RIVET VERDICT

THE CROWN EATS IRON

Complete lyrics / 12 songs / Both takes



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Voices: Garran Holt - male lead. Elin Vey - low female lead.

Original lyrics submitted for the twelve-song Mureka album. Each song appears once because both takes share the same lyric brief. Bracketed labels preserve the vocal assignments and performance directions; the generated recordings may vary.

Creative direction: NexusOS Music. Original AI-assisted lyrics; music and vocals generated with Mureka. Rivet Verdict and the story characters are fictional.

Listen: nexusosworks.com/music/albums/the-crown-eats-iron

Before the Bell

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Intro - exposed distorted bass, hammer rhythm builds]

[Verse 1 - Male]

Before the bell, before the dawn
I count the hands and move them on
Two at the molds and three at the wheel
Keep clear of the runners, keep hold of the steel
The steward wants his tally signed
I put the missing names behind
If every station holds its place
Perhaps today we earn some grace

[Verse 2 - Low Female]

You count the hands, I know the names
The man beside me shakes with pain
An empty peg, a coat not claimed
And nobody will say who's blamed
My brother hasn't slept since noon
He keeps his eyes upon the moon
You tell us hold another hour
Who holds the ones beneath your power?

[Chorus - Both]

The bell gets its answer before we get the sun
The fire gets its feeding before the day is done
You can count the weapons, you can count the flame
But every hand you number has a name

[Verse 3 - Male]

I learned this trade beside my father
Learned what happens when we bother
Men who never cross this floor
Except to tell us give them more
I know the weight, I know the cost
I count the ones we haven't lost
Call it fear or call it shame
I need you living through the flame

[Bridge - Female then Male]

Then look at us instead of down
No life is cheaper than the crown
I hear you, but the order stands
Then wear its weight upon your hands

[Bass break into twin guitar lead]

[Final Chorus - Both]

The bell gets its answer before we get the sun
The fire gets its feeding before the day is done
You can count the weapons, you can count the flame
But every hand you number has a name

[Outro - Female]

Remember every name

The Crown Eats Iron

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Verse 1 - Male]

A rider brings the royal seal
Another thousand lengths of steel
The steward spreads the parchment wide
As if the earth has arms to spare inside
He takes our winter grain away
Calls it the price a realm must pay
I sign because I know the sound
Of soldiers putting workers in the ground

[Verse 2 - Low Female]

You promised when the last load went
We'd see the bread the king had sent
We got a wagon full of chains
A new demand and nothing for our pains
His borders swell, our cupboards shrink
His horses drink before we drink
What victory could ever mend
The hungry mouths his victories defend?

[Chorus - Both]

The crown eats iron, the crown drinks flame
Sends back its hunger and calls it our shame
We forge its glory, we shoulder its rust
The crown eats iron, and it feeds on us

[Verse 3 - Male then Female]

If we refuse, they close the gates
If we obey, the hunger waits
I'm trying to buy another day
You pay with lives you cannot give away
The king has never seen this room
But every order brings his boot
Across the neck of every trade
That keeps him dressed in victories we made

[Chorus - Both]

The crown eats iron, the crown drinks flame
Sends back its hunger and calls it our shame
We forge its glory, we shoulder its rust
The crown eats iron, and it feeds on us

[Bridge - exposed bass, alternating voices]

More for the border
Less for the hand
More for the glory
Less for the land
How much is enough?
How long do we bend?
A mouth without a bottom
And a war without an end

[Twin guitar solo over loud moving bass]

[Final Chorus - Both]

The crown eats iron, the crown drinks flame
Sends back its hunger and calls it our shame
We forge its glory, we shoulder its rust
The crown eats iron, and it feeds on us

[Outro]

It feeds on us

Keep the Furnace Fed

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Verse 1 - Low Female]

There's a split above the eastern bay
The beam has shifted twice today
The chain is running out of true
The wheel is dragging, Garran, look at you
You see the seam, you hear the strain
You know the timber won't regain
The strength we borrowed yesterday
Call them back before it gives away

[Verse 2 - Male]

One more run, then clear the floor
I've asked for bracing twice before
They say the grain will be withheld
From every home if we deny the yield
I cannot let their children starve
I cannot change the words they carve
Into the order by my name
One more run, and I will take the blame

[Chorus - Both]

Keep the furnace fed, keep the furnace fed
The order keeps on speaking where the warning should have led
You call it one more hour, we call it borrowed breath
Keep the furnace fed until there's nothing left

[Verse 3 - Low Female]

You cannot shoulder what will fall
By writing sorry on a wall
My brother's underneath that brace
Look beyond the tally, look him in the face
His hands were steady yesterday
Now every finger shakes away
The little strength the night has left
How much longer will you bargain with his breath?

