Goodbye Pork Pie Hat

Joni Mitchell

When Charlie speaks of Lester
You know someone great has gone
The sweetest swinging music man
Had a Porkie Pig hat on
A bright star
In a dark age
When the bandstands had a thousand ways
Of refusing a black man admission
Black musician
In those days they put him in an
Underdog position
Cellars and chitlins'

When Lester took him a wife
Arm and arm went black and white
And some saw red
And drove them from their hotel bed
Love is never easy
It's short of the hope we have for happiness
Bright and sweet
Love is never easy street!
Now we are black and white
Embracing out in the lunatic New York night
It's very unlikely we'll be driven out of town
Or be hung in a tree
That's unlikely!

Tonight these crowds Are happy and loud Children are up dancing in the streets In the sticky middle of the night Summer serenade Of taxi horns and fun arcades Where right or wrong Under neon Every feeling goes on! For you and me The sidewalk is a history book And a circus Dangerous clowns Balancing dreadful and wonderful perceptions They have been handed Day by day Generations on down

We came up from the subway
On the music midnight makes
To Charlie's bass and Lester's saxophone
In taxi horns and brakes
Now Charlie's down in Mexico
With the healers
So the sidewalk leads us with music
To two little dancers
Dancing outside a black bar
There's a sign up on the awning
It says "Pork Pie Hat Bar"
And there's black babies dancing

Tonight