

At Seventeen

Janis Ian 1975

Key: C

Chord progression: 1 – 2m – 5(7)

I learned the truth at seventeen
 That love was meant for beauty queens
 And high school girls with clear skinned smiles
 Who married young and then retired
 The valentines I never knew
 The Friday night charades of youth
 Were spent on one more beautiful
 At seventeen I learned the truth

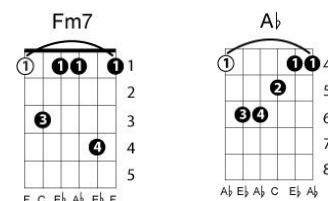
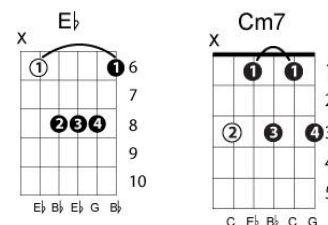
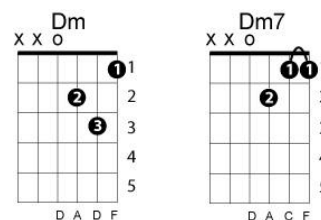
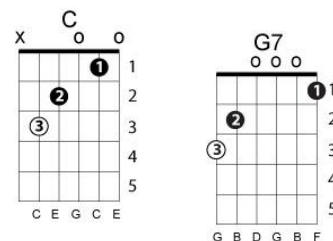
/ C - / Dm - / G7 - / C - / :

And those of us with ravaged faces
 Lacking in the social graces
 Desperately remained at home
 Inventing lovers on the phone
 Who called to say, "come dance with me"
 And murmur vague obscenities
 It isn't all it seems at seventeen

/ Eb - / Dm7 G7 / Cm7 Fm7 //
 / Ab G7 / Cm7 Fm7 / Dm7 - G7 - /

A brown eyed girl in hand-me-downs
 Whose name I never could pronounce said
 Pity, please, the ones who serve
 They only get what they deserve
 The rich-related home-town queen
 Marries into what she needs
 With a guarantee of company and haven for the elderly

Remember those who win the game
 Lose the love they sought to gain



In debentures of quality
And dubious integrity
Their small town eyes will gape at you in
Dull surprise when payment due
Exceeds accounts received at seventeen

To those of us who knew the pain
Of valentines that never came
And those whose names were never called
When choosing sides for basketball
It was long ago and far away
The world was younger than today
And dreams were all they gave for free
To ugly duckling girls like me

We all play the game and when we dare
To cheat ourselves at solitaire
Inventing lovers on the phone
Repenting other lives unknown
That call and say, "come dance with me"
And murmur vague obscenities
At ugly girls like me, at seventeen