[Bridge - Male then Female]

I heard the threat, I saw the seal
Then hear the wood and see what's real
They'll punish every house we own
There'll be no houses for the dead to go home

[Bass-led breakdown]

[Final Chorus - Both, desperate]

Keep the furnace fed, keep the furnace fed
The order keeps on speaking where the warning should have led
You call it one more hour, we call it borrowed breath
Keep the furnace fed until there's nothing left

[Outro - Female]

Garran, call them back

[Sudden instrumental stop]

Names Beneath the Slag

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Intro - low melodic bass, heavy measured drums]

[Verse 1 - Low Female]

The morning has no birds in it
The yard has lost its voice
A blanket hides the little things
That never had a choice
Tavin wore our father's coat
The sleeve was patched in blue
I know it by the crooked seam
I stitched the winter through

[Verse 2 - Male]

I sent him to the eastern bay
I heard the warning plain
I thought another hour could pass
I thought we'd bear the strain
The clerk has come to count the loss
He asks about the wheel
I cannot make my mouth describe
A life as damaged steel

[Chorus - Both]

Say their names before you count the iron
Say their names before you weigh the cost
Every empty place demands an answer
Not another number for the lost

[Verse 3 - Low Female]

Tavin laughed when rain got in
He danced without a tune
He said he'd build our mother stairs
Before the coming June
Merren kept a garden book
Jory carved a chair
You will not write them out of life
Because their hands aren't there

[Bridge - Male then Female]

I should have stopped the work
You should have stopped the work
I cannot bring them back
Then do not turn away
You do not get to call this fate
Or make the timber take the blame
Stand here where their children stand
And answer to each name

[Bass solo - restrained and raw]

[Final Chorus - Both]

Say their names before you count the iron
Say their names before you weigh the cost
Every empty place demands an answer
Not another number for the lost

[Outro - alternating voices]

Tavin
Merren
Jory
We will say your names

A Smaller Kind of Cruel

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Verse 1 - Male]

You think I never fought for you
I stood where none of you could see
And took the lashes off the list
And begged them leave your families free
I kept the youngest from the night
I turned the sick toward the door
I paid for every little inch
By giving them a little more

[Verse 2 - Low Female]

A little more of whose back bent?
A little more of whose sleep gone?
You found a softer word for force
And told yourself you kept us strong
You made the punishment seem small
Beside the worse they might have done
But Tavin's place is empty now
Tell Mother what your mercy won

[Chorus - Both]

A smaller kind of cruel is still a hand around the throat
A kinder voice can give the order, still it pulls the rope
How many little bargains make a life you can't defend?
How many times before the mercy and the cruelty blend?

[Verse 3 - Male]

If I had left, another man
Would grind you harder in my place
I made a shelter where I could
I thought it mattered who you faced

[Verse 4 - Low Female]

Then stay and face the ones you hurt
Without that shelter in your mouth
Your fear was real, your choices too
We cannot build on what you leave out

[Bridge - alternating over exposed bass]

I cannot change the morning
Then change the one ahead
I cannot speak for Tavin
Then listen when we name the dead
I need a way to make this right
You need to stand inside the wrong
And hear us without asking us
To make your burden less to carry on

[Bass-led breakdown and guitar solo]

[Final Chorus - Both]

A smaller kind of cruel is still a hand around the throat
A kinder voice can give the order, still it pulls the rope
How many little bargains make a life you can't defend?
Here is where the little bargains end

Under Every Hammer

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Intro - exposed rallying bass figure]

[Verse 1 - Low Female]

A crust passed down the table
A look across the yard
A name beneath a tally
A hand against a heart
The ones they keep divided
Have counted what we share
The hurt beneath the apron
The hunger in the air
We meet before the daylight
We speak when work is done
No savior coming down the road
The many have to act as one

[Chorus - Female with worker voices]

Under every hammer, another heart keeps time
Under every silence, another voice finds mine
You can own the order, you can own the gate
You cannot make us carry this forever for your sake

[Verse 2 - Male]

The room has changed around me
The glances travel fast
I know what I am seeing
I know what I would once have asked
The steward wants the names now
He says a spark must die
I hold his empty parchment
And cannot meet his eye
I used to call it order
When no one dared to speak
Now all I hear in quiet
Is the sound of people getting weak

[Verse 3 - Low Female]

We need the hands that tend the wheel
The ones who haul the stone
The women weighing charcoal
The boys who carry home
The little that is left to eat
After the crown has had its share
Tell every worker at this fire
There is a place beside us here

[Bridge - Male then Female]

They ask me who is speaking
Tell them everyone
They ask me who commands you
Tell them we have just begun

[Bass motif expands into twin-guitar solo]

[Final Chorus - Both]

Under every hammer, another heart keeps time
Under every silence, another voice finds mine
You can own the order, you can own the gate
You cannot make us carry this forever for your sake

