

## Strawbs

# "The Hangman and the Papist"

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The village square stands quiet  
The curfew still enforced  
The streets are even clear of dogs and whores

Like some evil bird of prey  
The scaffold spreads its wings  
The people build their fires and bolt their doors

The mayor is giving dinner to the officers' wives  
His eldest son is learning how to fawn  
The barrack block is hushed and tense  
The soldiers drawing lots  
Who will be the hangman in the dawn?

The lot falls on a young man  
Who has served for but a year  
His home is in the village close nearby

He shivers at the thought of what  
He's forced to do next day  
He wonders who it is, who has to die?

And the full moon casts a cold light  
On the gloomy prison walls  
The papist walks his cell, he cannot sleep

He hears the waiting gallows creaking  
Just beyond that door  
He prays for he has no more tears to weep

The day begins to break  
A muffled drums begins to sound  
A crowd begins to gather in the square  
The presence of the hangman in his terrifying mask

Weights heavy on the minds of all those there  
The colonel reads the sentence  
Which the papist knows by heart

He has failed to show allegiance to the King  
His crime is thus with God himself  
And in His name he must hang

The papist, head held high, says not a thing

The jailer binds his hands  
And puts his blindfold to his eyes  
He leads him through the door before the crowd  
The hangman sees his victim

And the blood drains from his face  
He sees his younger brother standing proud  
The hangman tries to protest  
But is ordered to proceed

His trembling hands begin to take the strain  
His eyes are blind with streaming tears  
And he cries for all to hear

Forgive me, God, we hang him in Thy name  
Forgive me, God, we hang him in Thy name  
Forgive me, God, we hang him in Thy name  
Oh, please forgive me, God, we hang him in Thy name  
Forgive me, God, we hang him in Thy name

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