



# Tom's Diner – Suzanne Vega - Notes



- **Activity types:** game, gap fill, vocabulary.
- **Grammar:** Present Continuous, Prepositions.
- **Time:** approx. 40 mins
- **Level:** Elementary / Pre-Intermediate.
- **Note:** Taken from her second album "Solitude Standing", Suzanne Vega wrote this in 1982. Inspired by a real life restaurant in New York (the bells referred to in the song are from the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, one block east), it simply describes what is happening in a certain moment in an *a capella* style. In 1990 two British producers called DNA added it to a dance beat, making the song hugely successful. Suzanne Vega was subsequently credited as the "mother of the mp3" – you and your students can read more about this, as well as find a link to a description of events in the song, at <http://measureformeasure.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/toms-essay/>

- 1) Cut out the following verbs to make sixteen small cards. There are thirteen verbs which students will guess, and three possible ways of demonstrating them.

<b>feel</b>	<b>hitch up</b>	<b>kiss</b>	<b>listen</b>
<b>look</b>	<b>pretend</b>	<b>shake</b>	<b>straighten</b>
<b>sit</b>	<b>think</b>	<b>try</b>	<b>turn</b>
<b>wait</b>	<b>ACT</b>	<b>MIME</b>	<b>DRAW</b>

- 2) Divide the classroom into three or four groups, depending on the number of pupils and their level. One person from each team will explain one of the verbs to his/her teammates. The selected student picks one verb at random, and one way of demonstrating it. The others must guess the verb.
- 3) Give the students a copy of the worksheet and ask them to listen and to complete the lyrics, using the correct verb in the Present Continuous or the correct preposition.
- 4) Allow students to check with each other, then correct in open class. With more advanced classes you can point out the verbs used in "somebody coming in", "someone watching me" and "on the outside looking inside" are in fact part of Participle Phrases. You can read more about this at [http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/participle\\_phrases.htm](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/participle_phrases.htm)
- 5) Note the prepositions and have a review of the adverbs of frequency.
- 6) Sing the song together.



# Tom's Diner – Suzanne Vega



Complete the song with the following verbs in the Present Continuous, and the correct prepositions.

*feel / hitch up / kiss / listen / look / pretend / shake / straighten / sit / think / try / turn / wait*

I \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ the morning  
 \_\_\_ the diner  
 \_\_\_ the corner

I \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ the counter  
 \_\_\_ the man  
 \_\_\_ pour the coffee

And he fills it  
 Only halfway  
 And before  
 I even argue

He \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ the window  
 \_\_\_ somebody  
 Coming \_\_\_

"It is always  
 Nice to see you"  
 Says the man  
 \_\_\_ the counter

\_\_\_ the woman  
 Who has come in  
 She \_\_\_\_\_  
 Her umbrella

And I look  
 The other way  
 As they \_\_\_\_\_  
 Their hellos

I' \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not to see them  
 And instead  
 I pour the milk

I open  
 \_\_\_ the paper  
 There's a story  
 \_\_\_ an actor

Who had died  
 While he was drinking  
 It was no one  
 I had heard of

And I' \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ the horoscope  
 And looking  
 \_\_\_ the funnies

When I' \_\_\_\_\_  
 Someone watching me  
 And so  
 I raise my head

There's a woman  
 \_\_\_ the outside  
 Looking inside  
 Does she see me?

No she does not  
 Really see me  
 'Cause she sees  
 Her own reflection

And I \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not to notice  
 That she' \_\_\_\_\_  
 Her skirt

And while she' \_\_\_\_\_ her stockings  
 Her hair  
 Has gotten wet

Oh, this rain  
 It will continue  
 \_\_\_ the morning  
 As I' \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ the bells  
 \_\_\_ the cathedral  
 I \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ your voice...

And \_\_\_ the midnight picnic  
 Once upon a time  
 Before the rain began...

And I finish \_\_\_ my coffee  
 And it's time \_\_\_ catch the train





## Tom's Diner – Suzanne Vega – Complete



I am sitting  
In the morning  
At the diner  
On the corner

I am waiting  
At the counter  
For the man  
To pour the coffee

And he fills it  
Only halfway  
And before  
I even argue

He is looking  
Out the window  
At somebody  
Coming in

"It is always  
Nice to see you"  
Says the man  
Behind the counter

To the woman  
Who has come in  
She is shaking  
Her umbrella

And I look  
The other way  
As they are kissing  
Their hellos

I'm pretending  
Not to see them  
And instead  
I pour the milk

I open  
Up the paper  
There's a story  
Of an actor

Who had died  
While he was drinking  
It was no one  
I had heard of

And I'm turning  
To the horoscope  
And looking  
For the funnies

When I'm feeling  
Someone watching me  
And so  
I raise my head

There's a woman  
On the outside  
Looking inside  
Does she see me?

No she does not  
Really see me  
'Cause she sees  
Her own reflection

And I'm trying  
Not to notice  
That she's hitching up  
Her skirt

And while she's straightening her stockings  
Her hair  
Has gotten wet

Oh, this rain  
It will continue  
Through the morning  
As I'm listening

To the bells  
Of the cathedral  
I am thinking  
Of your voice...

And of the midnight picnic  
Once upon a time  
Before the rain began...

And I finish up my coffee  
And it's time to catch the train