

## Dar Williams

# "Southern California Wants to Be Western New York"

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There's a part of the country  
Could drop off tomorrow in an earthquake  
Yeah, it's out there on the cutting edge  
The people move, the sidewalks shake

And there's another part of the country  
With a land that gently creaks and thuds  
Where the heavy snows make faucets leak  
In bathrooms with free-standing tubs

They're in houses that are haunted  
With the kids who lie awake and think about  
All the generations past  
Who used to use that dripping sink

Sometimes one place wants  
To slip into the other just to see  
What it's like to trade its demons  
For the restless ghost of Mrs. Ogilvy

Used to pick the mint from her front yard  
To dress the Sunday pork  
Sometimes southern California wants  
To be western New York

Wants to have a family business  
In sheet metal or power tools  
And it wants to have a diner  
Where the coffee tastes like diesel fuel

And it wants to find the glory of a town  
They say has hit the skids  
And it wants to have a snow day  
That will turn its parents into kids

And it's embarrassed, but it's lusting  
After a sunny student with mousy brown hair who is  
Taking out the compost  
Making coffee in long underwear

And southern California says

To save a place, I'll meet you there  
And it tried to pack up its miata  
All it could fit was a prayer

Sometimes the stakes are bogus  
Sometimes the fast lane hits a fork  
Sometimes southern California wants  
To be western New York

Tempe, Arizona thinks the Everglades  
Are greener and wetter  
And Washington D.C. thinks  
That Atlanta integrated better

But I think that southern California  
Has more pain that we can say  
'Cause it wants to travel back in time  
But it just can't leave L.A.

But now I hear they've got a theme park planned  
Designed to make you gasp and say  
Bet that crumbling mill town  
Was a booming mill town in its day

Old investors scoff at this, but the young ones  
Hope they'll take a chance  
And they promise it will make more dough  
Than Mickey Mouse in northern France

And the planners got an opening day  
A town historian will host  
And the waitresses look like waitresses  
Who want to leave for the West Coast

And they'll have puttering on rainy weekends  
Autumn days that make you feel sad  
They'll have hundred year old plumbing  
And the family you never had

And a Hudson River clean-up concert  
And a bundle-bearing stork  
And I hear they've got a menu planned  
It's tray western New York, western New York

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