

Pam Tillis, Calico Plains

(Matraca Berg/Mike Noble)

Sweet Abilena looks out at the midwestern sky
Sweet seventeen with a faraway look in her eyes
She said, "I feel like a bird in a cage
But come September I'm flying away"
I said, "I'm gonna miss you"; then I made her promise to write

Since we were tall as the corn in the spring
We shared every secret, shared every dream
So anxious to grow in the new summer rain
And bloom like a rose on the calico plains

How could she hear as we laughed on that warm summer night
The tiny heart of the baby she carried inside
I stood beside her when September came
Watched her get married and caught the bouquet
And like those hand me down dresses she gave me
I made her dreams mine

From a seat by the window on wings made of steel
I stared at the patchwork over the fields
Where young tears that once fell like warm summer rain
Were turning to snow on the calico plains

Sweet Abilena looks out at the midwestern sky
Closer to thirty but farther away in her eyes
She holds her babies like she holds her dreams
Each night she kisses and rocks them to sleep while
She reads the letters she makes me promise to write

Sweet Abilena looks out at the midwestern sky