

Ode to Billy Joe

Paula Cole

It was the third of June, another sleepy, dusty Delta day
I was out choppin' cotton, and my brother was balin' hay
And at dinner time we stopped and walked back to the house to e
at

And mama hollered out the back door, y'all, remember to wipe yo
ur feet

And then she said, I got some news this mornin' from Choctaw Ri
dge

Today, Billy Joe MacAllister jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge

And papa said to mama, as he passed around the blackeyed peas
Well, Billy Joe never had a lick of sense; pass the biscuits, p
lease

There's five more acres in the lower forty 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 MacAllister's jumped off the Tallahatchie Bri
dge

And brother said he recollected when he, and Tom, and Billie Jo
e

Put a frog down my back at the Carroll County picture show

And wasn't I talkin' to him after church last Sunday night?

I'll have another piece-

a apple pie; you know, it don't seem right

I saw him at the sawmill yesterday on Choctaw Ridge

And now ya tell me Billie Joe's jumped off the Tallahatchie Bri
dge

And 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 Tallahatch
ie Bridge

A year has come and gone since we heard the news 'bout Billy Jo
e

And brother married Becky Thompson; they bought a store in Tupe
lo

There was a virus going 'round; papa caught it, and he died las
t spring

And now mama doesn't seem to want to do much of anything

And me, I spend a lot of time pickin' flowers up on Choctaw Rid
ge

And drop them into the muddy water off the Tallahatchie Bridge