

Paul Simon

"How Can You Live In the Northeast"

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We heard the fireworks. Rushed out to watch the sky.
Happy go lucky. Fourth of July.
How can you live in the Northeast? How can you live in
the South? How can you build on the banks of a river
when the flood water pours from the mouth? How can
you be a Christian? How can you be a Jew? How can you
be a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Hindu?
How can you?
Weak as the winter sun, we enter life on earth. Names
and religion come just after date of birth. Then
everybody gets a tongue to speak, and everyone hears
an inner voice. A day at the end of the week to wonder
and rejoice.
If the answer is infinite light, why do we sleep in the
dark?
How can you live in the Northeast? How can live in the
South? How can you build on the banks of a river when
the flood water pours from the mouth? How can you
tattoo your body? Why do you cover your head? How
can you eat from a rice bowl, the holy man only breaks
bread?
We watched the fireworks, 'til they were fireflies.
Followed a path of stars, over the endless skies.
How can you live in the Northeast? How can you live in
the South? How can you build on the banks of a river
when the flood water pours from the mouth?
I've been given all I wanted. Only three generations off
the boat. I have harvested and I've planted. I am
wearing my father's old coat.

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