

Robert Earl Keen "Tom Ames' Prayer"

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Everyone in Nacogdoches
Knew Tom Ames would come to some bad end
'Cause the sheriff caught him
Stealin' chickens and such by the time that he was ten
One day his daddy took a ten-dollar bill
He tucked it in his hand
He said I know that you're headed for trouble son
Your Momma wouldn't understand
So he took his Dad's money and his brother's old bay
He left without a word of thanks
He fell in with this crowd in some border town
And he took to robbin' banks
Outside the law his luck had run out fast
A few years came and went
'Til he's trapped in an alley in Abilene
With all but four shells spent
And he realized prayin' was the only thing
That he hadn't ever tried
Well he wasn't sure that he knew quite how
But he looked up to the sky
He said: You don't owe me nothin' and as far as I know
Lord
I don't owe nothin' to you
I ain't askin' for a miracle Lord
Just a little bit o' luck will do
You know I ain't never prayed before
'Cause it always seemed to me

That prayin's the same as beggin' Lord
I don't take no charity
But right now Lord with my back to the wall
I can't help but recall
How they nearly hung me for stealin' a horse
In Fort Smith, Arkansas
Judge Parker said guilty and the gavel came down
Just like a cannon shot
I went away quietly
I began to file a plot
They sent the preacher on down to my cell
He said the Lord is your only hope
He's the only friend you're gonna have son
When you hit the end of Parker's rope

And I guess he could've kept on preachin' till Christmas
But he turned his back on me
I put a homemade knife to that golden throat
Asked the deputy for the key
It ain't the first trouble I've seen before
As you already know
I've had some help from you Lord and the Devil
himself's
Been strictly touch and go
Yeah but who in the hell am I talkin' to
There ain't no one here but me
So he cocked both his pistols and he spit in the dirt
And he walked out into that street

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