

Mary Chapin Carpenter, This Shirt

(Mary Chapin Carpenter)

This shirt is old and faded
All the color's washed away
I've had it now for more damn years
Than I can count anyway
I wear it beneath my jacket
With the collar turned up high
So old I should replace it
But I'm not about to try

This shirt's got silver buttons
And a place upon the sleeve
Where I used to set my heart up
Right there anyone could see
This shirt is the one I wore to every boring high school dance
Where the boys ignored the girls
And we all pretended to like the band

This shirt was a pillow for my head
On a train through Italy
This shirt was a blanket beneath the love
We made in Argeles
This shirt was lost for three whole days
In a town near Buffalo
'Till I found the locker key
In a downtown Trailways bus depot

This shirt was the one I lent you
And when you gave it back
There was a rip inside the sleeve
Where you rolled your cigarettes
It was the place I put my heart
Now look at where you put a tear
I forgave your thoughtlessness
But not the boy who put it there

This shirt was the place your cat
Decided to give birth to five
And we stayed up all night watching
And we wept when the last one died
This shirt is just an old faded piece of cotton
Shining like the memories
Inside those silver buttons

This shirt is a grand old relic
With a grand old history
I wear it now for Sunday chores
Cleaning house and raking leaves
I wear it beneath my jacket
With the collar turned up high
So old I should replace it
But I'm not about to try