

Randall Knife

Guy Clark

My father had a Randall knife
My mother gave it to him
When he went off to WWII
To save us all from ruin
If you've ever held a Randall knife
Then you know my father well
If a better blade was ever made
It was probably forged in hell

My father was a good man
A lawyer by his trade
And only once did I ever see
Him misuse the blade
It almost cut his thumb off
When he took it for a tool
The knife was made for darker things
And you could not bend the rules

He let me take it camping once
On a Boy Scout jamboree
And I broke a half an inch off
Trying to stick it in a tree
I hid it from him for a while
But the knife and he were one
He put it in his bottom drawer
Without a hard word one

There it slept and there it stayed
For twenty some odd years
Sort of like Excalibur
Except waiting for a tear

My father died when I was forty
And I couldn't find a way to cry
Not because I didn't love him
Not because he didn't try
I'd cried for every lesser thing
Whiskey, pain and beauty
But he deserved a better tear
And I was not quite ready

So we took his ashed out to sea
And poured `em off the stern
And threw the roses in the wake
Of everything we'd learned
When we got back to the house
They asked me what I wanted
Not the lawbooks not the watch
I need the things he's haunted

My hand burned for the Randall knife
There in the bottom drawer
And I found a tear for my father's life
And all that it stood for