Ode to Billy Joe  
by Bobbie Gentry (1967)

Intro: D7 . . . | . . .

It was the third of June, a-nother sleepy, dusty, del-ta day-ay-ay-ay—
I was out choppin’ cotton and my brother was bal—in’ hay-ay-ay-ay—
And at dinner-time we stopped and walked back to the house to e-e-eat.

And momma hollered at the back door, “Y’all re-member to wipe your fe-e-eet.”

And then she said, “I got some news this mornin’ from Choc-taw Ri—i--i--idge—

To-day, Billy Joe Mc-Allis-ter jumped off the Talla-hach-ee Bri—idge.”

D7 . . . . . Am7 . . . . . D7 . . . . . Papa said to Mama as he passed a-round the black-eyed pea-e-eas—
“WELL, Billy Joe never had a lick of sense. Pass the biscuits plea-e-ease—
There’s five more acres in the lower forty I’ve got to plo-o-ow——ow.”

And Mama said it was a shame a-bout Billy Joe any—how-o-ow——

Seems like nothing’ ever comes to no good up on Choc-taw Ri--i--idge—
And now Billy Joe Mc-Allis-ter’s jumped off the Talla-hach-ee Bri—idge.

D7 . . . . . Am7 . . . . . D7 . . . . . Brother said he recol-lected when he and Tom and Billy Joe-o-o—oe—
Put a frog down my back at the Carroll County picture show-o-o—ow—
And wasn’t I talkin’ to him after church last Sun-day night-i-i--ight?
And drop them
And now
There was a
Brother married
D7
A year has come and
I saw him at the sawmill yester-day on Choc-taw Ri–i–i–idge--
D7
And now you tell me Billy Joe’s jumped off the Talla-hach-ee Bri–idge.”

Momma said to me, “Child, what’s happened to your ap-pe--ti–i–i–ite?
I’ve been cookin’ all morning’ and you haven’t touched a single bite.
| G7 . . . . . . | . . . . . . | . . . . . . .
That nice young preacher Brother Taylor dropped by to---day-ay-ay.
. | D7 . . . . . . | . . . . . . | . . . . . . .
Said he’d be pleased to have dinner on Sunday, oh, by the way-ay-ay-ay---
| G7 . . . . . . | . . . . . . | . . . . . . .
He said he saw a girl that looked a lot like you up on Choctaw Ri–i–i–idge--
. | D7\ . . . . | C7\ . . . . | D7 . . . . . . .
And she and Billy Joe was throwin’ somethin’ off the Talla-hach-ee Bri–idge.

A year has come and gone since we heard the news a-bout Billy Joe-o-o--oe--.
Brother married Becky Thompson, they bought a store in Tup-el--o.
. | G7 . . . . . . | . . . . . . | . . . . . . .
There was a virus goin’ ‘round, Papa caught it and he died last spri-i-ing—ing
. | D7 . . . . . . | . . . . . . | . . . . . . .
And now Momma doesn’t seem to want to do much of any——thing-i-ing—ing
| G7 . . . . . . | . . . . . . | . . . . . . .
And me, I spend a lot of time pickin’ flowers up on Choc-taw Ri–i–i–idge--
. | D7\ . . . . | C7\ . . . . | D7 . . . . . . . | D\ 
And drop them in— to the muddy water off the Talla-hach-ee Bri–idge.

San Jose Ukelele Club
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