

David Bromberg "Spanish Johnny"

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Those other years, those dusty years
When we drove the big hearse through
I tried to forget the miles we rode
and Spanish Johnny, you!
He'd sit beside a water ditch
When all his herd was in
He'd never harm a child
But sing to his mandolin
He sang the old songs, the old talk
And the dealin' of our games
Spanish Johnny seldom spoke
But sang songs of Spain
And his talk with men was vicious talk
When he was drunk on gin
But those were golden things he said
To his mandolin
We had to stand, we had to judge

We had to stop him then
See those hands so gentle to a child
Had killed so many men
He died a hard death long ago
Before the roads came in
And the night before he swung
He sang to his mandolin
We carried him out in the morning light
The man who done no good
Laid him down in a cold, cold clay
Stuck in a cross of wood
And a letter we wrote to his kinfolks
To tell 'em where he'd been
We shipped it on down to Mexico
Along with the mandolin

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