

Rainbow's Edge

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A
I'm lying in bed in the dawn's grey light
D A
And I'm trying to write a song;
D A
It's one of those times when the feeling's right
E
But everything else is wrong.
D A
I wish I could have a rainbow,
E
To light up the morning sky
Esus E
Wish I could find the words to use
Esus E E A
When it's too hard to say goodbye.

D A Asus A
A little over the rainbow's edge
D E
Is a color the eye can't see
A Esus A
But I can't seem to remember
E
When my father told that to me.
D5 D A
My memory's like the rainbow,
A E
There are pieces that come and go,
A Esus A
And somewhere over the rainbow's edge
E E7 A
Is something I used to know.

I'm stuck in the rush-hour traffic jam
Going home in a winter rain,
Remembering some of our summer trips
To Tennessee and to Maine.
Eating picnic lunch by the roadside;
Hitting every tourist sight
Playing solitaire and casino
In our motel room at night.
I step off a train in Electric Town
And wonder which way to go;
Akihabara's like Canal Street
When we called it Radio Row.
Dad taught me about computers back
In the old days, when men were men
And transistors were germanium;

Writing code with a ballpoint pen.

A little over the rainbow's edge
Is a color that has no name
The clouds in the sky keep changing
And nothing remains the same.
The rainbow is only sunlight
Spread out in the cloudy air
A little like a memory
When nothing is really there.

I'm driving down out of Hecker Pass
On a winding road to the sea,
My kids in the back seat reading
Just like my brother and me.
We'd go to New York on weekends,
For museums, or just to roam;
There were sodium vapor streetlamps
At night on the highway home.

I'm standing here doing the morning chores
And trying hard not to cry
Remembering all of the things we did
In all of the days gone by.
And there isn't a rainbow this time,
But maybe before tonight
I'll remember enough of the words I need
For the song that I want to write.

A little over the rainbow's edge
Is a color the eye can't see,
But I will always remember
What my father has been to me.
But sunlight becomes the rainbow
Only after a storm has gone;
Somewhere over the rainbow's edge
I'm trying to carry on.

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The frequent references to infrared light reflect the fact that my father's field of research was infrared spectroscopy.

Electric Town is located in the Akihabara section of Tokyo. It bears a strong resemblance to Canal Street and Cortlandt Street in the days of New York's "Radio Row". Cortlandt Street was demolished when the twin-towered Pan Am building was built. For all I know Canal Street may still be there. Dad took me there the first time or two.

Hecker Pass is one of the routes over the Santa Cruz mountains from Gilroy to Monterey; the Monterey Bay Aquarium is excellent, and it's one of my family's frequent weekend destinations. Back in the old days when we lived 50 miles from New York City, we'd often go to the Museum of Natural History (my favorite) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Dad's mother lived in the Bronx on 232nd street.

I wrote most of this song about six months before my father died; we had a year between the time he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and his death.