

## **James McMurtry** **"We Can't Make It Here"**

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There's a Vietnam Vet with a cardboard sign  
Sitting there by the left turn line  
The flag on his wheelchair flapping in the breeze  
One leg missing and both hands free

No one's paying much mind to him  
The V.A. budget's just stretched so thin  
And now there's more coming back from the Mideast  
war  
We can't make it here anymore

And that big ol' building was the textile mill  
That fed our kids and it paid our bills  
But they turned us out and they closed the doors  
'Cause we can't make it here anymore

You see those pallets piled up on the loading dock  
They're just gonna sit there 'til they rot  
'Cause there's nothing to ship, nothing to pack  
Just busted concrete and rusted tracks

Empty storefronts around the square  
There's a needle in the gutter and glass everywhere  
You don't come down here unless you're looking to  
score  
We can't make it here anymore

The bar's still open but man it's slow  
The tip jar's light and the register's low  
The bartender don't have much to say  
The regular crowd gets thinner each day

Some have maxed out all their credit cards  
Some are working two jobs and living in cars  
Minimum wage won't pay for a roof, won't pay for a  
drink  
If you gotta have proof just try it yourself Mr. C.E.O.  
See how far 5.15 an hour will go  
Take a part time job at one your stores  
I bet you can't make it here anymore

And there's a high school girl with a bourgeois dream

Just like the pictures in the magazine  
She found on the floor of the laundromat  
A woman with kids can forget all that

If she comes up pregnant what'll she do  
Forget the career and forget about school  
Can she live on faith? Live on hope?  
High on Jesus or hooked on dope  
When it's way too late to just say no  
You can't make it here anymore

Now I'm stocking shirts in the Wal-Mart store  
Just like the ones we made before  
'Cept this one came from Singapore  
I guess we can't make it here anymore

Should I hate a people for the shade of their skin  
Or the shape of their eyes or the shape I'm in  
Should I hate 'em for having our jobs today  
No I hate the men sent the jobs away

I can see them all now, they haunt my dreams  
All lily white and squeaky clean  
They've never known want, they'll never know need  
Their shit don't stink and their kids won't bleed  
Their kids won't bleed in their damn little war  
And we can't make it here anymore

Will I work for food, will I die for oil  
Will kill for power and to us the spoils  
The billionaires get to pay less tax  
The working poor get to fall through the cracks

So let 'em eat jellybeans let 'em eat cake  
Let 'em eat shit, whatever it takes  
They can join the Air Force or join the Corps  
If they can't make it here anymore

So that's how it is, that's what we got  
If the president wants to admit it or not  
You can read it in the paper, read it on the wall  
Hear it on the wind if you're listening at all  
Get out of that limo, look us in the eye  
Call us on the cell phone tell us all why

In Dayton Ohio or Portland Maine  
Or a cotton gin out on the great high plains  
That's done closed down along with the school  
And the hospital and the swimming pool

Dust devils dance in the noonday heat

There's rats in the alley and trash in the street  
Gang graffiti on a boxcar door  
We can't make it here anymore

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