

Ellis Unit One

Steve Earle

I was fresh out of the service
It was back in 82
I raised some Cain when I come back to town
I left to be all I could be
Come home without a clue
Now, I married Dawn and had to settle down

So I hired on at the prison
Guess I always knew I would
Just like my dad and both my uncles done
And I worked on every cell block
Now, things're goin' good
But then they transferred me to Ellis Unit One

Swing low
Swing low
Swing low and carry me home

Well, my daddy used to talk about them long nights at the walls
And how they used to strap em in the chair
The kids down from the college and they'd bring their beer n all
N when the lights went out, a cheer rose in the air

Well, folks just got too civilized
Sparky's gatherin' dust
Cause no one wants to touch a smokin' gun
And since they got the injection
They don't mind as much, I guess
They just put em down at Ellis Unit One

Swing low
Swing low
Swing low and carry me home

Well, I've seen em fight like lions, boys
I've seen 'em go like lambs
And I've helped to drag em when they could not stand
And I've heard their mamas cryin' when they heard that big door slam
And I've seen the victim's family holdin' hands

Last night I dreamed that I woke up with straps across my chest
And something cold and black pullin' through my lungs
N even Jesus couldn't save me though I know he did his best
But he don't live on Ellis Unit One

Swing low
Swing low
Swing low and carry me home
Swing low
Don't let go
Swing low and carry me home