

Elvis Costello, Tramp The Dirt Down

I saw a newspaper picture from the political
campaign
A woman was kissing a child, who was obviously
in pain
She spills with compassion, as that young child's
face in her hands she grips
Can you imagine all that greed and avarice
coming down on that child's lips
Well I hope I don't die too soon
I pray the Lord my soul to save
Oh I'll be a good boy, I'm trying so hard to behave
Because there's one thing I know, I'd like to live
long enough to savour
That's when they finally put you in the ground
I'll stand on your grave and tramp the dirt down

When England was the whore of the world
Margaret [sic] was her madam
And the future looked as bright and as clear as
the black tarmacadam
Well I hope that she sleeps well at night, isn't
haunted by every tiny detail
'Cos when she held that lovely face in her hands
all she thought of was betrayal

And now the cynical ones say that it all ends
the same in the long run
Try telling that to the desperate father who just
squeezed the life from his only son
And how it's only voices in your head and
dreams you never dreamt
Try telling him the subtle difference between
justice and contempt
Try telling me she isn't angry with this pitiful
discontent
When they flaunt it in your face as you line up
for punishment
And then expect you to say "Thank you";
straighten up, look proud and pleased
Because you've only got the symptoms, you
haven't got the whole disease
Just like a schoolboy, whose head's like a tin-can
filled up with dreams then poured down
the drain
Try telling that to the boys on both sides, being
blown to bits or beaten and maimed
Who takes all the glory and none of the shame

Well I hope you live long now, I pray the Lord
your soul to keep
I think I'll be going before we fold our arms
and start to weep
I never thought for a moment that human life
could be so cheap
'Cos when they finally put you in the ground
They'll stand there laughing and tramp the
dirt down