

Week 7 Lyrics—Songs of, Part 2—Songs of Murder

Tom Dooley by The Kingston Trio, written by Thomas Land

Throughout history, there have been many songs written about the eternal triangle. This next one tells the story of Mister Grayson, a beautiful woman and a condemned man named Tom Dooley. When the sun rises tomorrow, Tom Dooley must hang

Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Poor boy, you're bound to die
I met her on the mountain
There I took her life
Met her on the mountain
Stabbed her with my knife
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Poor boy, you're bound to die
This time tomorrow
Reckon where I'll be
Hadn't-a been for Grayson
I'd-a been in Tennessee
Well now, boy
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Poor boy, you're bound to die
Well now, boy
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Poor boy, you're bound to die
This time tomorrow
Reckon where I'll be
Down in some lonesome valley
Hangin' from a white oak tree
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Poor boy, you're bound to die
Well now, boy
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley
Hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley

Poor boy, you're bound to die
Poor boy, you're bound to die
Poor boy, you're bound to die
Poor boy, you're bound to die

Mack the Knife by Bobby Darin, written by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht (1928)

Oh, the shark, babe, has such teeth, dear
And it shows them pearly white
Just a jackknife has old MacHeath, babe
And he keeps it, ah, out of sight
You know when that shark bites with his teeth, babe
Scarlet billows start to spread
Fancy gloves, oh, wears old MacHeath, babe
So there's never, never a trace of red
Now on the sidewalk, huh, huh, whoo sunny morning, un huh
Lies a body just oozin' life, eek
And someone's sneakin' 'round the corner
Could that someone be Mack the Knife?
There's a tugboat, huh, huh, down by the river don'tcha know
Where a cement bag's just a-drooppin' on down
Oh, that cement is just, it's there for the weight, dear
Five'll get ya ten, old Macky's back in town
Now did ya hear 'bout Louie Miller? He disappeared, babe
After drawin' out all his hard-earned cash
And now MacHeath spends just like a sailor
Could it be our boy's done somethin' rash?
Now Jenny Diver, ho, ho, yeah, Sukey Tawdry
Ooh, Miss Lotte Lenya and old Lucy Brown
Oh, the line forms on the right, babe
Now that Macky's back in town
I said Jenny Diver, whoa, Sukey Tawdry
Look out to Miss Lotte Lenya and old Lucy Brown
Yes, that line forms on the right, babe
Now that Macky's back in town
Look out, old Macky's back

Folsom Prison Blues by Johnny Cash (1956)

I hear the train a comin'
It's rolling round the bend
And I ain't seen the sunshine since I don't know when
I'm stuck in Folsom prison, and time keeps draggin' on
But that train keeps a rollin' on down to San Antone

When I was just a baby my mama told me

"Son, always be a good boy, don't ever play with guns"
But I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die
When I hear that whistle blowing, I hang my head and cry
I bet there's rich folks eating in a fancy dining car
They're probably drinkin' coffee and smoking big cigars
Well I know I had it coming, I know I can't be free
But those people keep a movin'
And that's what tortures me
Well if they freed me from this prison
If that railroad train was mine
I bet I'd move it on a little farther down the line
Far from Folsom prison, that's where I want to stay
And I'd let that lonesome whistle blow my blues away

Stagger Lee by Lloyd Price (1959)

The night was clear
And the moon was yellow
And the leaves came tumbling down
I was standing on the corner
When I heard my bulldog bark
He was barkin' at the two men who were gamblin'
In the dark
It was Stagger Lee and Billy
Two men who gambled late
Stagger Lee threw seven
Billy swore that he threw eight
Stagger Lee (oh Stagger Lee) told Billy, (oh Stagger Lee)
I can't (oh Stagger Lee) let you go with that (oh Stagger Lee)
You have won all (oh Stagger Lee) my money and my brand new (oh Stagger Lee)
(oh Stagger Lee) Stetson hat (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee)
Stagger Lee (oh Stagger Lee) went home (oh Stagger Lee)
And he got his forty-four (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee)
Said, I'm goin' to (oh Stagger Lee) the barroom just to pay that (oh Stagger Lee)
Debt I owe (oh Stagger Lee)
Stagger Lee went to the barroom
And he stood across the barroom door
He said, nobody move and he pulled his
Forty-four, Ooh
Stagger Lee, (oh Stagger Lee) cried Billy (oh Stagger Lee)
Oh, please (oh Stagger Lee) don't take my life (oh Stagger Lee)
I've got three little (oh Stagger Lee) children and a very (oh Stagger Lee)
Sickly wife (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee)
Stagger Lee (oh Stagger Lee) shot Billy (oh Stagger Lee)
Oh, he shot (oh Stagger Lee) that poor boy so bad (oh Stagger Lee)

