

Melora's Song

Lyrics: Steven Vincent Benet; Music: Linda Sue Ellis (1964)

E Love came by in the riversmoke,
A
D **A** **E**
When the leaves were fresh on the tree,
A **G**
But I cut my heart on the blackjack oak
A **G** **A**
Before they fell on me.

The leaves are green in the early
Spring,
They are brown as linsey now,
I did not ask for a wedding-ring
From the wind in the bending bough.

Fall lightly, lightly, leaves of the wild,
Fall lightly on my care,
I am not the first to go with child
Because of the blowing air.

D **A**
The good girls sleep in their modesty,
D **E**
The bad girls sleep in their shame,
A **D** **A** **F#m**
But I must sleep in a hollow tree
A **G** **A**
Till my child can have a name.

I am not the first nor yet the last
To watch a goosefeather sky,
And wonder what will come of the blast
And the name to call it by,

Snow down, snow down you
whitefeather bird,
Snow down, you winter storm,
Where the good girls sleep with a
gospel word

To keep their honor warm.

Chorus

I will not ask for the wheel and thread
To spin the labor plain,
Or the scissors hidden under the bed
To cut the bearing pain.
I will not ask for the prayer in church
Or the preacher saying the prayer.
But I will ask the shivering birch
To hold his arms in the air.

Chorus

Cold and cold and cold again,
Cold in the blackjack limb
The winds of the sky for his sponsor-
men
And a bird to christen him.

Now listen to me you Tennessee corn,
And listen to my word,
This is the first child ever born
That was christened by a bird.

Chorus

He's going to act like a hound let loose
When he comes from the blackjack
tree,
And he's going to walk in proud shoes
All over Tennessee.

I'll feed him milk out of my own breast
And call him Whistling Jack.
And his dad'll bring him a partridge
nest,
As soon as his dad comes back.