

Kris Kristofferson

"To Beat The Devil"

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A couple of years back, I come across a great
And wasted friend of mine in the hallway of a
recording studio
And while he was reciting some poetry to me that he'd
written
I saw that he was about a step away from dyin'
And I couldn't help but wonder why
And the lines of this song occurred to me
I'm happy to say he's no longer wasted and he's got
him a good woman And I'd like to dedicate this to John
and June
Who helped show me how to beat the devil

It was winter time in Nashville, down on music city 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
Keep the chilly wind off my guitar

My thirsty wanted whiskey, my hungry needed beans
But it'd been of month of paydays since I'd 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 could call it a Tavern
Cigarette smoke to the ceiling and sawdust on the floor
Friendly shadows

I saw that there was just one old man sittin' at the bar
And in the mirror, I could see him checkin' me and my
guitar
An' he turned and said, "Come up here boy, and show
us what you are"
I said, "I'm dry", he bought me a beer

He nodded at my guitar and said, "It's a tough life,
ain't it?"
I just looked at him, he said, "You ain't makin' any
money, are you?"
I said, "You've been readin' my mail"

He just smiled and said, "Let me see that guitar
I've got something you oughta hear", then he laid it on
me

"If you waste your time a-talkin' to the people who don't
listen
To the things that you are sayin', who do you think's
gonna hear
And if you should die explainin' how the things that
they complain about
Are things they could be changin', who do you think's
gonna care?"

There were other lonely singers in a 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
'Cause the truth remains that no-one wants to know

Well, the old man was a stranger, but I'd 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, the devil haunts a hungry man
If you don't wanna join him, you got to beat him
I ain't sayin' I beat the devil, but I drank his beer for
nothing
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 explainin' how the things that they
complain about
Are things they could be changin', hopin' someone's
gonna care

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

