

Round Table

Roger McGuinn

Seventeen feet across
of the hardest oak to be found
cut to the shape of the sun and the moon
shine the color of ale
and the knights of the living cross
gathered all around
raise their goblets and drink a toast
to the search for the holy grail
there was one well known for charity
and whose voice was gruff
and one who wielded a deadly sword
with the finest lace on his cuff
there was talk about a fearful ghost
the bastard son of a king
who died at the knee of his lordly host
you could hear his armor ring
still hear his armor ring
pure in heart and mind,
the key to all you seek
those were the words of the mighty king
as he looked deep into their eyes
the best of you have wine and dine
you're treacherous when you speak
you look for a way to seal your faith
but you find a compromise
you have raised your voice in vanity
you have turned your back on the poor
you have closed your heart to the written word
you defend the evil-doer
now the time is come to clean your minds
if the good is to prevail
I offer this emerald to the one who finds
our saviour's holy grail
our saviour's holy grail
banners in the sky, armor gleaming in the sun
the sounds of the horses, trumpets and drums
as they marched for the countryside
and the villagers they rode
be were silent everyone
frightened mothers closed their shades
and they made their daughters hide
and then they came upon a community
on a quiet summer's day
but these travelers to Jerusalem
saw nothing in their way
and before the night fell on that town
they had crucified the priest
they robbed and pillaged and burned it down
and kept headin' toward the east
they kept headin' toward the east
came to Israel stood shimmering in the sand
thirsty men could close their eyes
and see the milk and honey flow
the blood of the infidel
still fresh upon their hands
they knocked the ancient doorway down
like the walls of a Jericho

and they thanked their christianity
for the temple they had seized
and though no one found the holy grail
the mighty king was pleased
for he had changed the face of history
and a legend had begun
and little children were taught to see how
the good lord's work is done
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