

Vance

Roger Miller

He was born one mornin' it was cold and it was snowin'
And from the start he never had a chance
And though the doctors said he couldn't live his mama had some faith to give
And they brought him to her and his mama named him Vance
He was sick a long time then I used to sit by him
I'd rub his head he would squeeze my hand
But he never cried he'd grit his teeth and smile at me cause he couldn't speak
And that's when I began to respect the little man
And I think Vance was three right about then
He started school and one day he came home and at the doorway
I could tell the little man didn't want to come inside
He'd met a girl but her boyfriend Smitty
Had caught him walkin' home with her and nearly killed Vance
But then Vance never cried and the only thing that Smitty hurt was pride
And he said papa do you become a man when you're twenty one
And I said age doesn't make a man a man my son
He looked at me so puzzled with eyes so young and kind
And I think Vance was seven about that time
[strings]
I guess they say that first love is the very best
At least it was with Vance cause he'd scratched Becky on his desk
But Becky went with Smitty and Vance was very small
And he used to dream what it'd be like to be tall
And then a few years later Vance came in one day
And told me and his mama that he had to go away
To be fitted for a uniform and though his mama shed a tear
He kissed her and said he'd see us in two years
And he looked at me and said papa I'm gonna be a man
Well two years to the day Vance came walkin' in the driveway
And I didn't recognize him from his size till he got near
He came in and he hugged his mama
And said hey papa little man wanna go with me somewhere and grab a beer
So we're sittin' at this table when this fella at the bar started buggin' Vance
Callin' him soldier but Vance kept his cool
And he said papa that guy is Smitty and he's to be pitied now
Cause that's the same guy that used to bully me in school
Then Smitty said the wrong thing when he brought up Becky's name
And Vance finally stood and said boy what did you say
And it did my heart so much good when Vance hit ole Smitty

And it took two of Smitty's friends to carry him away
Well Vance left the very next mornin' and it was cold and it was snowin'
And from the first life hadn't been much fun
But he had finally made a stand and he'd become a self made man
And incidentally he had just turned twenty one

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