

# 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