

The Mercy Seat

Johnny Cash

It all began when
They took me from my home
And put me on death row
A crime for which I am totally innocent, you know
I began to warm and chill
To objects and their fields
A ragged cup, a twisted mop
The face of Jesus in my soup
Those sinister dinner deals
The meal trolley's wicked wheels
A hooked bone rising from my food
And all things either good or un-good
And the mercy seat is waitin'
And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearning
To be done with all this weighing of the truth
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth
And anyway I told the truth and I'm not afraid to die
I hear stories from the chamber
Christ was born into a manger
And like some ragged stranger
He died upon the cross
Might I say, it seems
So fitting in its way
He was a carpenter by trade
Or at least that's what I'm told
My kill-hand's tattooed 'E.V.I.L.'
Across it's brother's fist
That filthy five, they did nothing
To challenge or resist
In Heaven, His throne is made of gold
The ark of His Testament is stowed
A throne from which I'm told
All history does unfold

It's made of wood and wire
And my body is on fire
And God is never far away
Into the mercy seat I climb

My head is shaved, my head is wired
And like a moth that tries to enter the bright eye
I go shuffling out of life
Just to hide in death awhile
And anyway I never lied
And the mercy seat is waitin'
And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearning
To be done with all this weighing of the truth
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and anyway
I told the truth and I'm not afraid to die
And the mercy seat is burnin'
And I think my head is glowin'
And in a way I'm hoping
To be done with all this twisting of the truth
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth
And anyway there was no proof and I'm not afraid to die
And the mercy seat is glowin'
And I think my head is smokin'
And in a way I'm hoping to be done
With all these looks of disbelief
A life for a life and a truth for a truth
And I've got nothing left to lose
And I'm not afraid to die
And the mercy seat is smokin'
And I think my head is meltin'
And in a way that's helping
To be done with all this twisting of the truth
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth
And anyway I told the truth but I'm afraid I told a lie

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