

## Beggars Would Ride

Jan 22, 2016  
Harlingen

If I had a hammer and some three penny nails                      A Amaj7  
I would knock down the billboards and board up the jails              Adom7 D  
Pitch me a tent on the broad open plain Dm A Asus4 A [Dm A B7 Bm7]  
To shield desperados from rain                                              E

If I had my way and a bushel of seeds  
I would sow this whole valley with renegade weeds  
With the blossoms so big and the colors so bright  
They would stagger the armies of night

I looked for a flower of impossible blue                      D A  
I listened for tower bells ringing out true                      G D A  
I wished for a horse that had never been tied                      D A  
If wishes were horses beggars would ride                      G E D A

They say it's not your land, they say it's not mine  
And they warn you to heed the No Trespassing sign  
Who owns the river and who owns the air?  
Ask the lawyers snug in their lair

Where are the grasses that once lined the trails?  
Where are the breezes that lifted our sails?  
In a boardroom safe under padlock and key  
Protected from you and from me

*This song laments the loss of open land, common land, to the fetishizing of private property. Students of folksong may recognize echoes of Woody Guthrie; Peter, Paul, and Mary; and Blind Willie Johnson. The impossible blue flower refers to the blaue Blume of the German Romantics, which symbolized a mystical fusion of nature and humanity.*