'Till the bullet (oh Stagger Lee) came through Billy (oh Stagger Lee) and it broke the bar (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee)
Tender's glass (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee) (oh Stagger Lee)

Long Black Veil by Lefty Frizzell (1959)

Ten years ago, on a cold, dark night
There was someone killed 'neath the town hall light
There were few at the scene, but they all agreed
That the slayer who ran looked a lot like me
The judge said, "Son what is your alibi?
If you were somewhere else, then you won't have to die"
I spoke not a word, though it meant my life
For I had been in the arms of my best friend's wife
She walks these hills in a long black veil
She visits my grave when the night winds wail
Nobody knows, nobody sees
Nobody knows but me
The scaffold was high and eternity nears
She stood in the crowd and shed not a tear
But sometimes at night when the cold wind moans
In a long black veil, she cries over my bones
She walks these hills in a long black veil
She visits my grave when the night winds wail
Nobody knows, nobody sees
Nobody knows but me
Nobody knows but me
Nobody knows but me

Hey Joe by Jimi Hendrix, written by Billy Roberts (1962)

Hey Joe, where you goin' with that gun of your hand?
Hey Joe, I said, where you goin' with that gun in your hand? Oh
I'm goin' down to shoot my old lady
You know I caught her messin' 'round with another man, yeah
I'm goin' down to shoot my old lady
You know I caught her messin' 'round with another man
Huh, and that ain't too cool
Hey Joe, I heard you shot your mama down
You shot her down now
Hey Joe, I heard you shot your lady down
Shot her down in the ground, yeah
Yeah
Yes, I did, I shot her

You know I caught her messin' round, messin' round town
Yes, I did, I shot her
You know I caught my old lady messin' 'round town
And I gave her the gun
I shot her
Alright
Shoot her one more time again, baby
Yeah
Oh, dig it
Ah, alright
Hey, Joe
Where you gonna run to now? Where you gonna run to?
Hey Joe, I said
Where you gonna run to now? Where you, where you gonna go?
Well, dig
I'm goin' way down south
Way down to Mexico way
Alright
I'm goin' way down south
Way down where I can be free
Ain't no one gonna find me
Ain't no hangman gonna
He ain't gonna put a rope around me
You better believe right now
I gotta go now
Hey, Joe
You better run on down
Goodbye, everybody, ow

Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen (1975)

Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?
Caught in a landslide, no escape from reality
Open your eyes, look up to the skies and see
I'm just a poor boy, I need no sympathy
Because I'm easy come, easy go, little high, little low
Any way the wind blows doesn't really matter to me, to me
Mama, just killed a man
Put a gun against his head, pulled my trigger, now he's dead
Mama, life had just begun
But now I've gone and thrown it all away
Mama, ooh, didn't mean to make you cry
If I'm not back again this time tomorrow
Carry on, carry on as if nothing really matters
Too late, my time has come
Sends shivers down my spine, body's aching all the time

Goodbye, everybody, I've got to go
Gotta leave you all behind and face the truth
Mama, ooh (any way the wind blows)
I don't wanna die
I sometimes wish I'd never been born at all
I see a little silhouetto of a man
Scaramouche, Scaramouche, will you do the Fandango?
Thunderbolt and lightning, very, very frightening me
(Galileo) Galileo, (Galileo) Galileo, Galileo Figaro, magnifico
But I'm just a poor boy, nobody loves me
He's just a poor boy from a poor family
Spare him his life from this monstrosity
Easy come, easy go, will you let me go?
No, we will not let you go (let him go)
We will not let you go (let him go)
We will not let you go (let me go)
Will not let you go (let me go)
Never, never, never, never let me go
No, no, no, no, no, no, no
Oh, mamma mia, mamma mia
Mamma mia, let me go
Beelzebub has a devil put aside for me, for me, for me
So you think you can stone me and spit in my eye?
So you think you can love me and leave me to die?
Oh, baby, can't do this to me, baby
Just gotta get out, just gotta get right outta here
Ooh
Ooh, yeah, ooh, yeah
Nothing really matters, anyone can see
Nothing really matters
Nothing really matters to me

