Bentley and Craig
by Ralph McTell

In 1952 in Croydon (town)
There were bombsites still around from the war
November that year food was scarcely off the ration
Two boys went out to rob a store.

Craig he was just about sixteen years old,
Bentley he was nineteen,
But Craig had a shooter stuck in his pocket
Made him feel more like a man.

Out on the roof of Barlow & Parkers store
Somebody saw them there.
In a matter of minutes the police had arrived
And when they saw them you can bet those boys were scared.

Craig he shouted that he had a gun
And he thought about the movies that he'd seen
Back at Fell Road they signed the rifles out
And arrived very quick back on the scene.

Some of the police got onto the roof
Bentley knew that he could not escape
So he gave himself up and they put him under arrest
And he begged his young friend Chris won't you do the same.

Give me the gun, the sergeant cried
Let him have it Chris, poor Bentley said,
But a shot rang out well it tore the night in half
Well the poor policeman was lying there dead.

Some people said it was a bullet from Craig's gun
That laid that policeman away.
Some people said it was a police marksman's bullet,
Some people said it could be a ricochet.

Both was found guilty of murder Craig he was too young not yet a man
Though he was under arrest when the fatal shot was fired
Derek Bentley was judged old enough to hang
Bentley he was judged to be a man.

Twenty-eighth of January in Wandsworth prison
When they took poor Bentley's life
Some people shouted and some people prayed
Some people just hung their heads and cried.

Oh you men on our behalf who sanctioned that boy's death
There's still one thing left to do
You can pardon Derek Bentley who never took a life
For Derek Bentley cannot pardon you

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