

## Carla Cook "Ode To Billie Joe"

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It was the third of June another sleepy dusty Delta day  
I was out choppin' cotton and my brother was a bailin'  
hay  
And at dinner time we stopped and walked out to the  
house to eat  
And mama hollered of the back door, "Y'all remember  
to wipe your feet"  
Then she said, "I got some news this mornin' from  
Choctaw Ridge  
Today Billie Joe Macallister jumped off the Tallahatchie  
Bridge"

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

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 and gone since we heard the news  
'bout Billy Joe  
Brother married Becky Thompson, they bought a store  
in Tupelo  
There was a virus going 'round, Papa caught it and he

died last spring  
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

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