Hurricane by Bob Dylan (1976)

Pistol shots ring out in the barroom night
Enter Patty Valentine from the upper hall
She sees a bartender in a pool of blood
Cries out, "my God, they killed them all"
Here comes the story of the Hurricane
The man the authorities came to blame
For somethin' that he never done
Put in a prison cell, but one time he coulda been
The champion of the world
Three bodies lyin' there, does Patty see
And another man named Bello, movin' around mysteriously
"I didn't do it" he says, and he throws up his hands

"I was only robbin' the register, I hope you understand"
"I saw them leavin'" he says, and he stops
"One of us had better call up the cops"
And so Patty calls the cops
And they arrive on the scene
With their red lights flashin' in a hot New Jersey night
Meanwhile, far away in another part of town
Rubin Carter and a couple of friends are drivin' around
Number one contender for the middleweight crown
Had no idea what kinda shit was about to go down
When a cop pulled him over to the side of the road
Just like the time before and the time before that
In Paterson that's just the way things go
If you're black you might as well not show up on the street
'Less you want to draw the heat
Alfred Bello had a partner and he had a rap for the cops
Him and Arthur Dexter Bradley were just out prowlin' around
He said "I saw two men runnin' out, they looked like middleweights
Jumped into a white car with out-of-state plates"
And Miss Patty Valentine just nodded her head
Cop said "Wait a minute, boys, this one's not dead"
So they took him to the infirmary
And though this man could hardly see
They told him he could identify the guilty men
Four in the mornin' and they haul Rubin in
They took him to the hospital and they brought him upstairs
The wounded man looks up through his one dyin' eye
Say "Why'd you bring him in here for? He ain't the guy"
Here's the story of the Hurricane
The man the authorities came to blame
For somethin' that he never done
Put in a prison cell, but one time he coulda been
The champion of the world
Four months later, the ghettos are in flame
Rubin's in South America, fightin' for his name
While Arthur Dexter Bradley's still in the robbery game
And the cops are puttin' the screws to him, lookin' for somebody to blame
"Remember that murder that happened in a bar?"
"Remember you said you saw the getaway car?"
"You think you'd like to play ball with the law?"
"Think it mighta been that fighter that you saw runnin' that night?"
"Don't forget that you are white"
Arthur Dexter Bradley said "I'm really not sure"
The cops said "A poor boy like you, could use this break
We got you for the motel job and we're talkin' to your friend Bello
You don't want to have to go back to jail, be a nice fellow

You'll be doin' society a favor
That son of a bitch is brave and gettin' braver
We want to put his ass in stir
We want to pin this triple murder on him
He ain't no Gentleman Jim"
Rubin could take a man out with just one punch
But he never did like to talk about it all that much
"It's my work" he'd say, "and I do it for pay
And when it's over I'd just as soon go on my way"
Up to some paradise
Where the trout streams flow and the air is nice
And ride a horse along a trail
But then they took him to the jailhouse
Where they try to turn a man into a mouse
All of Rubin's cards were marked in advance
The trial was a pig-circus, he never had a chance
The judge made Rubin's witnesses drunkards from the slums
To the white folks who watched, he was a revolutionary bum
And for the black folks he was just a crazy nigger
No one doubted that he pulled the trigger
And though they could not produce the gun
The D.A. said he was the one who did the deed
And the all-white jury agreed
Rubin Carter was falsely tried
The crime was murder one, guess who testified?
Bello and Bradley and they both baldly lied
And the newspapers, they all went along for the ride
How can the life of such a man
Be in the palm of some fool's hand?
To see him obviously framed
Couldn't help but make me feel ashamed to live in a land
Where justice is a game
Now all the criminals in their coats and their ties
Are free to drink martinis and watch the sun rise
While Rubin sits like Buddha in a ten-foot cell
An innocent man in a living hell
Yes, that's the story of the Hurricane
But it won't be over 'til they clear his name
And give him back the time he's done
Put in a prison cell, but one time he coulda been
The champion of the world

