

Broken Man's Lament

Emmylou Harris

I was once a broken man
I was once a broken fool
Lost my wife and children
To one basic broken rule

Now I live my life in silence
Though I'm not quite in a shell
I drink and listen to that song
'A Whiter Shade of Pale', oh
A Whiter Shade of Pale

I was a good shade tree mechanic
So I sent myself to school
They smoothed out my rough edges
In my hands they put new tools

The instructor, once he told me
I could work on any line
I could tune to make a diesel sing
Just like Patsy Cline, oh
Just like Patsy Cline

Well, I met my wife to be
Through my mother's best friend's son
She'd been a barroom singer
She was as good as anyone

But I asked her to stop singing
And the girl, she did not flinch
Next day she went and bought that man
A brand new crescent wrench, oh
A brand new crescent wrench

We had three fine children
As eight years went on by
And earned a supervising line
My knuckles stayed bone dry

But after supper I kept hearing her
By the kitchen radio
Singing sweet but desperate harmony
A little bit too low, oh
A little bit too low

She left three months later
I'd just come home for lunch
Note said "Easy come, hard go
I still love you so much"

She said, "I don't know if I'll be there
Or if you'll want me when I come
But if and when that happens, dear
You'd better let my sweet dream run", oh
Let my sweet dream run

Oh, oh
Oh, oh

Oh, oh

I was a good shade tree mechanic
So I sent myself to school
They smoothed out my rough edges
In my hand they put new tools

The instructor once he told me
I could work on any line
But now my diesels ain't the only thing
That sing like Patsy Cline, oh
Sing like Patsy Cline

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To one basic broken rule

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