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 hasn't been too good this year
There's just no 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's quite a blessing 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 best of all we had her
Roy cut down a pigapple 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 cause this Christmas was lean
But after all there was the babies Tom and Joanne babies need a few things
I whittled a whistle for my brother Jack and though we fought 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 sharecropped 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 coaloil or beans to boil
A log apples cranges and such
Me and Jack took a jar of coaloil nd 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 coaloil and hickernuts and said
I sure do thank ye 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
Then daddy put on his gumboots waited for the thaw back home in Dyess Arkansas

Songwriters
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