

# Can the Circle be Unbroken?

*Carter Family*



## Chorus:

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| Can the circle be unbroken<br>By and by, Lord, bye and bye?<br>There's a better home a-waiting<br>In the sky, Lord, in the sky.    | 3. I followed close behind her,<br>Tried to hold up and be brave<br>But I could not hide my sorrow<br>When they laid her in the grave.        |
| 1. I was standing by my window<br>On one cold and cloudy day;<br>And I saw the hearse come rolling<br>For to carry my mother away. | 4. Went back home, my home was lonesome<br>Since my mother, she was gone;<br>All my brothers, sisters crying<br>What a home so sad and lone.  |
| 2. "Undertaker, undertaker,<br>Undertaker, please drive slow;<br>For this body you are hauling,<br>Lord, I hate to see her go"     | 5. Now my mother, she's crossed over<br>Where so many have gone before.<br>And I know, Lord, I will meet her<br>Just waiting at glory's door. |

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Another song in the sentimental tradition of dead mothers and grieving children much like "Sad and Lonesome Day", also recorded by the Carter Family. "Can the Circle Be Unbroken" is a country/folk song reworked by A. P. Carter from the hymn "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" by Ada R. Habershon and Charles H. Gabriel. The song's lyrics concern the death, funeral and mourning of the narrator's mother. The song first gained attention due to the Carter Family recording. It has since been used by just about anyone you can think of in the country/folk genre. Most cover versions of the song use the alternate title "Will the Circle be Unbroken". In 1998 it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

Almost all cover versions of the song use a straight 4/4 meter throughout, while the Carter Family recording from 1927 uses bars of 3/4 near the end of each verse and twice in the chorus.