

The Sky Above and the Mud Below

Ramblin' Jack Elliott

Two men rode in from the south, a rainy autumn night
The Sky above and the mud below
They walked into the Deacon's bar, they were Mexican by sight
The sky above and the mud below
They threw a horsehair bridle down, we trade this for whiskey rounds
The Deacon slams a bottle down, the two men start to drinkin' Their hair was long and black, tied up behind
their ears
Their faces were identical, like one man beside a mirror
Then someone whispered that beats all, their wanted posters on the wall
Twin brothers name of Sandoval, horse thieves from Boquillas Now the bridle and the belts they wore were
braided gray and black
The color of a roan horse once belonged to Deacon Black
The fastest horse for miles around, he'd been stolen from the old fairground
A month ago outside of town we tracked and never found him Now the Deacon was a preacher who had fallen
hard from grace
He owned the bar and a string of quarter horses that he'd race
Yea, Deacon he could drink and curse, though he still quoted sacred verse
He was sheriff, judge; he owned the hearse, a man you did not anger The sky above, the mud below, the wind
and rain, the sleet and snow
Two horse thieves from Mexico drinkin' hard and singin' One brother he spoke English, Deac inquires as to
their work
The man says mister we braid horsehair bridles, ropes and quirts
Yea, that fine bridle we did make, a roan horse killed by leg-bone break
He's horsehair rope now; horse-meat steak, we cleaned him to the bone Well these gentlemen they were ignorant
or didn't know just where they were
The Deacon's face grew darker as he measured every word
You horsehair braidin' sons o' witches stole my claim to earthly riches
Someone go and dig a ditch, there may well be a hangin' One brother reached inside his shirt searching for his
gun
Too late, for Deac had whipped around his sawed off Remington
The twins, they raised their hands and sneered, Deac was grinnin' ear to ear
He says court's in session, hear ye hear, yours truly is presidin' Well the trial commenced and ended quick they
didn't have a hope
Deac says we'll cut your hair now boys and you can braid yourselves a rope
The Old Testament, it says somewhere eye for eye and hair for hair
Covet not thy neighbors mare, I believe it's Revelations Now the fancy horsehair bridle, it hangs on Deacon's
wall
Next to that wanted poster of the brothers Sandoval
And he twisted rope so shiny black, the artifact that broke their necks

Their craftsmanship he did respect, they shoulda stuck to braidin'
The sky above the mud below, the wind and
rain, the sleet and snow
The Deacon's hearse is rollin' slow in the first blue light of mornin'

Songwriters

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