

This Old Town

Janis Ian

This old town should have burned down in 1929
That's when we stood in line
Waiting for our soup while swallowing our pride
This old town should have burned down in 1931
When the rain refused to come
Air filled up our bellies
Dust filled up our lungs
And we thought our time had come

But this old town was built by hand
In the dustbowl of the motherland
There must be rock beneath this sand
I'll be damned – this town still stands

This old town should have burned down in 1944
When the last man went to war
They came back different, if they came back at all
This old town should have burned down in 1956
That's when the twister hit
All our hopes lay buried beneath the boards and bricks
And we almost called it quits

But this old town was built by hand
In the dustbowl of the motherland
There must be rock beneath this sand
I'll be damned – this town still stands

Somewhere in the distance
The city lights do shine
Sidewalks gleam with neon dreams
That call from time to time
When my children's children ask me
Why I didn't go
I'll say – the heart of any town
Is the people that you've known
And they always call you home

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In the dustbowl of the motherland
There is be rock beneath the sand
I'll be damned – this town still stands