

A Sort of Chimpanzee

Malcolm Smith

(Am) Long ago there (G) was an ape, a (F) sort of chimpan(Em)zee
(F) Sociable by (G) nature, (Am) living in the (G) trees
(Am) It's hard for us to (G) understand just (F) how this chimpan(Em)zee
(F) Became a human (G)being that (Em) led to you and (Am) me
*(C)It evolved an upright (G)posture as it (F)moved onto the (G)plain
With (C)spears and speed and (G)teamwork it (F)hunted bigger (G)game
Its (Am)numbers now in(G)creasing it (F)spread out of its (Em)range
With (F)furs and fire a(G)dapted (Em)as the climate (F*)changed*

Millenia passed in a blink, this ape spread far and wide
Africa, Australia, took Asia in its stride
Till somewhere in the middle east it settled down to farm
In the fertile crescent, and here begins the harm
*Society developed with its rules and property
And worship of the rulers at the summit of the tree
Religion told us what to do, who should live or die
Civilised but still an ape, as are you and I*

Now wars between the nations for power and for land
Grow wider and more deadly as territories expand
And the language that you speak and the god that you revere
Define who you belong to and the ones that you should fear
*You cannot choose to live apart or refuse to go to war
The king's men will enlist you and many hundreds more
And send you off to fight his fight for glory or for gain
For you are just a pawn and he won't care if you are slain*

Industrial revolution brought changes by the score
Technology of production led to more and more
Railways marched across the land, smokestacks filled the air
In mills and forges workers slaved, caught in labour's snare
*The military sought weapons more deadly than before
Millions were killed in war after bloody war
Till a weapon was invented that could surely kill us all
For more than all our lifetimes we have lived under its pall*

So now this ape controls the earth and nature's on its knees
We mine the land, we pump the oil, we fell and burn the trees
We rape the planet's oceans till fish stocks disappear
We even change the climate and pollute the very air
*But every species has its day and maybe we've had ours
To save our species' future may well be beyond our powers
Nuclear armageddon or catastrophic climate change
It's many generations since we spread beyond our range*

Repeat last four lines