

## The Ballad of Bobby Lee

Bobby Lee was born in the South  
Big, blue eyes and a pretty, little mouth  
Loved to run up side the hill  
Run back down and take a spill  
Bobby's mama was tall and thin  
Raven-black hair and milk-white skin  
Loved to sing while Bobby played  
Wore a bracelet Bobby made  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Bobby's house was small and square  
Miles from just about everywhere  
Windows shined like polished chrome  
Least until his pa came home  
Rolled in slow like a thundercloud  
Dark and fierce, full and proud  
Kept t' himself till you got him riled  
Then he'd crack like lightning, quick and wild  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

When Pa was home not much was heard  
Mama got quiet as a frightened bird  
Pa'd bump Bobby from his Mama's bed  
So he listened up when Papa said  
"When you grow up, boy, you'll understand  
A man's gotta keep the upper hand  
A woman's mouth's like an open cut  
Gets real nasty 'less you keep it shut."  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Mama came home too late one night  
Slipped in quiet, Pa hit the light  
Grabbed her arm, took her to the floor  
Broke the bracelet she always wore  
Bobby's eyes could not erase  
His papa's fist on his mama's face  
The bloody flame on her milk-white cheek  
The price you pay for being meek  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Gravel flew when Pa hit the gas  
A stone cut through the fragile glass  
Night wind whistled through hole it made  
Such a mournful tune it played  
Mama held him close and tight  
Warmed his body all through the night  
Blood and tears, warm and wet  
Bitter comfort he could not forget  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

When Bobby left his mama's home  
He bragged about how far he'd roam  
But he got a job in a music store  
Stocked the selves and swept the floor  
Met a girl looking for a song  
They were making love before too long  
It was working out the way he planned  
And it sure felt like the upper hand  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

One night he opened his girlfriend's door  
Found naked lovers on the kitchen floor  
Somebody screamed, the man attacked  
Something inside Bobby cracked  
His blood had never burned so hot  
He killed her lover on the spot  
Plain to see somebody lied  
Something inside Bobby died  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Shamed and shaken, hurt and scared  
His woman cursed the dreams they shared  
He tried to hide from the thundercloud  
But her words were wicked, cruel, and loud  
When she refused his crude embrace  
His fists rained down on her tear-stained face  
One blow killed, don't know which  
Carried her out to a shallow ditch  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Brittle comfort, the warmest yet  
Lying with her, cold and wet  
Blood and tears, close and tight  
Barking dogs, blinding light  
Bobby proud on the witness stand  
"A man's gotta keep the upper hand."  
Guilty verdict, eye for eye  
Bobby Lee condemned to die  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Bobby's cell was small and square  
A long, long way from anywhere  
Cold and dark like an open tomb  
But his mama's songs fought the awful gloom  
His last day came, his last day went  
All his legal options spent  
TV cameras, a spark of fame  
Call from the governor never came  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

We strapped him down to that deadly chair  
Said he liked it, small and square  
"I just might stay here till I'm dead."  
At least that's what I thought he said  
Lightning cracked through Bobby's bones  
Reporters grabbed their mobile phones  
Headline spun the words he spoke  
"Killer's Final Words a Joke"  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me

Our job don't take a lot of skill  
Never did and it never will  
Wait for the light, throw the switch  
One of us kills but we don't know which  
Bobby's grave is small and square  
Don't know who can tell you where  
Nothing gained, nothing learned  
Another mama's baby burned  
Bobby Lee, oh, Bobby Lee  
Won't you please have mercy on me