

When I First Went to Canada

When I first went to Canada
Viet Nam was lost in flames
Dick Nixon sounded too bizarre
With his paranoiac games
And Woodstock seemed a simple place
Just a promise to be kept
While Armstrong called from outer space
Where he took his giant step
I asked myself which one is worse
As I trampled through the snow—
To do my time at Leavenworth
Or in north Ontario?

I crossed the West Virginia line
Going back to Beale and Main
My Harpoon and my twelve-string
And my adolescent pain
I knew it all at twenty-one
I bore it all alone
What evil things great men have done
Who never will atone
The rain soaked through my surplus coat
I could hardly move my feet
Just waking long enough to know
I was living on the street

When I first reached satori
Every thought of mine was gone
And there was nothing in me
For the light to shine upon
Because there was no shadow
There could be no night or day
I thought I heard my echo
But the sound got in the way
I looked out of my empty room
Through a dirty window pane
At gardens where the apple blooms
Were gone to seed again