Gold

Jeffrey Lewis

When I got to the golden city
Most of the gold was gone
By that time I had some questions
So I flagged down a race-car bum
He said "Sonny I don't know where it's going,
But I can show you where it all comes from"
And he mopped his red forehead and he pointed
Straight into the setting sun
And people let me tell you
That what I then did saw
It sent such a shock to my system
That I almost fell down dead on the floor
'cause the sun had a big chunk missing
About 24 carats wide
And I stared into that hole in the golden sun
And you want to know what I saw inside?
I saw a giant toothpick factory
And it made my very soul feel sick
'cause when I say I saw a toothpick factory
I mean I saw a factory made out of toothpicks
And that factory was a-hoppin' and a-jumpin'
And a-roaring and letting off steam
And you know that that ain't all now
Let me tell you what else I seen
Behind the factory was a giant mutant monster
With sixty-seven separate tails
And each one was a-wiggling and a-waving
And each one as long as twenty-three whales
And at the tip of each towering tendrils
Were a dozen tiny pencils of lead
And each word they wrote was in a different language
And when you put them all together they said
"You who have arms to wrestle
And you who have wars to fight
And you who have chips on your shoulders
Must now line up and stand to my right
But you who are meek and lawful
And you who are soft and kind
If you don't want to see something awful

Run and get yourself a rock to hide behind
'cause these colours are just a signal
And these colours are just about to fade"
And when I read those words I shivered
And I saw exactl what the factory made
Out of a little doorway
At the end of a conveyor belt
In the centre of a ring of fire
Half the size of a postage stamp
Were a million household items
Packed into a metal Dukes Of Hazzard lunchbox
And they were all shut and sealed and fastened
With a gold combination lock
And just about every minute
Another one came right out of the hole
And crashed to the earth beneath it
And landed in a lump of coal
And every poor coal miner
Who happened on a golden stone
Was made both richer and wiser
And had to murder someone to get it home
And then I had to close my eyelids
And I had to turn my face away
The race-car man was crying
And I heard him angrily say
"I suppose you want a glass of water
I suppose you want to eat something warm"
I said, "Yes but not with you sir"
And I ran off to be alone
And I sat under a bridge and I wondered
What exactly all of these things were
And I found I could not yet remember
What I thought they were before
I just want something even
Something that won't cause no fuss
The sun can go about its business
And leave the rest to us
And we'll call it even
And we'll call it gold

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