



Bobbie Gentry's Ode to Billie Joe (33 1/3)

By Tara Murtha

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July, 1967: It seems the entire country stopped to listen to a husky voice steeped in the simmering secrets of the South tell a tragic tale of teenage suicide. So much for the Summer of Love. "Ode to Billie Joe" knocked the Beatles' "All You Need is Love" off the top of the charts, and Bobbie Gentry became an international star. Almost 50 years later, Gentry is as enigmatic and captivating as her signature song. Of course, fans still want to know why Billie Joe McAllister jumped off the Tallahatchie Bridge. They also wonder: Why did Bobbie Gentry, who has not performed or made a public appearance since the early 1980s, leave it all behind?

Through extensive interviews and unprecedented access to career memorabilia, Murtha explores the real-life mysteries ensnarled within the much-disputed origin of *Ode to Billie Joe*. The result is an investigative pop history that reveals, for the first time, the full breadth of Bobbie Gentry's groundbreaking career-and just may help explain her long silence.

Foreword by musician Jill Sobule.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Tara Murtha examines that song and the rest of Bobbi Gentry's career in *Ode To Billie Joe*, the latest release in the 33 1/3 series of books. It is a wonderfully compelling book and the best I've read in the series since *“Television: Marquee Moon.”* Perhaps it's her background as a reporter, but Murtha does not go down the pedantic path that many of the books in this series seem to do lately. Instead, the author presents a fascinating study of Gentry and her career-defining debut. That's right; *“Ode to Billie Joe”* was her debut recording. Wow.” *Steve J., AllMusicBooks*

“Murtha pulls free the threads of truth from a tangled knot of personal mythology and contradictions. Her book is likely to be a hit with casual listeners and pop-culture obsessives alike.” *Katie Haegele, Utne Reader*

“Philadelphia journalist Tara Murtha has dug deep into the story behind Gentry's song with the latest entry in the “33 1/3” book series devoted to various pop albums of significance... Murtha charts Gentry's challenges as a musician who in her teens was most interested in selling her songs to other singers, not recording them herself. But once she did get into the position of recording, she was up against a male-dominated record industry that offered little validation to a young woman with her own ideas about performance and production.” *Randy Lewis, L.A. Times*

About the Author

Tara Murtha is a journalist based in Philadelphia, USA.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kim Duncan:

Hey guys, do you desire to find a new book to study? May be the book with the title Bobbie Gentry's *Ode to Billie Joe* (33 1/3) suitable to you? The actual book was written by well known writer in this era. The book untitled Bobbie Gentry's *Ode to Billie Joe* (33 1/3) is the one of several books in which everyone read now. This kind of book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this book you will enter the new dimensions that you ever know prior to. The author explained their concept in the simple way, so all of people can easily understand the core of this guide. This book will give you a great deal of information about this world now. So that you can see the represented of the world on this book.

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perusing this book.

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