

# Give Me A Song

Gimme a song that tells a story  
and touches my heart,  
a song about Mama  
makin' herself a dress outta flower sacks,  
and one for Rose t'wear to school.  
She never got a day off, not even Sundays.  
Had supper on the table when daddy come home.  
A few times I saw him hug her in front of us.  
Wherever he took Mama dancin'  
we waited up as long as we could.

Daddy wanted to be a singer,  
had his guitar and all.  
He made-up a good song  
about a girl of his dreams.  
She had blue eyes and was from Texas.  
Mama said she was the girl daddy was singin' about.  
The man in his song had on cowboy boots,  
a western shirt, a pistol at his side,  
and a Ranger star on his chest.  
Peace lovin' by nature.

Daddy called his song A Lotta Woman

A smile on my lips  
but not in my eyes,

Whisperin' sweet nothin's.  
Nothin' but lies.

My eyes was wild  
till I met you  
and give my heart  
to your eyes of blue.

I swore to be true,  
as true as I can,  
because you're a lotta woman  
for just one man.

I don't run around  
from door to door.  
my cheatin' heart  
don't cheat no more.

I never thought  
I could be true,  
but I'd be cheatin' myself



if I cheated on you.

I swore to be true.  
as true as I can.  
because you're a lotta woman  
for just one man.

There's Jimmy, he weren't right,  
but we didn't know nothin' to do.  
When he got older, he was strong as a ox.  
Girls was afraid around him.  
Mama was scared he might get lost in the woods.  
She couldn't stand the thought of Jimmy,  
out there all by hisself.

Me? Ain't much to tell.  
Walking two miles to school weren't no bother.  
Eight grades in one room.  
Rose was in second.  
Me and her walked together.  
Sometimes I give her a piggyback ride.  
When she fell asleep on her desk,  
teacher let her sleep.

Teacher said I figured good.  
The world she told us about were like a dream.  
Nothin' real about it to me.  
I just wanted to get home and have supper.

Lily was three.  
She only had a diaper,  
'cept in the winter, she had a coat.

We raised Blue from a pup.  
He slept most of the time,  
and he loved to go huntin'.  
Shakin' his head, his ears flopped  
like leaves on the tree.  
Take out the squirrel rifle  
and his eyes light up,  
sniffin' and rarin' to go.  
When we lost Blue  
I didn't cry.  
I bawled.  
Only time in my life.  
Did he run off?  
Someone must have stole him.  
I miss Blue somethin' awful.

Daddy went down to the mine.  
He never saw the sun  
'cept a few hours on the sabbath.  
He was a sad, sad man and a mean drunk.  
If he stopped in a honkytonk on his way home  
to drown his sorrows in a few beers,  
look out.  
His soul was black as the coal he brung up from the earth.  
Mama waited up for him,  
Knowin' there'd be hell to pay.

The night he left he come home  
He came in and washed up.  
We ate supper and he sent us to bed.  
I heard him sayin' to Mama,

I'm sorry, but I gotta go.  
I gotta get out of here before I die.

What about me and the kids?

He said I'm sorry. Here's all I got,  
and he emptied his pockets on the bed.  
Through a crack I could see him putting clothes in a sack.

You're leavin' me and the kids without nothing?  
He begun to cry but kept on puttin' clothes in the sack.

I'm a dead man if I stay.  
I gotta get out.  
He put on his jacket,  
picked up his guitar,  
and went out the door.

Out the window I saw the old pickup  
drive away into the night,  
leaving Mama with a hole in her heart.

Mama cried herself to sleep that night.  
I heard her prayin' and cryin' at the same time.  
I knew she was on her knees by the bed.

Lord, what'll I do? What'll I do? Lord hep.  
You know the fix we're in.

The springs squeaked when she got in bed.  
I thought she'd never stop crying.  
The preacher said he prayed for us,  
but he was as poor as people in the holler.

He had his own to take care of.  
He said Jesus might help us,  
but I never saw him in our part of the country.

Mama scraped till her fingers was raw.  
She sold everything she could,  
till we didn't have nothin' nobody wanted.  
But it weren't enough.  
She opened the cabinet doors one by one.  
Ever shelf was empty.  
We didn't know where to turn.

Three months since my daddy's left,  
Floyd the sheriff's assistant, the deputy or somethin',  
came sniffin' around.  
When he grinned his mouth full of teeth  
looked like a possum.  
The preacher told us about Satan temptin' Jesus.  
I thought Floyd was Satan come to tempt Mama.

We was all hungry.  
Floyd was hungry, too.  
He set two sacks on the table  
and set down like he belonged.  
Mama looked at Floyd steady.  
She looked at Jimmy, and me,  
and Rose and Lily.  
She stared at the groceries.  
Fine'ly, she whispered,  
I'll get supper.  
She did not smile.

Drivin' through the woods in my 4x4,  
Walkin' toward the old house,  
It's hard to breathe.  
It's like carryin' a heavy weight.  
My heart was goin' like a bass drum.

Momma's gone. Jimmie's gone.  
Rose and Lily has families.  
I can't quit thinkin'  
How Mama cried the night daddy left.  
I remember her eyes of blue  
and what Mama done for us.  
I don't cry no more.  
I'm all cried out.