

## Bittersweet Symphony

The Verve | Study #1

Cause it's a bittersweet symphony this life  
Trying to make ends meet, you're a slave to the  
money then you die.

I'll take you down the only road I've ever been  
down

You know the one that takes you to the places  
where all the veins meet, yeah.

No change, I can't change, I can't change, I can't  
change,

But I'm here in my mold, I am here in my mold.  
But I'm a million different people from one day to  
the next

I can't change my mold, no, no, no, no, no, no, no

Well I never pray,

But tonight I'm on my knees, yeah.

I need to hear some sounds that recognize the pain  
in me, yeah.

I let the melody shine, let it cleanse my mind, I feel  
free now.

But the airwaves are clean and there's nobody  
singing to me now.

No change, I can't change, I can't change, I can't  
change,

But I'm here in my mold, I am here in my mold.  
And I'm a million different people from one day to  
the next

I can't change my mold, no, no, no, no, no, no, no

Cause it's a bittersweet symphony this life.

Trying to make ends meet, trying to find some  
money then you die.

I'll take you down the only road I've ever been  
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You know the one that takes you to the places  
where all the veins meet, yeah.

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but I'm here in my mold, I am here in my mold.  
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I can't change my mold, no, no, no, no, no, no, no

I can't change my mold, no, no, no, no, no, no, no

I can't change my mold, no, no, no, no, no, no, no

It just sex and violence melody and silence

It just sex and violence melody and silence (I'll take  
you down the only road I've ever been down)

It's just sex and violence melody and silence

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It's just sex and violence melody and silence (I'll

take you down the only road I've ever been down)

It's just sex and violence melody and silence....

**Song's Meaning:** This song is about the feeling of being trapped and powerless to change your behavior or your life due to circumstances beyond your control. It is about the sense of desperation you feel as your life passes before your eyes and you struggle unsuccessfully to control and shape it. It is about the perpetual conflict between the path you want to follow and the path you are compelled to follow.

Walking down a busy London street is a metaphor for how he feels about his life. He walks down the street and is almost hit by a passing car, runs into people, walks over a car hood that is in his path... As a result everyone is annoyed — even angry with him. When a young woman confronts him physically he calmly and resolutely moves forward along his path without a trace of animosity or anger.

People are critical and disdainful of the path he is walking — insisting he should be able to avoid these obstacles— to choose a better, safer and more conscientious path to walk. But he feels completely powerless to change his speed and direction. His path is mandated and not chosen by him.

He knows emphatically that he could be different — be a better person and live a different, more meaningful life. He knows if it were merely up to him he could change (“I can change, I can change, I can change”), but the circumstances of his life have cast him into a rigid mold that keeps him on a steady trajectory, limiting his choices.

It isn't his lack of ability, intelligence, imagination or flexibility that is holding him back (“I'm a million different people from one day to the next”) but the circumstances of the culture / world into which he was born.

He wants more meaning in his life. But the overriding importance of the pursuit of making a living is always threatening to squeeze out his uniqueness, nullify his aptitudes and mold his path to a formal structure of daily life that he had no part in designing. He wants to be a better person. Yet, he continually finds himself walking down the same familiar self-destructive paths, despite his effort to avoid them. There is never a time when he can break free of this mold because he is stuck in a pattern of behavior until he dies.

He can't accept this. Because this is the only life he will ever have, he is pressed with frequent internal anguish. He is on the verge of breaking and is walking through life in a fog. He doesn't generally pray, but he is getting desperate. He gets down on his knees to pray — if only to hear the sound his own voice recognizing the frustration he feels. Any sound of compassion - any recognition of his pain - is better than the silence.

He prays sincerely, earnestly and desperately. While he is pleading and making his case, his prayer is like a melody that helps him to feel better. It is a song that clears his mind, grounds him and makes him feel like he can break free of his mold and change his life. But it is a false hope.

When he finishes praying there is only silence. God does not answer him. The airwaves are clean without a trace of anything but static. For all his singing, no one is singing to him. He has no idea what to do and finds himself just as discouraged and helpless as before. There must be more to life than this

This experience is a microcosm for the whole of his life—a Bittersweet Symphony. There are periods of clarity, beauty and temporary relief in his life. Yet, it is all encapsulated by an overall theme that is heart rending—like waking suddenly from a warm, peaceful dream to find that you are back in cold, dark room—unchanged and unmoved by your dreams.

He can't accept the path his life has taken, but he has no choice. He will be in perpetual conflict with his situation. He is immobilized in his mold and has no choice but to continue down this path, accepting all its adverse consequences, until it the path finally comes to an end at the place "where all things meet" - Death.

## Jesus: The Sermon on the Mount

**Matthew 5** Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them. He said:

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

<sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Is it possible that...  
these aren't just two perspectives on life,  
but two realities of life, two certainties?  
And  
that all of us live within the former  
with no means of escape...unless  
someone comes to the rescue.**