

## Roger McGuinn

### "Vance"

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He was born one mornin' it was cold and it was snowin'  
And from the start he never had a chance  
And though the doctors said he couldn't live his mama  
had some faith to give  
And they brought him to her and his mama named him  
Vance  
He was sick a long time then I used to sit by him  
I'd rub his head he would squeeze my hand  
But he never cried he'd grit his teeth and smile at me  
cause he couldn't speak  
And that's when I began to respect the little man  
And I think Vance was three right about then  
He started school and one day he came home and at  
the doorway  
I could tell the little man didn't want to come inside  
He'd met a girl but her boyfriend Smitty  
Had caught him walkin' home with her and nearly killed  
Vance  
But then Vance never cried and the only thing that  
Smitty hurt was pride  
And he said papa do you become a man when you're  
twenty one  
And I said age doesn't make a man a man my son  
He looked at me so puzzled with eyes so young and  
kind  
And I think Vance was seven about that time  
[ strings ]  
I guess they say that first love is the very best  
At least it was with Vance cause he'd scratched Becky  
on his desk  
But Becky went with Smitty and Vance was very small  
And he used to dream what it'd be like to be tall  
And then a few years later Vance came in one day  
And told me and his mama that he had to go away  
To be fitted for a uniform and though his mama she'd  
a tear  
He kissed her and said he'd see us in two years  
And he looked at me and said papa I'm gonna be a  
man  
Well two years to the day Vance came walkin' in the  
driveway

And I didn't recognize him from his size till he got near  
He came in and he hugged his mama  
And said hey papa little man wanna go with me  
somewhere and grab a beer  
So we're sittin' at this table when this fella at the bar  
started buggin' Vance  
Callin' him soldier but Vance kept his cool  
And he said papa that guy is Smitty and he's to be  
pitied now  
Cause that's the same guy that used to bully me in  
school  
Then Smitty said the wrong thing when he brought up  
Becky's name  
And Vance finally stood and said boy what did you say  
And it did my heart so much good when Vance hit ole  
Smitty  
And it took two of Smitty's friends to carry him away  
Well Vance left the very next mornin' and it was cold  
and it was snowin'  
And from the first life hadn't been much fun  
But he had finally made a stand and he'd become a  
self made man  
And incidentally he had just turned twenty one

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