



She's That Kind of Girl

Drawing by Kelly Hanner

SPOKEN SONGS

I

I pulled out the mandolin
And tuned it again.
I turned it over in my hands
And noted scars from many lands

So I sat to play these songs
As people gathered in their throngs.
I sang to them of life and death,
A baby's birth, an old man's last breath

I told them tales of far flung shores,
Of epic heroes and their flashing swords
Far into the night with mighty deeds
Of noble knights and righteous steeds.

II

I brushed the dirt of another burg from my feet, shouldered my pack, and continued to the next village. The miles were long and hard. The road was no softer, nor any shorter than the roads of the past. Pebbles skittered at my feet. The sun, high and hot, pelted down upon me. But, I have been beaten before. My feet took me past fields of grain, where simple folk lived out their lives. Some of the folk watched me as I went by; some of them wished they were me; some just stared at a passing stranger. The villages were small and agrarian. They're full of the faces of men and women that life has passed over. Though the villages were equally full of the bright, eager faces of children. All but a few fated to meet their parents' destiny. I watched the sun cross the sky and walked the ribbon of the road. Though they were sore, calloused and hurt, my feet carried me ever onward to the far horizons I would never reach.

III

I travelled the roads,
Speaking my songs,
Holding my loads
With no one along

I've gotten into fights
And woken up gray.
I've drunken all night
And on till the next day.

I've tripped up kings,
Who wished me dead
I've done many things
With my instruments and my head.

IV

I lay awake at nights and feel the crinkled covers under me: that is I'm lucky. Most nights are spent in the backs of taverns or barns. Many nights are spent under the skies. Those nights are the best ones: nights spent in deep, dreamless slumbers. Sometimes I lie awake and feel my feet on the road. Other occasions I remember the past; the faces of the innkeepers, the drunks, the nobles, the street people. All the faces flee across my vision. Sometimes one hangs there for a second, a particularly friendly old man or a young girl who takes pity on me. Those faces to flee with the rest. Something calls to me; it makes me go from town to town. Usually I feel far away from the calling. Occasionally I feel closer to whatever calls me. Once a long era ago I thought I had found what had called to me. But, that too fled with the other faces. My feet can feel the road, even in my sleep. They wake me up and once again we go off to feel the road.

V

Perhaps I'm nothing more
Then a lost troubadour.
Maybe I've seen too many places
Or too many faces.

I've fought for men's rights
And seen my sights.
I've trekked long, hard years
Peopled only by fears.

VI

Years ago I had a dog that used to travel with me, but he ran off or died. I don't know. It was a long time ago. I had a squirrel. Once an old woman gave me a monkey, but it got shot by mistake. I've travelled with thieves and honest men. I was asked where I was from; I smiled. I never really had a home. That's the cost of being a troubadour. My best friend is this old battered mandolin and his pal the penny whistle. The taverns are full of abused drunks and beaten lives. I watch the stars and see the streaks flashing by; a forlorn piece of cosmic dirt wandering off to die. I wander through all those masses of people. Searching for the faces of the past. It eats at me. All that I have is the music, the road, and this senseless wandering I do. Something calls to me. Once eons ago I thought I had found it, but that too fled with the faces of the past. I wonder where she is now.

VII

Perhaps I'm nothing more
Then just a lost troubadour.
I brushed the dirt of another burg from my feet
And continue onward to the destinies I meet

Jim Evins

**Icicle dolls stand
On blue straw legs, — Meek glass, eyes
China-Fragile world.**

**Ancient tomb of chill,
Ice shroud wraps sacred life sprouts.
Cold crow squawk — sermon.**

Andy Valle