

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.

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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!