

Apology to Red Steagall

(10/20/1994 written on way to help Rick Ship, before daylight)

I apologize, Mr. Steagall  
For a promise that I can't keep.  
I try hard, but don't have rhyme.  
My rhyme sounds mighty cheap.

I am a cowboy, Mr. Steagall.  
No apologies for that.  
Pert near every day  
I use my cowboy hat.

Burning in me, Mr. Steagall  
Are stories that long to be heard,  
Things I've lived or heard about  
That don't come out in pretty words.

Working hard to get better, Mr. Steagall  
Shine up what I've got to say.  
My heart must beat irregular, and  
I just don't talk that way.

No sarcasm intended, Mr. Steagall,  
Real deep respect for what you do.  
Maybe when my poetry grows up,  
It will sound more like you.

I won't forget what you said, Mr. Steagall  
"Something with integrity needs to be good."  
I'll keep tryin' to make it flow and rhyme.  
We'll both know I did the best that I could.