

Robert Earl Keen "Bluegrass Widow"

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It's been five years come this autumn, she remembers
well the day

The day the fever got him and took him far away
Far away from always knowing that the love they
shared was true

Far away the fiddler's bowing, the grass forever blue
It was in the dead of winter when her man first caught
the chill

And he said he heard the angels singing, "Cabin on the
Hill"

Through the springtime he was groaning
"The good times are past and gone"

By the summer she was moaning, "Old lover please
come home"

Now she stands out in the midnight, in the moonlight
all aglow

She prays to Carter Stanley, "Won't you please tell Bill
Monroe

Rather be in some dark hollow or some dark deep
shady grove

Than to be a bluegrass widow"

I started listening to bluegrass music

In Bryan Duckworth's rust red 1970 Ford Maverick

Had an eight track tape deck

And an eight track tape of Bill Monroe's Greatest Hits

We used to skip second period chemistry

Go over to the Shamrock station across the street

From the high school and get a case of Texas Pride
beer

Charge it on my dad's credit card

And get 'em to write it up as oil so dad never knew the
difference

Then we'd ride around and drink Texas Pride

Listen to Bill Monroe, soon we got to be bluegrass
experts

And we'd stop in another Shamrock station

And get another Texas Pride case

Drink that and listen to the Stanley Brothers

And then we'd go get a tape of Jim and Jesse

And it was on to the Kentucky Colonels
And Mack Wiseman and the New Grass Revival, Peter
Rowan
And finally I got the brilliant idea one day
To take all the greatest bluegrass song titles in the
world
And string 'em together to make this song right here
'The Bluegrass Widow'
Quite possibly the worst bluegrass song ever written

I did this in tribute to the Front Porch Boys
Which was a bluegrass band, I was in, in College
Station, Texas
We were a little four piece band
We played weddings and parties and out on the porch
and beer joints
And one weekend on a handful of cheap
amphetamines
We decided to go to Crockett, Texas
We entered the International Bluegrass Band
Competition
And took second place

We could play faster than anybody in the competition
The other two bands took first and third, respectively
I met some friends and went off into the night
Separated from the Front Porch Boys and met back up
with them
In the cold, gray light of dawn, as the bluegrass songs
say
They were standing underneath a giant pine tree there
In Crockett singing the rudest, most grotesque
Nastiest bluegrass songs you've ever heard in your life

I'm talking about the kind of song
Where not only is the character in the song
Dead by the end of the song but he's been
dismembered as well
And the Front Porch Boys stopped
And looked up at me just long enough to say
"We're taking bluegrass music where it's never been
before
And we're not taking you with us
'Cuz you don't have that high and lonesome sound
That bluegrass music requires"

Well, I'm not one to fight failure, I packed up my stuff
and left
The Front Porch Boys broke up three days later
When they realized I owned the PA system

"Will you miss me when I'm gone?" were his final words to her
"Darlin? think of what you've done," then replied his Knoxville girl
And the leaves had started turning when his mind began to fail
Then he broke down in a breakdown, now she wears a long black veil

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