

# Small Fred, Father's Song

I remember the man  
Rising early in the morning  
Smelling of starch and aftershave  
Sometimes I would shave beside him  
With a plastic razor and a cardboard blade  
And watch his car disappear  
Into the morning gray.

I remember the man  
Talking so long on the telephone  
His voice hard and polished like a precious stone  
In command of itself and the darkness  
He was not afraid in my hearing  
Though sometimes he would rage  
Without reason

CHORUS:

There's a man I hardly remember  
Who would hold me in his arms without flinching  
And tell me it's all right  
I put my hands out to my father  
Standing strong in the water  
When I could not swim  
I held on to him  
It was all right.

I remember the man  
Shouting from the sidelines at my football games  
He'd razz opposing players by their names  
My mother would plead, Oh please calm down  
And he did when the game was over  
He was so proud  
Of his son.

I remember the man  
Laid off last December  
That's not what they called it  
Twenty years with the firm  
Eased out in favor of a younger man  
Fear tugged at his voice  
But he had other plans.

CHORUS

I dreamed last night of my grandmother  
She was tall and I a child  
But death was hiding in her house  
In the dark I saw her  
A rotting shell  
And I cried out  
My father took my hand  
And led me from that awful place.  
Soon my parents will be old  
They will count their dreams and weight them  
One by one  
Two lives long together, a daughter and a son  
Many things accomplished, many left undone  
Some left behind  
For something better.  
And once before he dies  
I will hold him in my arms without flinching  
And tell him it's all right  
I put my hands out to my father  
Standing strong in the water  
When I could not swim  
I held on to him  
It was all right.