

Harry Chapin, Mercenaries

Mercenaries

by Harry Chapin

It's a slow motion night
In the hot city lights
Past time when the good folks
Are snoring in bed
On a loose-jointed cruise
To recolor your blues
With illegal notions alive,
Alive in your head
You are back from some war
That you've been fighting for
Some old blue blood bastard
In a dark pinstripe suit
and the word from your loins
Has your mind in your groin
And your back pocket burning with blood
Blood money loot
So, you walk past the glow
Of the flicker-picture shows
Where the raincoat men wait
For a child to come by
And the women in doorways
Who have nothing to say
'Cause your money is talking
To the ones that you would try
She owns the block
With the dead pawnshop clock
She's the answer to dreams
That you pay to come true
She's got no heart of gold
But that's not what she's sold
She just sees herself doing what she
What she has to do
And she's all that you're hoping
As her coat falls open
Give her bread she leads you
To a bed on the floor
Where for ten million years
And through ten billion tears
The armies of bootmen have marched
Back from their wars
She's in that state of grace
Before time finds her face
With a mind of old wisdoms
And a body still young
And she tastes as sweet
As a child's chocolate
Before the butts and the whiskey
Had wasted the taste of your tongue
Play the music again
Of the grey-stubble men
That groaning blue symphony
Moans evermore
And you watch as she fakes it
And of course you just take it
She's better than others
You never paid money for
You've used up your booty
The girl's done her duty
The turnstile has turned
And you learn you are done
You're back on the street
Joining fresh marching feet

You see more soldiers coming
And your girl chooses one
And the medic has brought
Shots for what you have caught
Your leave is all over
You're back on the line
And the joke in the trenches
Of the hot blooded wenches
And the next thing that you'll do
When they next give you the tim.
And you're back in your army
Back shedding red blood
And you dream of the girl
As you sleep in the mud
And you know you'd swap with her
If the deal could be made
'Cause you'd rather be working at love
Love as your trade