

Reverend Mr. Black

He rode easy in the saddle. He was tall and lean,  
and at first you'd a-thought nothing but a streak of mean  
could make a man look so down right strong,  
but one look in his eyes and you knowed you was wrong.

He was a mountain of a man, and I want you to know.  
He could preach hot hell or freezin' snow.  
He carried a Bible in a canvas sack  
and folks just called him The Reverend Mr. Black.

He was poor as a beggar, but he rode like a king.  
Sometimes in the evening, I'd hear him sing:

I gotta walk that lonesome valley.  
I got to walk it by myself.  
Oh nobody else can walk it for me.  
I got to walk it by myself.

You got to walk that lonesome valley.  
You got to walk it by yourself.  
Oh nobody else can walk it for you.  
You got to walk it by yourself.

If ever I could have thought this man in black  
was soft and had any yellow up his back,  
I gave that notion up the day  
a lumberjack came in and it wasn't to pray.

Yeah, he kicked open the meeting house door  
and he cussed everybody up and down the floor!  
Then, when things got quiet in the place,  
he walked up and cusses in the preacher's face!

He hit that Reverend like a kick of a mule  
and to my way of thinkin' it took a real fool  
to turn the other face to that lumber jack,  
but that's what he did, The Reverend Mr. Black.

He stood like a rock, a man among men  
and he let that lumberjack hit him again,  
and then with a voice as quiet as could be,  
he cut him down like a big oak tree when he said:

I gotta walk that lonesome valley.  
I got to walk it by myself.  
Oh nobody else can walk it for me.  
I got to walk it by myself.

It's been many years since we had to part  
and I guess I learned his ways by heart.  
I can still hear his sermon's ring,  
down in the valley where he used to sing.

I followed him, yes, sir, and I don't regret it  
and I hope I will always be a credit  
to his memory 'cause I want you to understand.  
The Reverend Mr. Black was my old man!

I gotta walk that lonesome valley.  
I got to walk it by myself.  
Oh nobody else can walk it for me.  
I got to walk it by myself.

Songwriters: Billy Wheeler / Jerry Leiber / Mike Stoller  
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