

Tom T. Hall, Kentucky Feb. 27, '71

There were signs beside the road like "Jesus Saves"
And "Relieve yourself the fast and gentle way"
I was lookin' for an old man who lived way back in these hills
Who just might have a story I could tell

Pretty soon the blacktop disappeared
I felt the car change to a lower gear
I took a drink of liquor just to chase away the chill
I was 27 miles from Olive Hill
Ahead I saw the bridge where I turned right
A dirt road led straight up a mountainside
I pulled up to a farmhouse I thought I had seen before
An old man and his dog were at the door

They told me this old-timer knew this land
I told him, "Sir, I just don't understand
Why the kids in this state just grow up and move away
And leave the land where they were born and raised."
He said, "Son, you can't make it on this land
Unless you're happy workin' with your hands
There ain't no kids today that wanna stay and work it out
They wanna see the things they hear about."

He said, "I cleared this whole farm off myself
And I'd work it now but time has got my health."
Then starin' out the window restin' in his easy chair
He told me what I'd really come to hear
"You know, son, people used to tell their kids
'Now, I don't want you to have to work the way I did.'
They don't and some will tell you that it's a shame
But you have to think before you place the blame."
I guess we must have talked for half a day
'Til I told him that I'd best be on my way
He shook my hand and said, "I'm glad I met you, Mr. Hall
But I guess there ain't no song here after all."