Coward of the County

The Roka-Billys

Everyone considered him the coward of the county
He'd never stood one single time to prove the county wrong
His mama named him Tommy, but folks just called him Yellow
Something always told me, they were reading Tommy wrong
He was only ten years old when his daddy died in prison
I looked after Tommy, 'cause he was my brother's son
I still recall the final words my brother said to Tommy
"Son, my life is over, but yours has just begun"
"Promise me, son, not to do the things I've done
Walk away from trouble if you can
It won't mean you're weak if you turn the other cheek
I hope you're old enough to understand
Son, you don't have to fight to be a man"
There's someone for everyone and Tommy's love was Becky
In her arms, he didn't have to prove he was a man
One day while he was working, the Gatlin boys came calling
They took turns at Becky an' there was three of them
Tommy opened up the door and saw Becky crying
The torn dress, the shattered look was more than he could stand
He reached above the fireplace and took down his daddy's picture
As his tears fell on his daddy's face, he heard these words again

"Promise me, Son, not to do the things I've done
Walk away from trouble if you can
It won't mean you're weak if you turn the other cheek
I hope you're old enough to understand
Son, you don't have to fight to be a man"
The Gatlin boys just laughed at him when he walked into the bar room
One of them got up and met him half way cross the floor
When Tommy turned around they said, "Hey look! Old Yellow's leaving"
But you could've heard a pin drop
When Tommy stopped and locked the door
Twenty years of crawling were bottled up inside him
He wasn't holding nothing back, he let 'em have it all
When Tommy left the bar room, not a Gatlin boy was standing
He said, "This one's for Becky, as he watched the last one fall
An? I heard him say
"I promised you, Dad, not to do the things you've done
I walk away from trouble when I can

Now please don't think I'm weak, I didn't turn the other cheek
And Papa, I should hope you understand
Sometimes you gotta fight when you're a man"
Everyone considered him the coward of the county

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