



Will the Circle be Unbroken

Music by Charles Gabriel, lyrics by Ada Habershon

Performed by The Carter Family

[LISTEN](#)

THE CARTER FAMILY was not only one of the biggest discoveries at the famed 1927 Bristol Sessions—the so-called “Big Bang” that did much to put country music on the map—but the trio’s members remained at the music’s forefront during its first two decades as a commercial art form. Considered “The First Family of Country Music,” the Carter Family essentially invented the kind of harmony singing used for years in the music, and popularized numerous songs that became country standards. Members of the Carter Family include AP Carter, Sara Carter and Maybelle Carter. [LEARN MORE](#)

ABOUT THE SONG

“**Will the Circle be Unbroken**” is based on a gospel hymn published in 1908 with words by Ada Habershon and music by Charles Gabriel, both very prolific writers of church music. The hymn was reworked by the Carter Family and released in 1935.

Part country song, part spiritual, it describes a funeral. We see the hearse come to take the singer's mother away, and the slow procession to the grave site. Returning home, he feels a profound loss as he grieves with his siblings. Comfort comes from knowing she is with the Lord.

The Carter Family made significant changes to the lyrics, most notably in the chorus, where instead of singing: “By and by, by and by,” they sing “By and by, Lord, by and by.”

4/4 Time **WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN** **Original Key C**
(Ada R. Habershon & A.P.Carter) - The Carter Family

INTRO {C,2} {G,2} {C}

CHORUS

*Will The Circle Be Unbroken...
By And By Lord, By And By...
There's A Better Home Awaiting
In The Sky... Lord In The Sky...*

- 1) I Was Standing... By My Window
On A Cold And Cloudy Day
When I Saw That...Hearse Come Rolling
For To Carry My Mother Away

CHORUS

- 2) Undertaker... Undertaker
Undertaker Please Drive Slow
For The Body You Are Holdong
Lord I Hate To See Her Go

CHORUS

- 3) Well I {C,2m} Followed... Close Behind Her
Tried To {F} Hold Up... And Be {C} Brave
But I {C,2m} Could Not... Hide My Sorrow
When They {C,2} Laid... Her {G,2} In The {C} Grave

CHORUS

- 4) Well I Went Back Home Yes... My Home Was Hopefull
Although Mother... Had Gone On
With My Family, Stand Together
Now No One Stands Alone

CHORUS 2X

TAG *There's A Better... Home A - Waiting*
(slow) *In The Sky... Lord... In... The... Sky...*

4/4 Time

WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN Original Key C

(Ada R. Habershon & A.P.Carter) - The Carter Family

INTRO {C,2} {G,2} {C}

CHORUS

*Will The {C,2m} Circle... Be Unbroken
By And {F} By Lord... By And {G} By...
There's A {C,2m} Better... Home Awaiting
In The {C,2} Sky Lord {G,2} In The {C} Sky*

- 1) Well I Was {C,2m} Standing... By My Window
On One {F} Cold... And Cloudy {C} Day...
When I {C,2m} Saw That... Hearse Come Rolling...
For To {C,2} Carry... My {G,2} Mother A - {C} way

CHORUS

- 2) Under- {C,2m} taker... Undertaker
Under- {F} taker Please Drive {C} Slow
For That {C,2m} Body... You Are Holding
Lord I {C,2} Hate To {G,2} See Her {C} Go

CHORUS

- 3) Well I {C,2m} Followed... Close Behind Her
Tried To {F} Hold Up... And Be {C} Brave
But I {C,2m} Could Not... Hide My Sorrow
When They {C,2} Laid... Her {G,2} In The {C} Grave

CHORUS

- 4) Well I Went {C,2m} Back Home Yes, My Home Was Hopefull
Although {F} Mother, Had Gone {C} On
With My {C,2m} Family... Stand Together
Now {C,2} No One {G,2} Stands A- {C} lone

CHORUS 2X

TAG *There's A {C,2m} Better... Home Awaiting*
(slow) *In The {C,2} Sky... Lord... {G,2} In... The... {C} Sky...*