

Prison Trilogy (Billy Rose)

Joan Baez

Billy Rose was a low rider, Billy Rose was a night fighter
Billy Rose knew trouble like the sound of his own name
Busted on a drunken charge, driving someone else's car
The local Midnight Sheriff's claim to fame
In an Arizona jail, there are some who tell the tale
How Billy fought the sergeant for some milk that he demanded
Knowing they'd remain the boss, knowing he would pay the cost
They saw he was severely reprimanded
In the blackest cell on A block
He hanged himself at dawn
With a note stuck to the bunk head
'Don't mess with me, just take me home'
Come and lay, help us lay, young Billy down
Luna was a Mexican, the law calls an alien
For coming across the border with a baby and a wife
Though the clothes upon his back were wet, still he thought
That he could get some money and things to start a life
It hadn't been too very long, when it seemed like everything went wrong
Didn't even have the time to find themselves a home
When this foreigner, a brown-skin male thrown inside a Texas jail
Left the wife and baby quite alone
He eased the pain inside him
With a needle in his arm
But the dope just crucified him
And he died to no one's great alarm
Come and lay, help us lay, poor Luna down
And we'll raze, raze the prisons to the ground
Kilowatt was an aging con of 65 who stood a chance
To stay alive and leave the joint and walk the streets again
As the time he was to leave drew near, he suffered all the joy and fear
Of leaving 35 years in the pen
Then on the day of his release, he was approached by the police
Who took him to the warden walking slowly by his side
The warden said, "You won't remain here
But it seems a state retainer claims another 10 years of your life"
He stepped out in the Texas sunlight
And the cops all stood around
Old Kilowatt ran 50 yards
Then threw himself down on the ground

They might as well just have laid, that old man down
But we're gonna raze, raze the prisons to the ground
Help us raze, raze the prisons to the ground

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