

## The Flat Baritone

## The Gourds

Form a ring and wind and twine  
Round the ol' grape vine  
Heavy on the wire from the house  
Salt the cow and kill the calf  
Meet her lonesome with a once and a half  
Gent's on the east and ladies on the south

The solemn boy carries his silver damage  
Sold but for, the number and the image

His eyes have saddened making wine from the stems  
Empty ears longing for the wood and the skins  
Paper yellowed from the salt and the failure

When he sings he slurs  
And uses the meat of his thigh  
T-hold the book he wrote when he was lame  
So wrapped up in his flat baritone  
No castrato could woo him in from the rain

For he never raised his voice when his britches  
Was spillin<sup>1</sup> over with that honey truck richness

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Well the stylus hit the patches  
As he spit on the splashes  
And sought out the scratches in the vinyl  
'Neath a needle topped with nickels  
To keep the tunes a-goin'  
Cracklin', croonin' and crowin'

Multi-colored, hard-boiled and hidden  
In the corners, with the dogs rusty remnants  
His eyes have saddened making wine from the stems  
Empty ears longing for the wood and the skins

Paper yellowed from the salt and the failure