

My Name Is Emmett Till

Emmylou Harris

I was born a black boy
My name is Emmett Till
I walked this earth for 14 years
And one night I was killed
For speaking to a woman
Whose skin was white as dough
That's a sin in Mississippi
But how was I to know?

I'd come down from Chicago
To visit with my kin
Up there I was a cheeky kid
I guess I'd always been
But the harm they put upon me
Was too hard for what I'd done
For I was just a black boy
And never hurt no one

Oh oh oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh oh oh

They took me from my uncle's house
Mose Wright was his name.
He'd later stand and, without hesitation,
Point the blame
At the ones who beat and cut me
And shot me with a gun
And threw me in the river
Like I was trash when they were done

I was sent back to my mother,
At least what was left of me,
She kept my casket open
For the whole wide world to see
The awful desecration
And the evidence of hate
You could not recognize me
The mutilation was so great

There came a cry for justice
To be finally fulfilled
All because of me, a black boy
My name is Emmett Till

Oh oh oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh oh oh

Oh oh oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh oh oh

Oh, but I'd have rather lived
'Till I was too old to die young
Not miss all I left behind
And all that might have come
Summer clouds above my head
The grass beneath my feet
The warmth of a good woman

Her kisses soft and sweet

Perhaps to be a father
With a black boy of my own
Watch him grow into a kinder world
Than I had known
Where no child would be murdered
For the colour of his skin
And love would be the only thing
Inside the hearts of men

They say the horror of that night
Is haunting Heaven still
Where I am one more black boy
My name is Emmett Till