

Ode To Billie Joe

Billie Jo Spears

It was the third of June another sleepy dusty Delta day
I was out choppin' cotton and my brother was a bailin' hay
And at dinner time we stopped and walked out to the house to eat
And mama hollered of the back door, "y'all remember to wipe your feet"
Then she said, "I got some news this mornin' from Choctaw Ridge
Today Billie Joe Macallister jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge"

Papa said to Mama as he passed around the blackeyed peas
"Well, Billy Joe never had a lick of sense, pass the biscuits, please
There's five more acres in the lower forty that I've got to plow"
And Mama said, "It was shame about Billy Joe, anyhow
Seems like nothin' ever comes to no good up on Choctaw Ridge
And now Billy Joe Mac Allister's jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge"

Mama said to me, "Child, what's happened to your appetite?
I've been cookin' all morning and you haven't touched a single bite
That nice young preacher, Brother Taylor, dropped by today"
Said, he'd be pleased to have dinner on Sunday, oh, by the way
He said, he saw a girl that looked a lot like you up on Choctaw Ridge
And she and Billy Joe was throwing somethin' off the Tallahatchie Bridge

A year has come and gone since we heard the news 'bout Billy Joe
Brother married Becky Thompson, they bought a store in Tupelo
There was a virus going 'round, Papa caught it and he died last spring
Now Mama doesn't seem to wanna do much of anything
And me, I spend a lot of time pickin' flowers up on Choctaw Ridge
And drop them into the muddy water off the Tallahatchie Bridge