

# The Ballad Of Bill Thaxton

Marty Robbins

Bill Thaxton was an ex-ranger  
One of the bravest by far  
It's said that old Bill was the fastest man ever  
To pin on a ranger's star  
Stories about him were legends  
Bill was the best of the bold  
Bad men all feared him way back in his day  
But he was now growing old

Into Bill's town rode an outlaw  
He wore his gun low and tied down  
He reined in his horse and announced to the crowd  
"If you speak to me call me Sundown"  
His clothes were all dark and fancy  
And topped by a black leather vest  
Somebody asked how he came by his name  
And if he was one of the best.

The eyes of the tall stranger narrowed  
He grinned like the devil possessed  
"I never fight till the sun's going down  
And my back is facing the West"

Said he wouldn't be with us tomorrow  
He only rode in for one thing  
He only stopped by to make Bill Thaxton die  
So he could add to his fame.  
"Go give Bill Thaxton a message  
And tell him a killer's in town  
Tell him we'll meet at the end of the street  
Just as the sun's going down"

Somebody said it had been years  
Since old Bill had toted a gun  
Sundown replied that it wasn't his hide  
Killing old Bill would be fun  
The old ranger sent back his answer

"Tell him that I'm on my way  
I've never ran and I'll meet this young man  
At any time of the day"

Bill got there just about sunset  
It still hung like fire in the sky  
In just a few moments out there in the street  
Old Bill or the outlaw would die

Slowly Bill slid from the saddle  
And started to make his advance  
The sun hit the old ranger square in the eyes  
The shadows had started to dance  
Bill started talking to Sundown  
Judging his distance that way  
Their stride was the same and at just thirty feet  
Both of the men made their play

Bill's gun slipped leather like lightning

His forty-four spoke with a whine  
The sun didn't bother Bill Thaxton at all  
Because the old ranger was blind  
Six shots delivered their message  
The ranger had emptied his gun  
Bill gave a sigh when there was no reply  
He knew that once more he had won

The old ranger lowered his six gun  
He just stood there starting ahead  
Watching you'd think that old Bill didn't know  
In front of him Sundown lay dead

Bill has been gone for a long time  
But old timers still can recall  
The day the old ranger stood up to the test  
And proved he was best of them all