

## Tom Ames' Prayer

Steve Earle

Everyone in Nacadoches just knew Tom Ames  
Would come to some bad end  
Well the Sheriff had caught him stealin' chickens and such  
By the time that he was ten

And one day his daddy took a ten dollar bill  
And he tucked it in his hand  
He said, "I can tell you're headed for trouble, son  
And your momma wouldn't understand"

So he took that money and his brothers old bay  
And he left without a word of thanks  
Fell in with a crowd in some border town  
Took to robbin' banks

Well, outside the law your luck will run out fast  
And a few years came and went  
Till 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 he knew quite how  
But he looked up to the sky

Said, "You don't owe me nothin' and as far as I know  
Lord, don't owe nothin' to You  
And I ain't askin' for a miracle, Lord  
Just a little bit of luck will do"

"And You know I ain't never prayed before  
But it always seemed to me  
If prayin' is the same as beggin', Lord  
I don't take no charity"

Yeah, but right now Lord with my back to the wall  
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  
And I went away quietly  
And I began to file and plot

Well they sent the preacher down to my cell  
He said, "The Lord is your only hope  
He's the only friend that you gonna have  
When you hit the end of Parker's rope"

Well, I guess he could have kept on preachin' till Christmas  
But he turned his back on me  
I put a home made blade to that golden throat  
And asked the deputy for the key

Well, it ain't the first close call I ever had  
I'm sure you already know

I had some help from you Lord and the Devil himself  
It's been strictly touch and go

Yeah, but who in the hell am I talkin' to  
There ain't no one here but me  
And then he cocked both his pistols and he spit in the dirt  
And he walked out in the street