

# A Boy Named Sue

## Johnny Cash

A

My daddy left home when I was three

D

And he didn't leave much to ma and me

E

Just this old guitar and an empty bottle of booze.

A

A

Now, I don't blame him cause he run and hid

D

But the meanest thing that he ever did

E

Was before he left, he went and named me "Sue."

A

A

Well, he must o' thought that is quite a joke

D

And it got a lot of laughs from a' lots of folk,

E

It seems I had to fight my whole life through.

A

A

Some gal would giggle and I'd get red

D

And some guy'd laugh and I'd bust his head,

E

I tell ya, " life ain't easy for a boy named Sue."

A

A

Well, I grew up quick and I grew up mean,

D

My fist got hard and my wits got keen,

E

I'd roam from town to town to hide my shame.

A

A

But I made a vow to the moon and stars

D

That I'd search the honky-tonks and bars

E

And kill that man who gave me that awful name.

A

A

Well, it was Gatlinburg in mid-July

**D**

And I just hit town and my throat was dry,

**E**

**A**

I thought I'd stop and have myself a brew.

**A**

At an old saloon on a street of mud,

**D**

There at a table, dealing stud,

**E**

**A**

Sat the dirty, mangy dog that named me "Sue."

**A**

Well, I knew that snake was my own sweet dad

**D**

From a worn-out picture that my mother'd had,

**E**

**A**

And I knew that scar on his cheek and his evil eye.

**A**

He was big and bent and gray and old,

**D**

And I looked at him and my blood ran cold

**E**

**A**

And I said: "My name is 'Sue!' How do you do!

Now you gonna die!!"

**A**

Well, I hit him hard right between the eyes

**D**

And he went down, but to my surprise,

**E**

**A**

He come up with a knife and cut off a piece of my ear.

**A**

But I busted a chair right across his teeth

**D**

And we crashed through the wall and into the street

**E**

**A**

Kicking and a' gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer.

**A**

I tell ya, I've fought tougher men

**D**

But I really can't remember when,

**E**

**A**

He kicked like a mule and he bit like  
a crocodile.

A

I heard him laugh and then I heard him cuss,

D

He went for his gun and I pulled mine first,

E

He stood there lookin' at me and I saw him smile.

A

And he said: "Son, this world is rough

D

And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough

E

And I knew I wouldn't be there to help ya along.

A

So I give ya that name and I said goodbye

D

I knew you'd have to get tough or die

E

And it's the name that helped to make you strong."

A

He said: "Now you just fought one hell of a fight

D

And I know you hate me, and you got the right

E

To kill me now, and I wouldn't blame you if you do.

A

But ya ought to thank me, before I die,

D

For the gravel in ya guts and the spit in ya eye

E

Cause I'm the son-of-a-bitch that named you "Sue."

A

I got all choked up and I threw down my gun

D

And I called him my pa, and he called me his son,

E

And I came away with a different point of view.

A

And I think about him, now and then,

D

Every time I try and every time I win,

(No Chords)

And if I ever have a son, I think I'm gonna name him

A (keep strumming)

Bill or George! Anything but Sue! I still hate that name!

