Wasteland

Dan Bern

I saw the best of my generation playing pinball
Maked up and caked up
And looking like some kind of china dollWith all of Adolf Hitler's moves down cold
As they stood up in front of a Rock and Roll band
And always moving upward and ever upward
To this gentle golden promised landWith the smartest of them all
Moonlighting as a word processor
And the strongest of them all
Checking IDs outside saloonsAnd the prettiest of all taking off her clothes
In front of men whose eyes look like
They were in some little hick town
Near Omaha, watching the police chief
Run his car off the side of a bridgeI saw men with dreams like the ones I'd had
Beg quarters outside the Seven-Eleven
Till it got so they didn't affect me anymore
Than the mailboxes I'd passed
'Cept that sometimes, I'd put somthing in the mailboxI'd had the wind at my back now I felt it cold in my face
And for an awful long time now
You were the only one who ever called me late at night
And I really never noticed till after you stopped calling
And the emptiness, silence got so heavyBroken up in the wasteland, broken up in the promised land
Broken up in Disneyland, broken up in the plastic land
Broken up in the wasteland, broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wastelandI saw dead Marilyn Monroe
Strung up on every street corner in Hollywood
Like some two bit whore offering a discount rate
And I wondered how Joe Dimaggio feltI saw dead James Dean's ghost
Wandering the sidewalk looking troubled
And I wondered how his mama feltI saw signs that said, "Headshots done for cheap"
Signs that said, "Extras wanted, top dollars paid"
Signs for 'Haircuts' and signs for 'Manicures'
And signs for "Tanning salons" and signs for 'Wardrobe specialists
Signs for "Cosmetic surgery' and signs for 'Assertiveness training'
And I stopped to read them allAnd every single block looked like every single block
Looked like every single block looked like every single block
But she kept driving 'cause everyone else kept driving
And 'cause gridlock is evil and not knowing anywhere is evilAnd those who had money looked good
But weren't too happy and those who didn't have money
Didn't look so good and weren't too happy either

And in a city of three million, two hundred and sixty nine thousand
Nine hundred eighty four, everyone was lonelyBroken up in the wasteland, broken up in the promised land
Broken up in Disneyland, broken up in the plastic land
Broken up in the wasteland, broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wastelandAnd I watched as everyone I knew spent their lives
Trying to be watched on stage
Watched on film or listened to on a record
And they thought, "Well, maybe that way
I could get a little love out of this life"And I watched as the best of my generation
Abandoned their dreams and settled for making a little money
I watched TV, read the papers, listend to the radio
And made all the fancy scenes
And said all the right words and wore all the right clothes
And knew the names of the hip peopleBut I still felt out of touch so I stopped watching TV
And reading the papers and listening to the radio
And making the fancy scenes and saying the right words
And wearing the right clothes and knowing the names of the hip people
And I felt more out of touch than ever but I didn't care anymoreAnd I felt you slipping away and I felt myself slipping from you
And I wanted more than anything else
For it to rain for one whole day like it used to
But all there ever was was sun, relentless sun, hot beating sunAnd everyone wore their sunglasses
And walked around like flies under magnifying glass
With their eyes removedBroken up in the wasteland, broken up in the promised land
Broken up in Disneyland, broken up in the plastic land
Broken up in the wasteland, broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland, broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland

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