

Beside The Rio Grande
Strawbs

[Intro]

Am Em Am G

[Verse]

Am Em
It happened rather suddenly that the Preacher came to town
Am Em
With stories from the testaments of men of great renown
Am Em
With his box of patent medicines, he swore to cure all ills
Am
From the lameness in the horses, to the children s colds and chills
Em
And he had along his Indian wife and a country music band
Am F Am Em Am G
Who sang of peace and brotherhood beside the Rio Grande

[Verse]

Am Em
Now the Preacher quickly gathered sick and poor from miles around
Am Em
Who came to him for comfort and to hear his country sound
Am Em
But the mayor thought he was trouble when he spoke against the law
Am
And he saw the growing power of the crowds that he could draw
Em
And he worried when the Preacher bought himself a plot of land
Am F Am Em Am G
To settle with his family beside the Rio Grande

[Verse]

Am Em
The saloon was pretty crowded and the stakes was a-running high
Am Em
And the girls sang sentimental songs that made us cowboys cry
Am Em
We began to criticise the Preacher, marrying a squaw
Am
And how could he associate with cripples, drunks and whores
Em
And in a crazy fit the Preacher scattered chips and winning hands
Am F Am Em Am G
And condemned it as a den of vice beside the Rio Grande

[Verse]

Am Em

Now the boys were drunk and rowdy, and mostly pretty mean

Am

Em

And we dragged him to the sidewalk and we whipped his shoulders clean

Am

Em

We said he was responsible for bringing on the drought

Am

That had burned off all the spring grass and had wiped the young herd out

Em

The sheriff would not get involved, the law could take no hand

Am

F

The Preacher had not harmed a soul

[Verse]

Am

Em

We pegged him on the hillside alongside two Apache braves

Am

Em

Who'd been given picks and shovels and been made to dig their graves

Am

Em

And when he asked for water, stood and pissed around his feet

Am

While his tongue swelled up and blackened in the burning desert heat

Em

And someone said we ought to mark the Preacher with a brand

Am

F

Am

Em

Am

G

To show that he did not belong beside the Rio Grande

[Verse]

Am

Em

Then the sky began to darken and a breeze whipped up the dust

Am

Em

And some of us were frightened, while others swore and cursed

Am

Em

And the Preacher said a few words with his final dying breath

Am

About forgiving us for what we had done to bring about his death

Em

And as the night began to fall we covered him with sand

Am

F

And left his weary bones to bleach