

## Ode To Billy Joe

Roch Voisine

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 eat And mama hollered at the back door "Y'all remember to wipe your feet". And then she said "I got some news this mornin' from Choctaw Ridge Today Billie Joe McAllister jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge".

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

Brother said he recollected when he and Tom and Billie Joe 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 of apple pie, you know it don't seem right. I saw him at the sawmill yesterday on Choctaw Ridge And now you tell me Billie Joe's jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge".

Mama said to me "Child, what's happened to your appetite ? I've been cooking 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 Billie Joe were throwin' somethin' off the Tallahatchie Bridge".

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