

Elvis Costello, Fake Tin Star

(Krall/Costello)

Things these days are better by far,
A horse can out run a motor car,
If the wheels are rubber and the rails are steel
That beast can outrun any automobile

Here's the story of progress and all the bullets they spent
On a sheet hung up in a circus tent
There's a lantern shining - it's pointing the way
This kind man has probably had his day
But they keep him around with his last vain hope
For selling tickets while spinning a rope.

They brought him down off the vanishing trail
But nobody these days wants to hear his tale
So he spends his nights leaning up at the bar
The real gone cowboy with the fake tin star.

Up on the screen there's a boy half his age
They pay him 20 times his weekly wage
For dodging phony bullets and catching blunt blades
For blowing up horses and kissing young maids.

Children cheer
Women throw flowers
Men just glower
Up at the screen
But they don't know
Just what it means
Vengeance and dreams.

Girls just swoon at the mention of him
With his face all powdered and his immaculate brim
And his hair pommaded and his fingernails clean
While old men whisper "Just look at him preen"
And outside muttering through a cheap cigar
There's a real gone cowboy with a fake tin star.