[Outro - workers]

Another heart keeps time

The Children's Measure

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Verse 1 - Male, controlled]

They bring a new decree at dawn
The injured lose their place
No bread for hands that cannot work
No shelter, no appeal for grace
Replace the losses from their homes
The steward says and waits
The children stand in ragged coats
Beside the measuring gates
I hold the rule against a wrist
Too small to bear the tool
He asks if he can sit a while
Before he starts to learn the rules

[Pre-Chorus - Male, rising]

His father's on the blanket list
His mother cannot meet my eyes
The steward tells me mark him fit
And something in me will not sign

[Chorus - Male]

You will not weigh a child against a blade
You will not call this debt already paid
Take back your seal, take back your claim
I will not put that order to my name

[Verse 2 - Low Female]

I waited for a softer word
Another way to bend
Another private promise
That the worse would somehow end
But you have put the measure down
Where everyone can see
And sent the children through the door
Toward their families
That doesn't lift the names you bear
That doesn't make the morning clean
But now the crown can see you stand
Beside the hands it calls a machine

[Bridge - Male then Female]

There will be soldiers at the gate
There always were, you called them fate
I cannot promise we'll survive
Then help us fight to stay alive

[Acceleration - bass and double kick]

[Final Chorus - Both]

You will not weigh a child against a blade
You will not call this debt already paid
Take back your seal, take back your claim
We will not put that order to our names

[Outro - Both]

Take your measure to the king
There are no children for his ring

No More Iron for the King

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Intro - galloping bass and double kick]

[Verse 1 - Low Female]

Close the ledger, clear the floor
No royal tally leaves this door
Stand beside the ones you know
Nobody gets left below
Give the wounded room and bread
Write the names above the dead
Every crew has got a voice
This is more than one man's choice

[Verse 2 - Male]

I know the yard, I know the strain
The weight these rafters can sustain
Keep the children from the wall
Keep a clear way through the hall
I used to shout to make you move
Now tell me what I need to prove
I'll take the place you ask me to
I know this work, I work for you

[Chorus - Both]

Not another sword, not another chain
Not another child beneath your name
Hear the hammer, hear us sing
No more iron for the king

[Verse 3 - Low Female]

They told us we were scattered sparks
Too small to trouble all their dark
But every spark has found a hand
And every hand has found a stand
This room is full of frightened hearts
Courage comes in human parts
You can shake and still say no
You can stand and let it show

[Chorus - Both]

Not another sword, not another chain
Not another child beneath your name
Hear the hammer, hear us sing
No more iron for the king

[Bridge - Male and Female trade]

Who keeps the fire?
We keep the fire
Who bears the weight?
We bear the weight
Who makes the choice?
We make the choice
Then let the whole yard hear your voice

[Fast twin-guitar duel over prominent bass]

[Final Chorus - Both and workers]

Not another sword, not another chain
Not another child beneath your name
Hear the hammer, hear us sing
No more iron for the king

[Outro]

No more iron for the king

The Bargain at the Gate

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Verse 1 - Male]

A white cloth at the outer gate
A captain asks to speak alone
He says the king remembers work
And loyalty can still atone
Deliver Elin by the dawn
The rest will keep their homes and bread
A chain of office waits for me
A softer pillow for my head

[Verse 2 - Low Female]

I've seen that look upon your face
When someone offers less despair
And asks you choose the neck to bend
As if the choosing makes it fair
Don't tell me this will save the room
Don't dress her sentence as relief
You cannot buy a future here
By making one more mother's grief

[Chorus - Both]

If your mercy needs a victim, keep it
If your pardon needs a chain, keep it
If your promise needs a body at the gate
We have heard enough of mercy served that way

[Verse 3 - Male, addressing workers]

He offered me a golden chain
To trade the voice that made us stand
He offered you a little bread
If I delivered her bound hands
I will not answer out of sight
Or make this bargain in your names
You hear the terms the same as me
You hear the filth beneath the claims

[Bridge - Male then Female]

I give you back your golden chain
Then say it where the captain hears
I give you back your purchased name
Then stand beside us through the fear
This isn't mine to trade away
Not her, not him, not anyone
No private deal above this floor
No life surrendered for a softer dawn

[Bass solo into savage twin guitars]

[Final Chorus - Both]

If your mercy needs a victim, keep it
If your pardon needs a chain, keep it
If your promise needs a body at the gate
We have heard enough of mercy served that way

[Outro - Both]

Keep it

What We Owe the Living

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Verse 1 - Low Female]

The bread is running low again
The soldiers hold the road
The room that sang together
Now argues over loads
Some want to crown a leader
Some want a name to blame
I want to hear the quiet ones
Who never get to make a claim
I have a brother in the ground
I will not call that debt repaid
Because you stood against the crown
Or finally put down the blade

