

Tom Ames' Prayer

Robert Earl Keen

Everyone in Nacodoches
Knew Tom Ames would come to a bad end
'Cause the sheriff caught him
Stealin' chickens and such by the time he was ten

One day his daddy took a ten dollar bill
And tucked it in his hand
He said, I know you're headed for trouble son
Your Momma wouldn't understand

So he took his dad's money and his brother's old bay
He left without a word of thanks
He fell in with this crowd in some border town
And he took to robbing banks

Outside the law his luck run out fast
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 quite knew how
But he looked up to the sky

He said, you don't owe me nothin' and as far as I know Lord
I don't owe nothin' to you
I ain't askin' for a miracle Lord
Just a little bit of luck will do

You know I ain't never prayed before
'Cause it always seemed to me
That prayin' is the same as beggin' Lord
I don't take no charity

But right now Lord with my back to the wall
I 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
I went away quietly
I began to file a plot

They sent the preacher down to my cell
He said the Lord's your only hope
He's the only friend you're gonna have son
When you hit the end of Parker's rope

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

It ain't the first trouble I've seen before
As you already know

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

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