

Bob Dylan

"The Death of Emmett Till"

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'Twas down in Mississippi not so long ago
When a young boy from Chicago town
Stepped through a Southern door

This boy's dreadful tragedy
I can still remember well
The color of his skin was black
And his name was Emmett Till

Some men, they dragged him to a barn
And there they beat him up
They said they had a reason
But I can't remember what

They tortured him and did some things
Too evil to repeat
There were screaming sounds inside the barn
There was laughing sounds out on the street

Then they rolled his body down a gulf
Amidst a bloody red rain
And they threw him in the waters wide
To cease his screaming pain

The reason that they killed him there
And I'm sure, it ain't no lie
Was just for the fun of killin' him
And to watch him slowly die

And then to stop the United States
Of yelling for a trial
Two brothers, they confessed
That they had killed poor Emmett Till

But on the jury there were men
Who helped the brothers commit this awful crime
And so this trial was a mockery
But nobody there seemed to mind

I saw the morning papers
But I could not bear to see
To see smiling brothers

Walkin' down the courthouse stairs

For the jury found them innocent
And the brothers, they went free
While Emmett's body floats the foam
Of a Jim Crow southern sea

If you can't speak out against this kind of thing
A crime that's so unjust
Your eyes are filled with dead men's dirt
Your mind is filled with dust

Your arms and legs
They must be in shackles and chains
And your blood, it must refuse to flow
For you let this human race
Fall down so God-awful low

This song is just a reminder
To remind your fellow man
That this kind of thing still lives today
In that ghost-robed Ku Klux Klan

But if all of us folks that thinks alike
If we gave all we could give
We could make this great land of ours
A greater place to live

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