

Lay Your Body Down

Jan 16, 1977

When you're locked in to the Wheel of Life
And all that you can see
Is the rooster and the serpent and the swine
Do not despair, the Lord of Death
Is offering you the key
Lay your body down
Lay your body down

Em G
D C
Am G D
Em C
D Am
C Em D
C G D

You cannot tell a lusty man
He's scratching at the air
The cock of the walk lays down a heavy line
And shackles of desire
He will proudly bear
Got to lay his body down

The serpent takes his prey without
A warning or a sign
They say he'll strike a victim twice his size
But you cannot move with a loaded gun
Stuck inside your mind
Got to lay your body down

In the world of hollow men
There is little enough to choose
You cannot get no gold dust from a stone
So turn the prayer wheel slowly
For us swinish multitudes
And lay your body down

In 1977, when we lived in Florida, Massachusetts, I was writing a novel called Guardian of the Snow, the sequel to Land of Precious Snow, about a young American's exploration of Tibetan Buddhism. The rooster, serpent, and swine represent the three vices that inhibit spiritual enlightenment, while to "lay your body down" means to give up attachment. Andrée and I used to sing this with joyous abandon in the Black Stallion bar in nearby Charlemont.