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 writeIt 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 heartIt 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 youIn 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 lightThe 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 elseWell, 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 playWe 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 goAn 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
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