

# Cherokee Bend

## Gordon Lightfoot

His father was a man who could never understand  
The shame on a red man's face  
So they lived in the hills and they never came down  
But to trade in the white man's place  
It was early in the spring when the snow had disappeared  
They came down with a bag of skins  
In the fall of the year of 1910  
Daddy died by the rope down in Cherokee Bend  
Daddy didn't like what the white man said  
'Bout the dirty little kid at his side  
Daddy didn't like what the white man did  
Nor the deal or the way that he lied  
There was blood on the floor of the government store  
When the men took his daddy away  
But the boy stayed back till he come to his end  
And he run like the wind from Cherokee Bend  
Now the mother was alone and the winter was at hand  
And she prayed to her spirit kin  
It was warm in the lodge in the Kentucky hills  
On the day when the boy came in  
Then a blizzard came down and it covered up the door  
Till they thought that it never would end  
And he told her the tale of the terrible affair  
In the government store down in Cherokee Bend  
Daddy didn't like what the white man said  
'Bout the dirty little kid at his side  
Daddy didn't like what the white man did  
Nor the deal or the way that he lied  
For three long days and three long nights  
They wept and they mourned and then  
She returned to her work and her weavin'  
And they tried to forget about Cherokee Bend  
Now the boy wasn't big but he hunted what he could  
And they lived for a time that way  
But the food run low and the meat went bad  
And she said to the boy one day  
I'm leaving tonight and I never will return  
From the land of my Spirit Kin  
You must take what you need and trade what you can  
For a Red Man's grave down in Cherokee Bend  
It wasn't very long till she closed her eyes  
And he wrapped her in a robe  
He found her a place on the side of the hill  
And he buried her in the snow  
Early in the spring he was seen in the town  
With his load looking ragged and thin  
Not a year had gone by till he stood once again  
In the government store down in Cherokee Bend  
He was ten years tall and a Redskin too  
So he hadn't much face to save  
And the men sat around and they laughed and they clowned

At the talk of a criminal's graveThen the man from the east didn't smile when he said  
You're the son of that Indian scum  
If you value your hide then you better abide  
By the white man's rules here in Cherokee BendDaddy didn't like what the white man said  
'Bout the dirty little kid at his side  
Daddy didn't like what the white man did  
Nor the deal or the way that he liedAnd he spit on the floor of the government store  
And it served him to no good end  
At the close of the day they had taken him away  
To the white man's school down at Cherokee BendIt's been 21 years since the boy disappeared  
Where he run to, nobody knows  
But they say he fell in with a man named Jim  
And he rides in the rodeosAnd they say he returns all alone to a place  
Hidden deep in the Kentucky glen  
And it's pretty well known who hauled up the stone  
To the grave on the hill above Cherokee BendDaddy didn't like what the white man said  
'Bout the dirty little kid at his side  
Daddy didn't like what the white man did  
Nor the deal or the way that he liedThere was blood on the floor of the government store  
When the men took his daddy away  
It was 1910 and they never had a friend  
When he died by the rope down at Cherokee BendIt was 1910 and they never had a friend  
When he died by the rope down at Cherokee Bend

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