

# Walking West on Barton Street

©Howard L. Kaplan 1981

*The real Karma Co-op in Toronto, where I have been a member, shopper, and frequent director since its founding in 1972, is actually located off Barton Avenue, not Barton Street. Although this song was written when I was serving as Karma's Treasurer, it was inspired by a conversation about director recruitment at a meeting of the regional food co-op federation, of which I was also a director at the time.*

Lively (♩=180)

The musical score is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, marked 'Lively' with a tempo of 180 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The lyrics are printed below the staff, aligned with the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

I was go-ing for a stroll, Wal-king West on Bar-ton Street,  
On a tra-gic, hot, and fate-ful Au-gust day,  
When I chanced u-pon two wo-men, And their voi-ces were so sweet,  
But they stole the best part of my life a-way.  
I was pressed in-to ser-vice, though no time I could af-ford,  
And I spent my next three years on the Kar-ma Co-op Board.

*Complete lyrics overleaf*

I was going for a stroll, Walking West on Barton Street,  
On a tragic, hot, and fateful August day,  
When I chanced upon two women, And their voices were so sweet,  
But they stole the best part of my life away.

I was pressed into service, though no time I could afford,  
And I spent my next three years on the Karma Co-op Board.

Many years I'd been a member, Walking West on Barton Street,  
Every other week I'd work there for an hour.  
But these women said to me, And their voices were so sweet,  
That the time had come to take the reins of power.

I was pressed ...

Well, I scoffed at their suggestion, Walking West on Barton Street,  
For the Board should be a model of perfection,  
But they said, be not concerned, And their voices were so sweet,  
It was hard enough just holding an election.

I was pressed ...

So, I ran and was elected, Walking West on Barton Street,  
And was secretary when we chose our roles.  
Speeches flew, and I got flustered, And their voices were so sweet,  
So I made things up to fill in all the holes.

I was pressed ...

Well received was my reporting, Walking West on Barton Street,  
So the next year I was placed in charge of money,  
But the Board thought banks were evil, And their voices were so sweet,  
So I hid the cash in jars marked "Buckwheat Honey".

I was pressed ...

In my last year I was chairman, Walking West on Barton Street,  
And I got to learn a whole new set of vices,  
Like deserting wife and family, And their voices were so sweet,  
Staying up at night to deal with weekly crises.

I was pressed ...

When my three year term was over, Walking West on Barton Street,  
The new Board said they thought it was a pity  
They'd be losing my good counsel, And their voices were so sweet.  
Would I like to be the head of a committee?

I was pressed ...

Should you ever meet the devil, Walking West on Barton Street,  
Do not let her turn your head with phrases clever,  
For the Board returned my body, And their voices were so sweet,  
But my soul stayed in the minutes book forever.

I was pressed ...