

Marty Robbins

"Cottonwood Tree"

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I rode into Tucson three hours ago
For supplies and a short, friendly game
A poker-wild Smitty put some new shoes
On old Dan before he goes lame

I sat in a game at The Miner's Saloon
Soon I had doubled my stake
The cards run like they'd been dealt by lady luck
They were just sealin' my fate

A young cowboy lost more than he could afford
And accused me of dealin' too smart
His draw was too slow and he fell to the floor
With three bullets close to the heart

Oh, cottonwood tree are you waiting for me
Waiting to take me away
I've done no wrong, but the town cannot see
And, so, with my life I must pay

A crowd started gathrin', the Sheriff came in
I handed him over my gun
Was then that I found out the boy I had killed
Was the town's biggest man's only son

I tried to explain I had shot in defense
It was the young cowboy or me
The crowd wouldn't listen, so they drug me out
To the limb of this cottonwood tree

Majestic'ly standing out here all alone
It's Spring and the valley is green
But I can't admire a place I don't belong
To me it's all like a bad dream

But old Dan's beneath me with new shoes and all
As they place the noose 'round my neck
Cowboys I never laid eyes on before
A-tyin' my hands to my back

Oh, cottonwood tree are you waiting for me
Waiting to take me away

I've done no wrong but the town cannot see
And, so, with my life I must pay

I see hate in the eyes of the town's biggest man
As he pulls a branch from the tree
To whip the backside of my old pony, Dan
So, he'll run out from under me

Insane, he won't listen to my last appeal
A wild grin has covered his face
As I tried to reason just how he would feel
If he were up here in my place

There's many a mountain trail I'll never ride
Green valley's I'll never see
A young cowboy died, and a man's foolish pride
Brought me to this cottonwood tree

My face is turned upward and I cannot breath
The sky's growing dark overhead
The knot's pulling tight as my body swings free
A few moments more, I'll be dead

Oh, cottonwood tree were you put here for me
Put here to take me away
I've done no wrong, but the town cannot see
And, so, with my life I must pay

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