

Ode To Billy Joe

In E – orig in F Play capo 1 to play in orig key F

E7 Bm7 E7
It was the third day of June, another sleepy, dusty Delta day
E7 Bm7 E7
I was out choppin' cotton and my brother was bailin' hay
A7
And at dinnertime we stopped and walked back to the house to eat
E7 Bm7 E7
And Mama hollered at the back door, "Y'all remember to wipe your feet"
A7
Then she said, "I got some news this mornin' from Choctaw Ridge
E7 D7 E
Today Billy Joe McAllister jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge

E7 Bm7 E7
And Papa said to Mama as he passed around the black-eyed peas
E7 Bm7 E7
"Well Billy Joe never had a lick of sense, pass the biscuits please"
A7
"There's five more acres in the lower forty I've got to plow"
E7 Bm7 E7
And Mama said it was a shame about Billy Joe, anyhow
A7
Seems like nothin' ever comes to no good up on Choctaw Ridge
E7 D7 E
And now Billy Joe McAllister's jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge

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

And Mama said to me "Child, what's happened to your appetite?"
"I've been cookin' 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 Billy Joe was throwing somethin' off the Tallahatchie Bridge"

A year has come 'n' gone since we heard the news' bout Billy Joe
And Brother married Becky Thompson, they bought a store in Tupelo
There was a virus going 'round, Papa caught it and he died last spring
And now Mama doesn't seem to wanna 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 Tallahatchie Bridge