

Elvis Costello, American Without Tears #2 (Twilight

December 1965 in Caracas

When Arnie LaFlamme(?) took his piece of the pie
When he packed up the casino chips, the IOU and the abacus
And switched off the jukebox in a "A Fool Such as I"
He was a leg man who was open to offers
But he couldn't get her off his mind as he passed the tourist office
and as he entertained himself singing just like Sammy Davis Junior
He toyed with a trip to Miami

For money like that
he could have sweet talk in her ear
Now they don't speak any English
Just American without tears

It was an idea that he dangled on his knee
and nursed it like his coffee cup
when he couldn't find any other way
It always seemed to come to him
while the day was dipping down
and sun was like a light bulb
being swallowed by a clown

He took her for everything
He took her for his only one
He took her out of Coventry and over to Idaho
But the war wound that he carried home
wasn't really visible
When the bullets were forgotten
she lived dowdy, down, and miserable

And she seemed to be crying for year after year
and says, "You don't speak any English
Just American between tears."

"Arnie" she said to me, "Will you turn down the radio.
You haven't slept a wink since we came to Havana
When're you gonna get the strength to go over to Florida?
All you ever listen to is 'The Voice of America'."

It was the story of a young English poppet
Who took up with a soldier boy
And thought she would profit
Just like me she found out what true love is about
Anyway she's in New Orleans It would never work out

Oh she seemed to be crying for year after year
Now you don't speak any English
Just American between tears
Just American without tears

For you seem to be crying for year after year
Now you don't speak any English
Just American without tears
Just American without tears