

Paint the Red Rose Blue

Elvis Costello

He was the youngest of five and the only son
He called his wife by a nickname as his father had done
Not the root
Not the branch
Not the flower or stem
He had the wildest of dreams but he rarely remembered them

Turn the red rose
Paint the red rose blue
What was he to do?
But turn the red rose

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What was he to do?
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The words that came to him
Both the lies and the threats
They arrived all too easily
But they ran up some debts
From the thunder of a pulpit
To the whispers of a lover
'Til he found that he couldn't tell one from the other

Turn the red rose
Paint the red rose blue
What are we to do?
But paint the red rose

Turn the red rose
Paint the red rose blue
What are we to do?
But paint the red rose

He haunted the shadows
And waited until
They had secrets to sell him
And some practical skill

Theatrical blood is convenient to spill
He turned on the light switch and watched her undress
Oh, you'd never guess
What came next, unless

He said "All of these hours that I've skulked in the shade
The sun never struck me or made me afraid
Now she and I share unspeakable pain
I have to believe in something, in anything"

Turn the red rose
Paint the red rose blue
There's nothing left to do but paint the red rose

Paint the red rose
Turn the red rose blue
There's nothing left to do but paint the red rose, blue