Richard Thompson, Can't Win

(Richard Thompson)

I started to cry, they put gin in my cup
I started to crawl, and they swaddled me up
I got up and run, they said "Easy, son,
Play up, play the game"

They told me to think and forget what I'd heard
They told me to lie and they questioned my word
They told me to fail, better sink than sail,
Just play the game

Oh, towers will tumble and locusts will visit the land
Oh, a curse on your house and your children and the fruit of your hand

They said "You can't win. You can't win.
You sweat blood. You give in.
You can't win. You can't win.
Turn the cheek. Take it on the chin.
Don't you dare do this. Don't you dare do that"
We shoot down dreams, we stiletto in the back
Oh the nerve of some people, the nerve of some people,
The nerve of some
I don't know who you think you are, who you think you are

Oh what kind of mother would hamstring her sons?
Throw sand in their eyes and put ice on their tongues
Ah better to leave than stay here and grieve
And play the game

Don't waken the dead as you sleepwalk around
If you have a dream, brother, hush, not a sound
Just stand there and rust, die if you must
But play the game

Oh, if we can't have it, why should a wretch like you?
Oh, it was drilled in our heads, now we drill it into your head too.

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