

First thing I remember knowin' was a lonesome whistle blowin'
And a young-on's dream of growing up to ride
On a freight train leaving town, not knowing where I'm bound
And no one could change my mind, but Mama tried

[Verse 2]

One and only rebel child, from a family meek and mild
Mama seemed to know what lay in store
'Spite of all my Sunday learnin', toward the bad I kept on
turnin'
'Til Mama couldn't hold me anymore

[Chorus]

And I turned twenty-one in prison doing life without parole
No one could steer me right, but Mama tried, Mama tried
Mama tried to raise me better, but her pleading I denied,
that leaves only me to blame, 'cause Mama tried

[Verse 3]

Dear old Daddy rest his soul, he left my mom a heavy load
She tried so very hard to fill his shoes
Working hours without rest, she wanted me to have the best
She tried to raise me right, but I refused

[Chorus]

And I turned twenty-one in prison doing life without parole
No one could steer me right, but Mama tried, Mama tried
Mama tried to raise me better, but her pleading I denied,
That leaves only me to blame, 'cause Mama tried

[Turnaround]

That leaves only me to blame, 'cause Mama tried