
And what makes those little ones grow old
To find eternity
And what takes the wise
And leaves behind
A foolish one like me

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