

Cactus in a Coffee Can

Blaine Larsen

She had the window and I had the aisle
She looked twenty-five but she was shakin' like a child
When we took off
I looked over and clutched in her hands
Was this cactus in a coffee can
She was holdin' that thing like it was all that she had
She smiled at me but I could tell she was sad

Somewhere over Denver I asked her her name
She said, Elena, then told me she came
From Santa Fe
She ordered a drink and a wall came down
She started talkin' and the pain poured out
She told me a story I'll never forget
She had me in tears when she looked at me and said

My mama's first love was crack
She made her livin' lyin' on her back
She gave me away on the day that I was born

She said, I spent the last ten years trackin' her down
Y'know it just don't seem fair that when I finally found
Her she was almost gone
We had two weeks together to laugh and to cry
Two weeks to say hello and goodbye

She gave me this cactus, said it's kinda like me
It'll hurt you to hold it but it blooms every spring
She said, I'm on my way back to New Mexico
Was gonna scatter her ashes where the desert winds blow
But I came up with a better plan
I'm gonna keep 'em in the bottom of this coffee can

My mama was a tortured soul
But I still love her even though
She gave me away on the day that I was born

The plane touched down and we both got off
I took her hand and said sorry for your loss
She said thanks for listening, for being here
I've been wantin' to talk about her for so many years
Now, I'll probably never see Elena again
We met as strangers and parted as friends
As we waved goodbye I was sure of one thing
There'll be a flower on that cactus come next Spring