

Dan Bern, Wasteland

I saw the best of my generation playing pinball
Make-up on, all caked up
Looking like some kind of china doll
With all of Adolf Hitler's moves down cold
As they stood up in front
Of a rock and roll band
And always moving upward and ever upward
To this gentle golden promised land
With the smartest of them all
Moonlighting as a word processor
And the strongest of them all
Checking IDs outside a saloon
And the prettiest of all
Taking off her clothes
In front of men
Whose eyes look like they were in some little hick town
Near Omaha
Watching the police chief
Run his car off the side of a bridge
I saw a men with dreams
Like the ones I'd had
Beg quarters outside the Seven-Eleven
Till it got so they didn't affect me anymore
Than the mailboxes I'd passed
'Cept that sometimes
I'd put something in the mailbox
I'd had the wind at my back
Now I felt it cold in my face
And for an awful long time now
You were the only one who ever
Called me late at night
And I really never noticed
Till after you stopped calling
And the emptiness
And silence
Got so heavy
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the promised land
Broken up in Disneyland
Broken up in the plastic land
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland
I saw dead Marilyn Monroe
Strung up on every street corner in Hollywood
Like some two bit whore
Offering a discount rate
And I wondered how Joe Dimaggio felt
I saw dead James Dean's ghost
Wandering the sidewalk looking troubled
And I wondered how his mama felt
I saw signs that said "Headshots done for cheap"
Signs that said "Extras wanted, top dollars paid"
Signs for "Haircuts"
Signs for "Manicures"
And signs for "Tanning salons"
And signs for "Wardrobe specialists"
Signs for "Cosmetic surgery"
And signs for "Assertiveness training"
And I stopped to read them all
And every single block
Looked like every single block
Looked like every single block
Looked like every single block

But she kept driving
'Cause everyone else kept driving
And cause gridlock is evil
And not knowing anywhere is evil
And those that had money
Looked good but weren't too happy
And those who didn't have money
Didn't look so good and weren't too happy either
And in a city of three million
Two hundred and sixty nine thousand
Nine hundred eighty four
Everyone was lonely
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the promised land
Broken up in Disneyland
Broken up in the plastic land
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland
And I watched as everyone I knew
Spent their lives
Trying to be watched on stage
Watched on film
Or listened to on a record
And they thought
"Well, maybe that way
I could get a little love out of this life"
And I watched as the best of my generation
Abandoned their dreams
And settled for making a little money
I watched TV
Read the papers
Listen to the radio
And made all the fancy scenes
And said all the right words
And wore all the right clothes
And knew the names of the hip people
But I still felt out of touch
So I stopped watching TV
And reading the papers
And listening to the radio
And making the fancy scenes
And saying the right words
And wearing the right clothes
And knowing the names of the hip people
And I felt more out of touch than ever
But I didn't care anymore
And I felt you slipping away
And I felt myself slipping from you
And I wanted more than anything else
For it to rain for one whole day
Like it used to
But all there ever was was sun
Relentless sun
Hot beating sun
And everyone wore their sunglasses
And walked around like flies
Under magnifying glass
With their eyes removed
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the promised land
Broken up in Disneyland
Broken up in the plastic land
Broken up in the wasteland
Broken up in the wasteland

Broken up in the wasteland