

The Man Who Would Speak True

Blitzen Trapper

I had a lover, her name was Grace
She found me down in a lonely place
She dug me out with an old jaw bone
She dressed me up for to take me home
She fed me words that I could not taste,
For I had no tongue, it had been replaced
By a green and a growing flower which grew
And I knew if I ever spoke, I would speak true

We lived together in an old hotel
A broke-down palace with a wishing well
The neighbor girl taught me how to spell
And how to steal what I could not sell
But I fed my tongue on the Devil's rum
In a roadhouse run by a godless bum
On a drunken night, with a stolen gun
I shot my lover as she made to run
The judge said, "Son, what have you done?"
But I didn't speak a word, no I didn't speak one
And the judge sent me away
And they buried my Grace, yeah, the very next day

They sent me out on a midnight train
In the rain, rolling down through the dusty plain
Four men sitting with an old shotgun,
Silver stars pinned on every one
They busted my mouth for to get at my tongue
To see just how this had all begun
So I opened my mouth like a dragon's breath
I only spoke truth, but it only brought death
And I laid those boys to rest
For the truth, in truth, is a terrible jest

For there ain't no road but the road to home,
There ain't no crops but the ones you've sown
And if you learn one thing from me
You better guard your tongue like your enemy

I came to ground in a one-horse town
On the western rim where the sun goes down
Where a branded man might start again
For to right his wrong, for to lose his sin
But my tongue kept growing, it would not cease
I grew quite weary, couldn't get no release
So I went to the magistrate and turned myself in,
Picked up a shovel, and he made the grin
And they planted me by the sea
Now the birds of the air make nests on me