

Small Fred, Letter From May Alice Jeffers

I'm an old woman typing
Old as the year, seventy-eight
Hear what I say
I was born in Laurel, Mississippi,
I live in North Carolina today
With my grandson James.
Now about the children
I had five children before the Great Depression
Five more since then.
All of them are living now
But the one that died in the war.
All the rest had children, too.
CHORUS:
Don't blame the children
Every girl, every boy,
They ain't no burden,
They're my pride and joy.
I know they're beautiful
Like leaves on a tree
And as I am growing old
They shelter me.
I have worked at every kind of job
Nursed people, preached, and sang
When I was a young woman, I built roads
I have not worked a job
In nineteen years--my grandchildren
Take care of me.
Now listen to me
Babies don't cause poverty
'Cause poverty
Is just people never paid enough for what we done.
You hear them talk--barefoot and
Pregnant. But I been barefoot
Pregnant or not.
CHORUS
I have known socialists
They stayed in my home in 1964
For the vote drive
They were like my children
I don't care if they be black or white
God bless you and all the socialists
My first husband was a Methodist
We did not drink but we did dance
When we had our family picnic
I think the white folks thought the colored
Was taking over, there was so many,
And the young men still ask me to dance.
CHORUS