

Lyrics to 'The Mercy Seat' by Nick Cave. From Nick Cave, *The Mercy Seat* (CD, Mute records MUTE 52, 1988). Written by Nick Cave (Mushroom Music/Mute Song). Reprinted with permission.

It began when they come took me from my home/ And put me in Dead Row
Of which I am nearly wholly innocent you know / And I'll say it again
I... am... not... afraid... to... die

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 / All things either good or ungood

And the Mercy Seat is waitin' / And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearnin' / To be done with all this measurin' of proof
An eye for an eye / And a tooth for a tooth
And anyway I told the truth / And I'm not afraid to die

Interpret signs and catalogues / A blackened tooth, a scarlet fog
The walls are bad, black, bottom kind / They are the sick breath at my hind [X3]
They are the sick breath gathering at my hind

I hear stories from the chamber / How Christ was born into a manger
And like some ragged stranger / Died upon the cross
And 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 good hand tattooed E.V.I.L. / Across its 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
Down here 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
So I go shufflin' out of life / Just to hide in death awhile
And anyway I never lied

My kill-hand is called E.V.I.L. / Wears a wedding band that's G.O.O.D.
'Tis a long-sufferin' shackle / Collarin' all that rebel blood

And the Mercy Seat is burnin' / And I think my head is glowin'
And in a way I'm hopin' / To be done with all this weighin' up of truth
An eye for an eye / And a tooth for a tooth
And I've got nothin' left to lose / And I'm not afraid to die

And the Mercy Seat is waitin' / And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearnin' / To be done with all this measurin' of proof

An eye for an eye / And a tooth for a tooth
And anyway there was no proof / And nor a motive why
And the Mercy Seat is waitin' / And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearnin' / To be done with all this measurin' of proof
A life for a life / And a tooth for a tooth
And anyway there was no proof / And I'm not afraid to die

And the Mercy Seat is waitin' / And I think my head is smokin'
And in a way I'm hopin' / To be done with all these looks of disbelief
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 waitin' / And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearnin' / To be done with all this measurin' of proof
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 waitin' / And I think my head is burnin'
And in a way I'm yearnin' / To be done with all this measurin' of proof
An eye for an eye / And a tooth for a tooth
And anyway I told the truth / And I'm not afraid to lie
[repeat this verse until]: And I'm afraid I told a lie