

# This River Runs Red

Ray Wylie Hubbard

My mama run off with a Bible salesman  
Daddy didn't come back from the Korean War  
My mama's mama took me in  
To save me from sin  
The kind she says sweet Jesus died for

Now one day she said "We're goin' down to River"  
Got loaded up in her old Pontiac  
"Before the next sunrise  
"Gonna get you baptized  
"And by the way, your mama ain't comin' back"

Now when we get down to the river, a man is in the water  
He's like a ghost in a suit of clothes old and gray  
There was people standin' 'round  
Yeah this Okie is Glory-bound  
He raised up his head and he began to pray

He said "This river runs red  
"This river runs red  
"This river runs red like Jesus' blood  
"We're gonna raise up the dead  
"We're gonna raise up the dead  
"We're gonna raise up these old bones from the cold cold mud"

"Let me tell you," he said, "about Revelations  
"Chariots of fire and a promised land  
"Be washed in the blood of the Lamb  
"Or else you'll be goddamned  
"Repent for the kingdom is at hand

Then the people start shouting "hallalujah"  
Come on, come on sweet heavenly host  
Old women begin to cry  
Throwing their hands up in the sky  
It was a full-tilt rapture of the Holy Ghost

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Now I got baptized that Sunday morning  
I guess it didn't take, as I look back  
'Cause when I turned fifteen

I just seemed to get mean  
And I stole my mama's mama's Pontiac

I took me a little drive up the south side of Tulsa  
I satisfied and moved in with a woman, sweet Lorraine  
Talkin' tough and breaking rules  
Bein' hip, slick and cool  
At twenty-two I was doin' a little cocaine

My luck run out one night in Knoxville  
"Not less than ten" is what the judge said  
Now it happens every night  
When they turn out the lights  
I can't stop the voices in my head

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