

Ode to Billy Joe

Written by: Bobby Gentry



[A7] It was the third of June, another sleepy, dusty, delta day
I was out chopping cotton, and my brother was bailing hay,
And at [D7] dinner time we stopped and walked back to the house to eat.
And Momma [A7] hollered out the back door "Y'all re - member to wipe your feet!"
And then she [D7] said, I got some news this mornin from Choctaw Ridge
Today [A7] Billie Joe MacAllister jumped [G7] off the Tallahatchie [A7] Bridge.

[A7] And Poppa said to Momma as he passed around the black-eyed peas
Well Billie Joe never had a lick of sense - pass the biscuits please
"[D7] There's five more acres in the lower forty - I got to plow.
And Momma [A7] said it was shame - about Billie Joe anyhow,
Seems like [D7] nothing ever comes to no good up on Choctaw Ridge.
And now [A7] Billie Joe McAllister jumped [G7] off the Tallahatchie [A7] Bridge.

[A7] And 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 [D7] I talkin' to him after church, last Sunday night.
[A7] I'll have another piece of apple pie, you know, it don't seem right.
I [D7] saw him at the sawmill yesterday up on Choctaw Ridge.
And now you [A7] tell me Billie Joe's jumped [G7] off the Tallahatchie [A7] Bridge.

[A7] Momma said to me "Child what's happened to your appetite?
[A7] Why, I've been cookin' all morning, and you haven't touched a single bite.
[D7] That nice young preacher Brother Taylor dropped by today.
[A7] Said he'd be pleased to have dinner on Sunday, oh, by the way.
[D7] He said he saw a girl that looked a lot like you up on Choctaw Ridge.
And she and [A7] Billie Joe was throwing something [G7] off the Tallahatchie [A7] Bridge."

[A7] A year has come and gone since we heard the news bout Billie Joe
Brother married Becky Thompson they bought a store in Tupello,
There was a [D7] virus going round Poppa caught it and he died last Spring.
And now [A7] Momma doesn't seem to wanna do much - of anything
And [D7] me, I spend a lot of time pickin' flowers up on Choctaw Ridge.
And droppin' [A7] them into the muddy water [G7] off the Tallahatchie [A7] Bridge.