The Gambler

Don Schlitz

F C G C C

/ / / /     / / / /     / / / /     / / / /     / / / . .

C F

On a warm summer's evening on a train bound for nowhere

F C F G7

I met up with a gambler, we were both too tired to sleep

C F

So we took turns a-staring out the window at the darkness

F C G C C

‘Til boredom overtook us, and he began to speak. \ / . .

C F C

He said, “Son I've made a life out of reading people's faces

F C F G7

Knowing what the cards were by the way they held their eyes.

C F C

So if you don't mind my sayin', I can see you're out of aces

F C G C C

For a taste of your whiskey, I'll give you some advice”.

C F C

So I handed him my bottle, and he drank down my last swallow

F C F G7

Then he bummed a cigarette and asked me for a light.

C F C

And the night got deathly quiet, and his face lost all expression

F C G C C

Said, “If you're gonna play the game, boy, you gotta learn to play it right.”
CHORUS:

C                                    F                     C
“You got to know when to hold ’em, know when to fold ’em
F                 C                     G7
Know when to walk away, know when to run.
C                                    F                     C
You never count your money when you’re sittin’ at the table
F                 C                     G             C
There'll be time enough for countin’, when the dealin’s done.”

C                                    F                     C
“Now, every gambler knows, the secret to survivin’
F                 C                     F                   G7
Is knowing what to throw away, knowing what to keep.
C                                    F                     C
’Cause every hand’s a winner and every hand’s a loser
F                 C                     G7             C       C
And the best you can hope for is to die in your sleep.”

C                                    F                     C
And when he’d finished speakin’, he turned back toward the window
F                 C                     F                   G7
Crushed out his cigarette, faded off to sleep.
C                                    F                     C
And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler, he broke even
F                 C                     G             C
But in his final words I found an ace that I could keep.

CHORUS:  X2  Tag last line to end