

**ODE TO BILLY JOE**

Words and music by Bobbie Gentry

**G7**  
IT WAS THE THIRD OF JUNE,  
**Dm7** **G7**  
ANOTHER SLEEPY, DUSTY,  
**G7**  
I WAS OUT CHOPPIN' COTTON  
**Dm7** **G7**  
AND MY BROTHER WAS BAILIN' HAY  
**C7** **C7** **C7** **C7**  
AND AT DINNER TIME WE STOPPED AND WALKED BACK TO THE HOUSE TO EAT  
**G7**  
AND MAMA HOLLERED AT THE BACK DOOR,  
**Dm7** **G7**  
"Y'ALL REMEMBER TO WIPE YOUR FEET."  
**C7**  
THEN SHE SAID,  
**C7** **C7** **C7**  
"I GOT SOME NEWS THIS MORNIN' FROM CHOCTAW RIDGE  
**G7**  
TODAY BILLY JOE MCALLISTER  
**F7** **G**  
JUMPED OFF THE TALLAHATCHEE BRIDGE."  
  
PAPA SAID TO MAMA, AS HE PASSED AROUND THE BLACK-EYED PEAS  
  
"WELL, BILLY JOE NEVER HAD A LICK O'SENSE, PASS THE BISCUITS PLEASE  
THERE'S FIVE MORE ACRES IN THE LOWER FORTY I'VE GO TO PLOW."  
  
AND MAMA SAID IT WAS A SHAME ABOUT BILLY JOE ANYHOW  
SEEMS LIKE NOTHIN' EVER COMES TO NO GOOD UP ON CHOCTAW RIDGE  
AND NOW BILLY JOE MCALLISTER'S JUMPED OFF THE TALLAHATCHEE BRIDGE.  
  
BROTHER SAID HE RECOLLECTED WHEN HE AND TOM AND BILLY JOE  
PUT A FROG DOWN MY BACK AT THE CARROL COUNTRY 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 BILLY JOE JUMPED OFF THE TALLAHATCHEE BRIDGE.  
  
MAMA SAID TO ME, "CHILD, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR APPETITE?  
I BEEN COOKIN' ALL MORNIN' 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 AN' BILLY JOE WAS THROWIN' SOMETHIN' OFF THE TALLAHATCHEE BRIDGE"

A YEAR HAS COME AND GONE SINCE WE HEARD THE NEWS 'BOUT BILLY JOE  
BROTHER MARRIED BECKY THOMPSON, THEY BOUGHT A STORE IN TUPELO  
THERE WAS A VIRUS GOIN' 'ROUND, PAPA CAUGHT IT AND DIED LAST 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 RIDGE  
AND DROP THEM INTO THE MUDDY WATER OFF THE TALLAHATCHEE BRIDGE.