

# Elvis Costello, Battered Old Bird

The landlady's husband came up to town today  
Since he left them both ten years ago to serve the ministry  
The dark down road of his approach in constant rain was drenched  
The tenant's boy said "How d'ya do"; then swore in French  
Did you teach this little child these curses on my soul  
You should both be shut down in the coal-hole  
That's the way to treat a child who cries out in the night  
And a woman who teaches wrong from right

[Chorus:]

He's a Battered Old Bird  
And he's living up there  
There's a place where time stands still  
If you keep taking those little pink pills

"Hush your mouth you hypocrite";  
His humour cut her deep  
The tight lipped leer of judgement  
That had seen her love desert her just like sleep  
"Filthy words on children's lips are better, my dear spouse  
Then if I were to speak my mind about this house";

[Chorus]

On the first floor there are two old maids  
Each one wishing that the other was afraid  
And next door to them is a man so mild  
'Til he chopped off the head of a visitor's child  
He danced upon the bonfire  
Swallowed sleeping pills like dreams  
With a bottle of sweet sherry that everything redeems

[Chorus]

And on the second floor is the Macintosh Man  
He's in his overcoats more than out of them  
And the typewriter's rattling all through the night  
He's burgundy for breakfast tight  
He says "One day I'll throw away all of my cares  
And it is always Christmas in a cupboard at the top of the stairs";

[Chorus]

"Well here's a boy if ever there was  
Who's going to do big things  
That's what they all say and that's how the trouble begins  
I've seen them rise and fall  
Been through their big deals and smalls  
He'd better have a dream that goes beyond four walls";  
You think he should be sent outside playing with the traffic  
When pieces of him are already scattered in the attic