

"I guess," I said. [REDACTED] only songs about death.

It was true. [REDACTED] Southern thing, or maybe

[REDACTED] just matter of [REDACTED] Roby was right about

[REDACTED] for cautionary tales. Maybe she sang me

[REDACTED] songs on purpose, to discourage me from swallow

[REDACTED] of approaching random boa constrictors.

[REDACTED] lips moved. "Now, Paul. [REDACTED] about the song

about the little white duck swimming in the water?"

[REDACTED] the duck who gets eaten by the little red snake? That

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it was the little black bug that got eaten, not the

[REDACTED] duck.

I lifted my eyebrows.

[REDACTED] about 'I've Been Working on the Railroad'?"

Mom said. She slipped her arm around me and tried to

make me sway. "I've been working on the railroad, all

the livelong day! Where's the death in that one? All the

livelong day?"

I grunted.

We stood there. [REDACTED] several seconds, Mom rested

[REDACTED] head on my shoulder. At ten years old, I was already

[REDACTED] all enough for her to do that.

"I wish I could explain it better," she said, "but that's the best answer I've got."

Best answer to what? I thought. Oh, yeah. I'd asked why she wanted a divorce.