

## **Richard Thompson**

### **"Can't Win"**

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I started to cry, they put gin in my cup  
I started to crawl, and they swaddled me up  
I got up and run, they said, "Easy, son  
Play up, play the game"

They told me to think and forget what I'd heard  
They told me to lie and they questioned my word  
They told me to fail, better sink than sail  
Just play the game

Oh, towers will tumble and locusts will visit the land  
Oh, a curse on your house and your children and a fruit  
of your hand

They said, "You can't win, you can't win  
You sweat blood, you give in  
You can't win, you can't win  
Turn the cheek, take it on the chin"

"And don't you dare do this, don't you dare do that  
We shoot down dreams, we stiletto in the back  
Oh the nerve of some people, the nerve of some  
people  
The nerve of some people, I don't know who you think  
you are  
Who you think you are"

Oh, what kind of mother would hamstring her sons?  
Throw sand in their eyes and put ice on their tongues  
Ah, better to leave than stay here and grieve  
And play the game

Don't waken the dead as you sleepwalk around  
If you have a dream, brother, hush, not a sound  
Just stand there and rust, die if you must  
But play the game

Oh, if we can't have it  
Why should a wretch like you?  
Oh, it was drilled in our heads  
Now we drill it into your head too

They said, "You can't win, you can't win  
You sweat blood, you give in  
You can't win, you can't win  
Turn the cheek, take it on the chin"

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...

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