Rehearsals For Retirement

The days grow longer for smaller prizes I feel a stranger to all surprises You can have them I don't want them I wear a different kind of garment In my rehearsals for retirement

The lights are cold again they dance below me I turn to old friends they do not know me All but the beggar he remembers I put a penny down for payment In my rehearsals for retirement

Had I known the end would end in laughter I tell my daughter it doesn't matter

The stage is tainted with empty voices The ladies painted they have no choices I take my colors from the stable They lie in tatters by the tournament In my rehearsals for retirement

Where are the armies who killed a country And turned a strong man into a baby No comes the rabble they are welcome I wait in anger and amusement In my rehearsals for retirement

Had I known the end would end in laughter Still I tell my daughter that it doesn't matter

Farewell my own true love, farewell my fancy Are you still owing me love, though you failed me But one last gesture for her pleasure I'll paint your memory on the monument In my rehearsals for retirement

Phil Ochs