

Understudies

The Hold Steady

In the window of the storefront
There's a mugshot for a manhunt
And those cakes all decorated with cartoons

Piñatas shaped like parrots
Secrets leaking from the gas tanks
In the back while they were twisting up balloons

The helium was noble
And the nitrous was obnoxious
And the neon lit the stage
For the patrons in their boxes

And the scarecrow stepped on set
He stumbled then recovered
Started on his steps then said whatever

This is showbiz
Hit the spotlight
If you really want to dance then put your shoes on

And the diamond
In his tie pin
Was blinking like an isolated neutron

He said it's perfect when you're finally performing
But all this waiting around just gets so boring

When the show is over
Then a people in a theater
Stand up and start to clap
Try to take this whole thing back

But the night is just beginning
For the actor and the gaffer
He's taking off his makeup
And they meet up by the back door

In the alley there's an taxi
When they get in it starts moving
And the driver gets a feeling
That he knows just where they're going

And it's quiet and he listens
To the actor the gaffer
Discuss the things they're getting
And where they're going after

And if 4am's the night time or the morning?
It's hard to get to sleep after performing
When a star is born the habit begins forming
It's hard to get to sleep after performing

The adrenaline it kicks in
When the stagehand hits the curtain
It's exciting when you're working
You get to be a different person

But later when it's over
And they're sweeping up the lobby
And you're still on that wavelength
And it's sometimes hard to shake it

The bakery is a business
That's pretty unsuspecting
They're busy on the third shift
And the doors are always open

The actor and the gaffer
They enter through the kitchen
When the baker sees them coming
He starts taking off his apron

Now it's showtime
Hit the spotlights
But the gaffer never turned up
And his phone's been dead since last night

Now it's showtime (Now it's showtime)
Cue the dancers (Cue the dancers)
The director phones the actor
But the actor doesn't answer

Call the back up (Call the back up)
Get the new guy (Get the new guy)
They're pacing around backstage
Trying to brush up on their lines

The understudy (The understudy)
Plays the savior (Plays the savior)
Comes in and does the part
Without the dangerous behavior

But when a star is born the habit begins forming
It's hard to get to sleep after performing
Is 4am the night time or the morning?
It's hard to get to sleep after performing