

Small Fred "Leslie Is Different"

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The neighbor up the road brought the message Joe and May never had a phone
Five children grown and gone to college
Now they lived out on Pewaukee Lake alone
And the nurse at the big Milwaukee hospital
Said "We've got a baby here with no eyes
It's retarded, it's got cerebral palsy
Six months old living only to die
And we remembered the tiny Englishwoman
Used to hire out as a nurse-governess
May Lemke, will you take this broken child off our hands?"

And God loves a fool 'cause she said yes. She said: CHORUS:

Leslie is different

Like everyone in the world

He's kind of awkward, he's kind of fragile

Kind of graceful, kind of tough

He's kind of slow, he's kind of clever

He's just Leslie and that's enough.

He just lay there helpless and silent

Not a tear, not a smile, not a word

But they held him and rocked him and sang him to sleep

And talked to him as if he really heard

And he grew with the sun and affection

Though his body was spindly and small

And a hundred times they stood him with his hands upon the fence

And a hundred times watched him fall

And their daughters warned it was useless

They said, "Mama, that boy will break your heart."

She said, "Love never comes easy

And miracles mostly come hard." She said:

CHORUS

May used to play the piano

And sing the old songs from the war

There was always music on the radio

And the records she bought at the store

And sometimes they swore he was listening

Though of course there was no way to know

Maybe he was flying in his own blue sky

Where no one else would ever go
Maybe he was lost in a forest
Where demons and woodspirits dwell
But for sixteen years he had never spoke a word
Never taken one step for himself. But they said:
CHORUS

Along about three in the morning
A ripple of music broke the night
Joe's fallen asleep at the TV again
May reached over to turn on the light
But the music kept getting louder
And the TV was quiet and cold
Leslie was playing the piano
And his fingers were agile and bold
A Tchaikovsky piano concerto
Like water breaking over a dam
A river of ecstasy flowed through his hands
And each note cried out, "I am." Because
CHORUS

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