

Knocking on Doors

For two afternoons I've been knocking on doors
A few hours, but at least I've done something
In Maine and New Hampshire, two so-called swing states
Though I didn't meet many swingers

I met a young college girl, barely awake
Though I knocked on her door at one-thirty
She said: "I'm just afraid, if we change leaders now
That the world will consider us weaker;
I don't really like what the President's done
But I guess that I'll probably stick with him..."
I said: "That's one opinion; can I tell you mine?"
She nodded and so I said to her:

"I think the world is waiting to see
If this country's still a democracy
If our leaders are held to account by our will..."
Was my tone condescending, my voice a bit shrill?
Did I move her to ask herself any questions
That she hadn't thought of before?
I've got no way of knowing
That's what it's like—knocking on doors

I met a man, seventy-seven years old
He invited me into his woodshop
He said: "In all my life, and I've been here awhile
I never have heard so much bullshit!"

He said: "Anyone voting that fella' back in
Here's what I'd like to do with 'em
Put a gun in their hand, send *them* off to Iraq
'Cause that's what they're deciding for others;
And son, let me tell you—that deficit,
You'll never see it paid off in your lifetime;
And what I'd like to see here before I pass on
Is an honest-to-God real third party!"

And I wanted to kiss that old codger profound
But he had a few power tools lying around
I said: "I wish they'd play you on Maine radio..."
And he talked a while more, and then I had to go
'Cause I had the rest of South Alpine to work
So I smiled past the piled two-by-fours
You meet some interesting people
Knocking on doors

I met a young teacher who'd made up her mind
No Child Left Behind had enraged her
And a middle-aged woman said: "We're so confused,
All these ads—we can't tell who to trust in..."

An elderly lady power-blowing her leaves
Who said: "Sorry but I've made my mind up;
I don't want the government sticking its nose
Into health care and raising new taxes..."
I met wives who said: "I've got my husband convinced..."
And families split right down the middle
And a cigarette-smoking young slacker who said
He'd watched every debate and considered

And often I wanted to argue and rail
And mostly I'd listen, though sometimes I'd fail
And I mentioned a few facts I thought might persuade
And though no one was rude, no big changes were made
Well, they say face-to-face has mysterious grace
Though it can feel the most menial of chores
But you never know what makes a difference
When you're knocking on doors

Now I'm done with this song
Got to move right along
Work the phones for another few hours
And hope that I learned a few lessons
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