

# A Boy Named Sue

Johnny Cash

**G**

My daddy left home when I was three

**C**

And he didn't leave much to Ma and me

**D**

**G**

Just this old guitar and an empty bottle of booze.

**G**

Now, I don't blame him cause he run and hid

**C**

But the meanest thing that he ever did

**D**

**G**

Was before he left, he went and named me 'Sue.'

Well, he must o' thought that is was quite a joke  
And it got a lot of laughs from a' lots of folk,  
It seems I had to fight my whole life through.  
Some gal would giggle and I'd get red  
And some guy'd laugh and I'd bust his head,  
I tell ya, life ain't easy for a boy named 'Sue.'

Well, I grew up quick and I grew up mean,  
My fist got hard and my wits got keen,  
I'd roam from town to town to hide my shame.  
But I made me a vow to the moon and stars  
That I'd search the honky-tonks and bars  
And kill that man that give me that awful name.

Well, it was Gatlinburg in mid-July  
And I just hit town and my throat was dry,  
I thought I'd stop and have myself a brew.  
At an old saloon on a street of mud,  
There at a table, dealing stud,  
Sat the dirty, mangy dog that named me 'Sue.'

Well, I knew that snake was my own sweet dad  
From a worn-out picture that my mother'd had,  
And I knew that scar on his cheek and his evil eye.  
He was big and bent and gray and old,  
And I looked at him and my blood ran cold  
And I said: "My name is 'Sue!' how do you do! Now you gonna die!"

Well, I hit him hard right between the eyes  
And he went down but, to my surprise,  
He come up with a knife and cut off a piece of my ear.  
But I busted a chair right across his teeth  
And we crashed through the wall and into the street  
Kicking and a' gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer.

I tell ya, I've fought tougher men  
But I really can't remember when,  
He kicked like a mule and he bit like a crocodile.  
I heard him laugh and then I heard him cuss,  
He went for his gun and I pulled mine first,  
He stood there lookin' at me and I saw him smile.

And he said: "Son, this world is rough  
And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough

And I know I wouldn't be there to help ya along.  
So I give ya that name and I said good-bye  
I knew you'd have to get tough or die  
And it's that name that helped to make you strong."

He said: 'Now you just fought one hell of a fight  
And I know you hate me, and you got the right  
To kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do.  
But ya ought to thank me, before I die,  
For the gravel in ya guts and the spit in ya eye  
Cause I'm the son-of-a-bitch that named you 'Sue'.'

I got all choked up and I threw down my gun  
And I called him my pa, and he called me his son,  
And I come away with a different point of view.  
And I think about him, now and then,  
Every time I try and every time I win,  
And if I ever have a son, I think I'm gonna name him  
Bill or George! Anything but sue! I still hate that name!