

Shel Silverstein, Boy Named Sue

Well, my daddy left home when I was three,
and he didn't leave much to ma and me,
Just this ole guitar and an empty bottle of booze.

Now I don't blame him 'cause he run and hid,
But the meanest thing that he ever did,
Was before he left he went and named me Sue.

Well, he musta thought that it was quite a joke,
An' it got a lot of laughs from lots a folks,
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'll tell ya, life ain't easy for a boy named Sue.

I grew up quick and I grew up mean,
My fist got hard and my wits got keen,
I roamed from town to town to hide my shame.

But I made me a vow to the moon and stars,
I'd search the honky-tonks and bars,
And kill that man that gave me that awful name.

Well, it was Gatlinburg in mid-July,
and i'd just hit town and my throat was dry,
thought I'd stop and have myself a brew.

In an old saloon on a street of mud,
There at a table dealin' 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 had,
and I knew that scar on his cheek & his evil eye.

He was big and bent and grey 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!"
Yeah that's what I told him.

Well, I hit him hard right between the eyes,
And he went down but to my surprise,
Came up with a knife an' cut off a piece o' my ear.

I busted a chair right across his teeth,
And we crashed through the wall and into the street,
Kickin' and a gougin' in the the mud and the blood and the beer.

I tell you I've fought tougher men,
but I really can't remember when,
he kicked like a mule and he bit like a crocodile.

Well I heard him laugh and then I heard him cuss,
He went for his gun but 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 you along.

So I gave you that name and I said goodbye,
I knew you'd have to get tough or die,
And it's that name that helped to make you strong.

Now you just fought one hell of a fight,
And I know you hate me and ya got the right,
To kill me now and I wouldn't blame you if you do.

But you oughtta thank me before I die,
For the gravel in your gut and the spit in your eye,
'Cause I'm the son of a bitch that named you Sue."

yeah, what could I do, what COULD I do?
Well I got choked up and threw down my gun,
Called him my pa and he called me his son,
And I come away with a different point of view.

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!