

Christmas As I Knew It

Johnny Cash

One day near Christmas when I was just a child
Mama called us together and mama tried to smile
She said you know the cotton crop hadn't been too good this year
There's not a lot of spending money and well at least we're all here I hope you won't expect a lot of Christmas
presents
Just be thankful that there is plenty to eat
That'll make things a little more pleasant
And us kids got to thinking how really blessed we were
At least we were all healthy and most of all we had her Roy cut down a pine oak tree and we drug it home Jack
and me
Daddy killed a squirrel and Louise made the bread
Reba decorated the tree with popcorn strings before we went to bed
Mama and daddy sacrificed because this Christmas was kind of lean
After all there was the babies Tom and Joanne
And babies need a few things I whittled a whistle for my brother Jack
And though we disagreed now and then
When I gave Jack that whistle he knew I thought the world of him
Mama made the girl's dresses out of flower sacks
And when she ironed them down
You couldn't tell that they hadn't come from town A sharecropper family across the road didn't have it as good
as us
They didn't even have a light and it was way past dusk
And mama said, "Well I bet they don't even have coal oil
Let alone apples and oranges and such" Me and Jack took a jar of coal oil and some hickernuts we'd found
We walked to the sharecropper's porch and set 'em down
A poor old ragged lady eased open the door
She picked up the coal oil and hickernuts and said
"I sure do thank you" and quickly closed the door We started back home me and Jack
And about halfway we stopped looked back
And in the sharecropper's window at last was a light
So for one of the neighbors and for us it was a good Christmas night Christmas came and Christmas went
Christmas that year was heaven sent
And my daddy put on his rubber boots
And paced the floor waiting for the thaw
Back home in Dyess Arkansas

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