[Verse 2 - Male]

I don't deserve a cleaner past
Because I chose a better day
The beam was split, the warning clear
I let the order have its way
Do not forgive me for the room
Or save my name to keep us strong
Give me the work I ought to do
And let the record hold the wrong
If we survive, I answer still
Before the people I have failed
No chain of office round my neck
No private truth behind a veil

[Chorus - Both]

We owe the dead their names
We owe the living change
A place to speak without a price
A hand that doesn't have to shake
No single voice above the rest
No wound required to prove our worth
We owe the dead their names
We owe the living more than words

[Verse 3 - Low Female]

Let every crew appoint a voice
Let every voice be called to stand
And answer when the workers ask
What has been done with their command
We need the grain, we need the roofs
We need a way to raise the young
Without a lifetime bent beneath
The weight of work that's never done

[Bass-led instrumental bridge]

[Final Chorus - Both, rising]

We owe the dead their names
We owe the living change
A place to speak without a price
A hand that doesn't have to shake
No single voice above the rest
No wound required to prove our worth
We owe the dead their names
We owe the living more than words

[Outro - Female then Male]

Tomorrow must be different
Then let us start it here

Break the Royal Seal

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Intro - galloping bass and advancing drums]

[Verse 1 - Male]

The captain lifts his sword at dawn
The ranks come down the blackened street
I know the man beneath that helm
I taught his hands to shape the heat
Bren, your father's at this wall
Your sister brings the wounded bread
The king will call your service good
And never learn the names of dead
I once mistook his word for law
And put my neighbors in the flame
Look at me and learn the cost
Before you make the choice the same

[Verse 2 - Low Female]

We are the ones who made your mail
The ones who shod the horses' feet
The ones who sent our children out
So they would not be forced to meet
The furnace with their little hands
The order you were sent to keep
Look across this open yard
And tell us who your swords will feed

[Chorus - Both]

A king can order iron
He cannot make it kneel
A hand can drop the weapon
A voice can break the seal
Look beyond the banner
See the people standing there
The crown has got an order
We have lives we will not spare

[Bridge - Male then Female, drums drop]

The captain shouts advance
One soldier does not move
Another lowers down his spear
Another finds the nerve to choose
The order comes again
It breaks against the street
No thunder from a royal mouth
Can make those hands repeat

[Full band erupts]

[Verse 3 - Both trade lines]

Open up the gate
Keep the wounded clear
Hold the officers to account
Let the whole town hear
This is not a king undone
By one heroic blade
This is many frightened hands
Refusing to obey

[Final Chorus - Both and workers]

A king can order iron
He cannot make it kneel
A hand can drop the weapon
A voice can break the seal
Look beyond the banner
See the people standing there
The crown has got an order
We have lives we will not spare

[Outro - twin guitars over bass rally motif]

For Hands That Build

THE CROWN EATS IRON / Read down the left column, then the right

[Intro - bass rally motif, triumphant full band]

[Verse 1 - Low Female]

The bell still rings above the yard
But no one runs in fear
The youngest watch beyond the gate
The mothers know they're clear
We read the names before the work
Where everyone can see
The ones who never saw this day
Are part of what we mean
No promise makes the grief go quiet
No hammer brings them back
We build a place that listens
When a worker sees a crack

[Verse 2 - Male]

I wear no chain around my neck
My station's by the door
I ask the crew what needs repair
And take my place upon the floor
The council calls, I answer
For the work and for the wrong
My hands can help the morning
But my name must carry what belongs
I watched a little boy today
Reach out to touch a finished wheel
And leave with all his daylight
Instead of learning how to kneel

[Chorus - Both]

Feed the fire for hands that build
For roofs kept dry and fields once tilled
No child beneath the weight of a blade
Let the morning judge the things we made

[Verse 3 - Low Female]

The royal orders lose their seals
The iron finds another use
For hinges, plows and wagon wheels
For homes that keep the winter loose
We haven't cured the hunger
And the kingdom won't forget
But we have learned to choose together
What we will and won't accept
There will be work tomorrow
There will be voices asking why
And no one gets to call that treason
When a worker looks them in the eye

[Bridge - Male then Female]

Who keeps the fire?
We keep the fire
Who makes the choice?
Every hand deserves a voice
Who holds the morning?
No one holds it on their own
We build it with each other
Or we leave it to the throne

[Final Chorus - Both, enormous]

Feed the fire for hands that build
For roofs kept dry and fields once tilled
No child beneath the weight of a blade
Let the morning judge the things we made

[Extended instrumental opus - 75 seconds, seamless]

[Exposed aggressive bass solo]

[Soaring twin-guitar harmonies over moving bass]

[Fast galloping full-band return]

[Decisive ringing ending, no fade]