

# Small Fred, Leslie Is Different

The neighbor up the road brought the message  
Joe and May never had a phone  
Five children grown and gone to college  
Now they lived out on Pewaukee Lake alone  
And the nurse at the big Milwaukee hospital  
Said "We've got a baby here with no eyes  
It's retarded, it's got cerebral palsy  
Six months old living only to die  
And we remembered the tiny Englishwoman  
Used to hire out as a nurse-governess  
May Lemke, will you take this broken child off our hands?"  
And God loves a fool 'cause she said yes. She said:

CHORUS:

Leslie is different  
Like everyone in the world  
He's kind of awkward, he's kind of fragile  
Kind of graceful, kind of tough  
He's kind of slow, he's kind of clever  
He's just Leslie and that's enough.  
He just lay there helpless and silent  
Not a tear, not a smile, not a word  
But they held him and rocked him and sang him to sleep  
And talked to him as if he really heard  
And he grew with the sun and affection  
Though his body was spindly and small  
And a hundred times they stood him with his hands upon the fence  
And a hundred times watched him fall  
And their daughters warned it was useless  
They said, "Mama, that boy will break your heart."  
She said, "Love never comes easy  
And miracles mostly come hard." She said:

CHORUS

May used to play the piano  
And sing the old songs from the war  
There was always music on the radio  
And the records she bought at the store  
And sometimes they swore he was listening  
Though of course there was no way to know  
Maybe he was flying in his own blue sky  
Where no one else would ever go  
Maybe he was lost in a forest  
Where demons and woodspirits dwell  
But for sixteen years he had never spoke a word  
Never taken one step for himself. But they said:

CHORUS

Along about three in the morning  
A ripple of music broke the night  
Joe's fallen asleep at the TV again  
May reached over to turn on the light  
But the music kept getting louder  
And the TV was quiet and cold  
Leslie was playing the piano  
And his fingers were agile and bold  
A Tchaikovsky piano concerto  
Like water breaking over a dam  
A river of ecstasy flowed through his hands  
And each note cried out, "I am." Because

CHORUS