

Stagger Lee

Tim O'Brien

It was over a hundred years ago in eighteen sixty-one
It was in the town of St. Louis that old Stagger Lee was born
Stagger Lee was a gambler and everybody knew his name
He made his living singing high low jack and a game

It was in the month of December on a cold and rainy night
Stagger Lee and Billy Bly got in an awful fight
I was standing on the corner when I heard my bulldog bark
Barking at the two men gambling there in the dark

R:

He was a bad man, talk about a bad man
Such a bad man, mean old Stagger Lee

Stagger Lee and Billy two men who gambled late
Stagger Lee threw seven and Billy swore he threw eight
Stagger Lee told Billy I can't let you go with that
You took all my money and my brand new Stetson hat

Stagger Lee he turned around and headed down the railroad track

Told Billy you better be gone from here by the time that I get
back
Stagger Lee he went on home and he loaded his fourty-four
Said I'm going to the bar room to pay a debt I owe

R:

Stag went down to the bar room and then stood on the bar room f
loor
And said nobody move and then he drew his blue steel fourty-
four
Billy cried oh Stag oh Stag oh please don't take my life
I got two little children and a darling lovin' wife

Stag said bless your children said goddamn your wife
You took my magic Stetson now I'm gonna take your life
Stagger Lee shot the bullet killed Billy oh so fast
Went straight through the heart, then it broke that looking gla
ss

R:

I never saw a sight before like the one when the smoke did clea
r
Billy was lying in a pool of whiskey, diamonds, blood, and beer
Stag had a magic Stetson but I guess it lost its power

Cause they took him to the gallows to await his final hour

R: