

Harry Chapin "Mr. Tanner"

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Mr. tanner was a cleaner from a town in the Midwest
And of all the cleaning shops around he'd made his the
best
But he also was a baritone who sang while hanging
clothes
He practiced scales while pressing tails and sang at
local shows
His friends and neighbors praised the voice
That poured out from his throat
They said that he should use his gift instead of
cleaning coats

But music was his life, it was not his livelihood
And it made him feel so happy and it made him feel so
good
And he sang from his heart and he sang from his soul
He did not know how well he sang, it just made him
whole

His friends kept working on him to try music out full
time
A big debut and rave reviews, a great career to climb
Finally they got to him, he would take the fling
A concert agent in New York agreed to have him sing
And there were plane tickets, phone calls, money spent
to rent the hall
It took most of his savings but he gladly used them all

But music was his life, it was not his livelihood
And it made him feel so happy and it made him feel so
good
And he sang from his heart and he sang from his soul
He did not know how well he sang, it just made him
whole

The evening came, he took the stage, his face set in a
smile
And in the half filled hall the critics sat watching on the
aisle
But the concert was a blur to him, spatters of applause
He did not know how well he sang, he only heard the
flaws

But the critics were concise, it only took four lines
But no one could accuse them of being over kind

Mr. Martin Tanner, baritone of Dayton, Ohio
Made his town hall debut last night
He came well prepared, but unfortunately his
presentation
Was not up to contemporary professional standards
His voice lacks the range of tonal color
Necessary to make it consistently interesting

Full time consideration of another endeavor might be
in order

He came home to Dayton and was questioned by his
friends
Then he smiled and just said nothing and he never
sang again
Excepting very late at night when the shop was dark
and closed
He sang softly to himself as he sorted through the
clothes

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good
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And he did not know how well he sang, it just made him
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