

One of a set of songs entitled *Three Distracted Women*, this number was first written for a concert tour by Anne Sofie von Otter & the Brodsky Quartet and performed by them in Paris, London, Madrid and Bologna. The songs portray a trio of women in contrasting predicaments. The first song is concerned with a vaudeville diva and her scheming understudy, and the last is about a woman living in the isolation of crumbling wealth that she compares to the life of a cosmonaut. "*Speak Darkly, My Angel*" is the central black-comic ballad that describes a wealthy divorcée who, after tiring of her younger lover at the end of the season, is considering pushing him out of the window. ELVIS COSTELLO with the METROPOLE ORKEST.

Speak darkly my angel

Or do I have to plead?
The sweetness has gone out of it
And all that's left is bitter barren greed.
A needy lover with her almost vanished liar
Entangled as the bloom is strangled by the clinging briar
That ventures out to gather in the gloom.
That perfect mouth is ruined now,
For as you turn down the corners of your smile
And cloud your dim corrupted eyes.
Just before the concertina wrecks your noble brow:
The fatal flaw I can't allow.

Depart now my angel.
The gaoler of my youth
Sends fifty thousand reasons why
I never ever try to tell the truth.
The season's over
And it's time for either one of us to go.
Stand by the window,
But don't lean so temptingly into the drop that calls below.
For if you tumble back,

I look so good in black.