

## Everyone A Puzzle Lover

10,000 Maniacs

why are some men born  
with minds that earn degrees  
the loving cups  
gilded plaques  
grace their study walls  
hide the cracks  
while their genius is turned  
to works of tyranny then  
off to market to market  
go selling these

with words so fiery and persuasive  
they steal cunningly  
riches no one can exceed

and why are some men born  
with a fate of poverty  
one firm bed  
for a swollen back  
year by year  
the bodies wracked while  
their obedience is had  
with gradual defeat  
by the pace by the pace  
and the urgency

through a muddled thought  
they phrase it  
God knows we're deceived  
barter for  
what they need

and where they go  
disdain and jeering  
for fools to call  
the noble peasantry

o how it puzzles me

I pressed flat the accordion pleats  
that had gathered in his cotton sleeves  
while he thumbed  
yes thumbed I wouldn't say caressed

the final piece  
a mountain's crest  
soon to reply assuredly

o for man aged ninety years  
no words to waste on sermons  
he'd be pleased to answer  
short and sincere

girl there's a nonsense  
in all these heaven measures  
it's a heathen creed  
so your grandma says

but better to live by...  
drink it all in before it's dry

he ended there with a rattle  
cough cough  
I took away the long gone cold coffee cup  
as a trail of Camel ashes fell  
on the floor