

Johnny Cash

"To Beat The Devil"

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It was winter time in Nashville down on Music Row
And I was lookin' for a place to get myself out of the
cold

To warm the frozen feelin' that was eatin' at my soul

And keep the chilly wind off me and my guitar
Well, my thirsty wanted whiskey and my hungry
needed beans

But it had been a month of payday since I heard that
eagle scream

So with a stomach full of empty and a pocket full of
dreams

I left my pride and stepped inside a bar

Actually I guess you'd call it a tavern

Cigarette smoke to the ceiling sawdust on the floor
friendly shadows

Well, I saw that there was just an old man that was
sittin' at the bar

And in the mirror I could see him checkin' me and my
guitar

And he turned and he said, come up here boy and
show us what you are

I said, I'm dry he bought me a beer

Then he nodded at my guitar and he said, it's a tough
life ain't it

I just looked at him and he said, you ain't making any
money are you

I said, you been readin' my mail

He just smiled and said, let me see that guitar

I got somethin' you ought to hear then he laid it on my
ear

If you waste your time a talkin' to the people

Who don't listen to the things that you are saying?

Who do you thinks gonna hear?

And if you should die explaining how the things that
they complain about

Or the things they could be changing who do you thinks
gonna care
There were other lonely singers and the world turned
deaf and blind

Who were crucified for what they tried to show
And their voices have been scattered by the swirling
winds of time
For the truth remains that no one wants to know

Well, the old man was a stranger but I'd have heard his
song before
Back when failure had me locked out on the wrong side
of the door
When no one stood behind me but my shadow on the
floor

And lonesome was more than a state of mind
You see a devil haunts a hungry man
And if you don't wanna join him, well, you gotta beat
him

I ain't sayin' I beat the devil but I drink his beer for
nothin'
And then I stole his song
And you still can hear me singin' to the people who
don't listen

To the things that I am sayin' prayin' someone's gonna
hear
And I guess I'll die explaining how the things that they
complain about
Are things they could be changing hoping someone's
gonna care

I was born a lonely singer and I'm bound to die the
same
But I've gotta feed the hunger in my soul
And if I never have a nickel I won't ever die in shame
'Cause I don't believe that no one wants to know

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