

Despised Icon

"Children's Work"

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My father was a paper plane
My mother was a windswept tree
My little brother's nearly twice my age
He taught me how to meditate
I taught him how to read
I grew up with a book in my bed
I got these dark circles before I turned ten
Heard my mother with her friends worry
It was something she did to get such a serious kid

Now I've learned how to paint my face
How to earn my keep / how to clean my kill
Some nights I still can't sleep
The past rolls back / and I can see us still
You've learned how to hold your own
How to stack your stones / but the history's thick
Children aren't as simple as we'd like to think

Before you came along I was a lone cub
Fell in love with language / tried to tell the grown-ups
About the storm clouds / the weather in my head
Hadn't learned the word for melancholy yet
Then you came in five years behind
We thought you couldn't talk
Turns out you were just shy
Mom said it was serious / dad said you'd be fine
I thought you were the prophet of 1989
You were so tender
We thought something was wrong with you
So patient / we thought that you were deaf
You were so solemn / so tiny but so ancient
Ma took you to see doctors / it scared he half to death
And I made you a library of tiny books
With spines two inches high
You didn't say too much, but smiled
Taught me how to quiet down my mind

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You slept in my bed / and if I kept quiet...
I could hear all the voices in your head
When the wagon tipped / I prayed over your body
I asked God to take the damage out on me
Ten years later / he finally gets the memo
Sent it to accounting and knocked out my front teeth
But you came to
And took my hand and held my eyes and
Me and you had a long walk home
So we decided not to cry
Now we've got a grown up love
And I know that's how it's suppose to be
Same old story mom gets Easters
Lets dad have Christmas Eve
But I won't pretend I don't remember how unusual we
were
The little mystic and his handler
All some children do is work

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