

# To the Artist

**Jerry Jeff Walker**

This song is a letter sung to a special friend of mine  
One who stopped his singing somewhere back along the line  
I wondered if he'd had enough of the rip-offs and the jive  
Or did he sing his song one night and lose the will to write  
It never was a business deal, this thing with your  
guitar  
It always seemed more a dance done deep inside your heart  
Tonight I wonder if it's true, like we felt it at the start  
That an artist truly does it best when he does it from the heart  
It seems to be much more than an art when the art  
you sell is you  
Be careful how you play the game or else the game plays you  
In the old days we'd stay up nights and laugh until  
we cried  
You said songs don't belong to us we just bring some thoughts to light  
The rule of thumb is never give the truth  
away to rhyme  
And a man can't lie when he tries to sing it betrays him every time  
We really write to understand more about ourselves  
And if we're lucky maybe then we touch someone else  
Well, I just got back from Europe friend where they hung  
on every word  
It made me feel a little better about my chosen line of work  
They asked me if I knew you wrote a lot these days  
I told 'em all I know is that you rarely ever play  
We start out singing what we like and just give it all away  
And wind up hating what we play and sit begging to be paid  
So let me say in closing friend, I want you to know  
I understand how hard it was to let your music go  
An artist must decide which parts to leave in and take out  
And if he no longer plays the game that's what the game's about

Songwriters

WALKER, JERRY JEFF Published by

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