

## Bentley and Craig

June Tabor

In 1952 in Croydon town  
The streets still scarred from the war  
November that year food was scarcely off the ration  
Two boys went out to rob a store  
Two young boys went out to rob a store

Christopher Craig he was just sixteen  
Derek Bentley he was nineteen  
Craig had a Colt .45 in his pocket  
Made him feel more like a man

Up on the roof of Barlow and Parker  
Somebody saw them there  
In a matter of minutes the police had arrived  
When they heard the bell you bet them boys were scared

Craig he shouted, "I've got a gun!"  
And he thought about the movies that he'd seen  
And at Fell Road station the rifles out were signed  
And police were soon back at the scene

Some of the police had got up onto the roof  
Derek Bentley knew he never could escape  
So he gave himself up and was put under arrest  
And he begged his young friend Chris to do the same,  
so people say

"Give me the gun," the sergeant said  
"Let him have it, Chris," poor Bentley cried  
And a shot rang out, tore the night in two  
On that dirty roof a brave policeman died

Guilty of this murder both these boys were found  
Craig was too young, not yet a man  
Though he was under arrest when the fatal shot was  
fired  
Derek Bentley was judged old enough to hang  
Derek, he was judged to be a man

Wandsworth jail, January twenty third  
They took that poor boy's life  
Some people shouted, some people prayed  
Some people hung their heads and cried  
And the mother, she just hung her head and cried

All of you who sanctioned that boy's death  
There's one thing left you could do  
You could pardon Derek Bentley who never took a life  
For Derek Bentley, he can never pardon you  
Derek Bentley, he can never pardon you