

 ***Ballad of the Welfare Mother***

©Words by Pasha Gertler, music by Linda Allen 1982

She stood on the pavement, holding a rock
She stood on the pavement, still
She stood on the pavement and hurled the rock
At Welfare's window sill

The rock, it barely made a dent
"That's from a Welfare bum
Who's tired of saying thanks for a loaf
And only getting a crumb"

She stood on the pavement, holding a rock
She stood like one harassed
She stood on the pavement and hurled the rock
It bounced off the Welfare's glass

"You hold up my check again and again
And you don't give a damn
If me and my kids are hungry and broke
While it's steak for my ex-ol'man."

She paced on the pavement, holding a rock
She paced like one attacked
She stopped, took aim, and hurled the rock
And watched the window crack

"You sneer at me, sneer at my kids
When we buy food with stamps
But you never sneer at him each night
When he goes out to dance."

She paced on the pavement, holding a rock
While her sweat poured like rain.
She stopped, took aim, and hurled the rock;
It shattered the window pane

"The judge awarded the kids to me
My man was to pay support
but you protect the men who run
And the children are victims in court"

A crowd rushed out on the pavement
Backing off as she took aim
One brick in each hand and she hurled them
Right through the window pane

"You sneer at the holes in our shoes and clothes
And rip off each dime I make
And shut the doors of school in my face
Then tell me to like my fate

How's it feel to have holes in you for a change?"
She shouted through the broken glass
And the crowd on the pavement yelled with her
"Up your bureaucratic ass!"

The sirens in the distance came closer
Two cops shoved her aside
"What have you done?" they snarled at her
"A moral act" she cried

They say she laughed in the jailhouse
And sang the whole night long
While the people gathered outside
And recalled the day in song

How she paced on the pavement, holding a rock
While her sweat poured like rain
Then stopped, took aim, and hurled the rock
And shattered the window pane