Psycho Killer by Talking Heads (1977)

I can't seem to face up to the facts
I'm tense and nervous and I can't relax

I can't sleep 'cause my bed's on fire
Don't touch me, I'm a real live wire
Psycho Killer
Qu'est-ce que c'est?
Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, better
Run, run, run, run, run, run, run away, oh-oh-oh
Psycho Killer
Qu'est-ce que c'est?
Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, better
Run, run, run, run, run, run, run away, oh, oh, oh, oh
Ay-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya, ooh
You start a conversation, you can't even finish it
You're talking a lot, but you're not saying anything
When I have nothing to say, my lips are sealed
Say something once, why say it again?
Psycho Killer
Qu'est-ce que c'est?
Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, better
Run, run, run, run, run, run, run away, oh-oh-oh
Psycho Killer
Qu'est-ce que c'est?
Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, better
Run, run, run, run, run, run, run away, oh, oh, oh, oh
Ay-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya
Ce que j'ai fait, ce soir-là
Ce qu'elle a dit, ce soir-là
Réalisant mon espoir
Je me lance vers la gloire, okay
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
We are vain and we are blind
I hate people when they're not polite
Psycho Killer
Qu'est-ce que c'est?
Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, better
Run, run, run, run, run, run, run away, oh-oh-oh
Psycho Killer
Qu'est-ce que c'est?
Fa-fa-fa-fa, fa-fa-fa-fa-fa-fa, better
Run, run, run, run, run, run, run away, oh, oh, oh, oh
Ai-ya-ya-ya-ya-ya, ooh

Nebraska by Bruce Springsteen (1982)

I saw her standing on her front lawn just twirling her baton
Me and her went for a ride, sir, and ten innocent people died
From the town of Lincoln, Nebraska, with a sawed-off .410 on my lap

Through to the badlands of Wyoming I killed everything in my path
I can't say that I'm sorry for the things that we done
At least for a little while, sir, me and her we had us some fun
Now, the jury brought in a guilty verdict, and the judge he sentenced me to death
Midnight in a prison storeroom with leather straps across my chest
Sheriff, when the man pulls that switch, sir, and snaps my poor head back
You make sure my pretty baby is sittin' right there on my lap
They declared me unfit to live, said into that great void my soul'd be hurled
They wanted to know why I did what I did
Well, sir, I guess there's just a meanness in this world

Where the Wild Roses Grow by Nick Cave

They call me The Wild Rose
But my name was Elisa Day
Why they call me it I do not know
For my name was Elisa Day
From the first day I saw her I knew she was the one
She stared in my eyes and smiled
For her lips were the colour of the roses
That grew down the river, all bloody and wild
When he knocked on my door and entered the room
My trembling subsided in his sure embrace
He would be my first man, and with a careful hand
He wiped at the tears that ran down my face
They call me The Wild Rose
But my name was Elisa Day
Why they call me that I do not know
For my name was Elisa Day
On the second day I brought her a flower
She was more beautiful than any woman I'd seen
I said, "Do you know where the wild roses grow
So sweet and scarlet and free?"
On the second day he came with a single red rose
He said "Will you give me your loss and your sorrow"
I nodded my head, as I lay on the bed
"If I show you the roses, will you follow?"
They call me The Wild Rose
But my name was Elisa Day
Why they call me that I do not know
For my name was Elisa Day
On the third day he took me to the river
He showed me the roses and we kissed
And the last thing I heard was a muttered word
As he knelt above me with a rock in his fist
On the last day I took her where the wild roses grow

And she lay on the bank, the wind light as a thief
And I kissed her goodbye, said, "All beauty must die"
And I lent down and planted a rose 'tween her teeth
They call me The Wild Rose
But my name was Elisa Day
Why they call me that I do not know
For my name was Elisa Day
My name was Elisa Day
For my name was Elisa Day