

SAM

Before we begin - a quick warning. This story contains violence, references to sexual assault, and racial epithets. Listener discretion is advised.

SAM

Hello, Ghost Family. Welcome to *Family Ghosts*.

[FG THEME]

SAM

Folks, today's story is special for a couple of reasons. First off, it's our Season 2 finale, and as you probably noticed when you refreshed your feed, it's a two-parter. That's because today's story is a big story - it starts in the 1830's, and goes all the way up to the present day.

But it's also a completely different kind of story than we've ever told - and that's because of the artist who's gonna tell it.

[music in: The Garden of Love]

Her name is Martha Redbone.

MARTHA (singing)

I laid me down upon a bed

Where Love lay sleeping

I heard among the rushes dank

Weeping, weeping...

SAM

Martha is a singer and songwriter based here in Brooklyn - and that's an excerpt from a record she released in 2012, called *Garden of Love - Songs of William Blake*. The album is a fusion of the poetry of William Blake and various forms of roots music. Martha wrote the album with her husband, the pianist Aaron Whitby - and over the last few years, they've been working on a new project - one that's much more personal. Martha comes from a family that's a blend of Cherokee, Black, and European ancestry - which means that when it comes to ignorant comments, she's heard it all.

MARTHA

These.. are just a few of the actual comments made to me throughout my life.

FRED

Martha Redbone! You look Black to me, you're just light--skinnededed. But you black.

SONI

I can see you got Indian all up in your face... and you got good hair... you look Indian... but girl you have a nigger nose.

AARON

Red Indians are still ALIVE?! You must be joking!

FRED

Light--skinned Blacks are ALWAYS trying to claim they're Indian... oh, don't tell me, your great great grandmother was a Cherokee princess, right?

CHARLIE

You're going to have to choose which road to walk

SONI

Yeah you can't be both

SAM

But Martha doesn't need anyone else to explain her heritage to her. Her family has been telling the story of who they are and where they come from for generations.

(ORGAN ENTERS, BAND SWIRLS)

MARTHA

(Sings) I could tell you the name

ALL

(Sings) She could tell you the name

MARTHA

(Sings) I could tell you the place

ALL

(Sings) She could tell you the place

MARTHA

(Sings) Even the date...

ALL

(Shouts) She could tell you the date!

MARTHA

(Sings) I could write a book

ALL

(Sings) She could write a book

MARTHA

(Sings) In fact I could even write a musical. (*MUSIC pauses*)

SAM

And that's exactly what she did.

(PIANO IN HARD)

MARTHA

“Gonna tell you a story about my family...
or a family kinda just like mine... We are Red

ALL

(shouts) – OF THE LAND!

MARTHA

(sings) We are Black!

ALL

(shouts) BROUGHT TO WORK!

MARTHA

(sings) We are White

ALL

(shouts)- THOSE WITH HOPE!

MARTHA

(sings) We're all mixed up...

(MUSIC STOPS DEAD)

(voice alone) but not confused...”

SAM

So recently, we got together with Martha and her band in a recording studio - and today on the show, we present our adaptation of that project Martha and Aaron have been working on- the story of Martha's family, from Black Mountain, Kentucky, to Brooklyn New York - a fusion of storytelling and song, hatred and hope, history and harmony.

From Spoke Media, and WALT, you're listening to *Family Ghosts*. I'm Sam Dingman, and this is episode sixteen, *Bone Hill*. Act One begins, after the break.

SAM

Welcome back to *Family Ghosts*. You're listening to our Season Two finale - *Bone Hill*, an original storytelling song cycle performed by Martha Redbone and her band - telling the remarkable story of Martha's remarkable family.

MARTHA

We're Cherokee people, Bird Clan – hunters and messengers. Mountain people from Harlan County, Kentucky

ALL

That's Appalachia.

(Cello and organ enter)

40 WHEELS

(Martha stands)

In our peaceful little world of Appalachia

Way up high, high on the hills among the clouds my people dwell

How sweet the silence, in the still of our hollows

We hear, the calling of our Lord Black Coal

Coal running through our veins

Bloody Harlan, Kentucky

Heya heya haaa weya heya haaa

Heya heya haaa haa ha aho

(Music fades out)

SAM

Our story begins in Harlan County, Kentucky, where Martha Redbone has vivid memories of sitting on her grandparents' porch.

(Easy lilting Banjo roll underscore enters)

MARTHA

From our family's house, up on top of Bone Hill we could see what everybody was up to in the camp – Oh, a camp? That's a mining town, a coal mining town.

Yeah, sitting on my grandparent's porch... We could see who was coming in and riding out...

SAM

But way back when Martha's family first moved into that house, it was Martha's great grandmother - Liza - who used to sit on the porch, looking out across the valley.

(DRUM AND CHANT START low)

MARTHA

Everyone in the camp knew Great Grandmother Liza – she went way back to when Indians lived throughout those mountains. When she gave you the eye – it was so cold even Satan needed a fur coat! BUT Mostly, she sat up on that porch dreaming about them old time Pow Wows.

LIZA'S POW WOW

ANAGEHYA (Mother Song)

Anagehya

Weh ha weya

Weh hana weh

We ha weya we na weya weya a a a

Anagehya

Weh ha weya

Weh hana weh

We ha weya we na weya weya a a a

Wena way na way hi

Wena way weya ha

Wena weyna way wayo

Ee weya we ha ya we ha we ha weya ha ha ha

(dies down and underscores next text and segues to MAMAW MASON SONG Banjo underscore)

MARTHA

My Great Grandma Liza dreamed about the stories her grandparents told her. Stories from way before the Trail of Tears. Or as we say The Long Walk. They like to tell you a story that after the Indian Removal Act all the Indians were gone, but that's not quite what happened. When we were forced from our homes, some of our people ran into the hills.

MAMAW'S SONG

Mamaw Mason

Healer round these parts

Called Astila

With fire in her heart

When the soldiers came a-searching

For the ones who'd slipped the Trail,

She'd watch them from the hill

She'd watch them all the way

The dogs kept a-howling

Their songs of rage and fear

All the horrors of murder,

Of death, blood and tears.

Then, still... as a stone.

Mamaw Mason...

Stila lay low in the cool of the earth

A child aching for the chance to breathe

Her little grieving heart pounding just like our drum

As she watched all our Cherokees go.

And gone was our Cherokee home.

Then, still... as a stone.

Mamaw Mason...

Mamaw Mason...

Mamaw Mason...

MARTHA

My family was one of the ones that made it back from the Long Walk. Mamaw Mason and her husband Joe signed up on the Dawes Rolls and they cut out of 'Indian Territory' as Oklahoma was still known and headed right on back home.

(Drum and Bass slow 40 WHEELS underscore)

MARTHA

There were bands of Indians that helped walk them through –like slaves did in the Underground Railroad. They wanted to find their relations who had lived across the Smokey, Clinch and Black mountains. They didn't want to die in a new place.

It took our people almost two years, but we got back and Great Grandmother Liza was born on Black Mountain.

But by then coal had been discovered and everything changed.

(underscore fades out)

SAM

Bone Hill will continue after the break.

SAM

Welcome back to *Bone Hill*. Before the break, Martha Redbone told us about Mama Mason, who was forced off her family's land on Black Mountain in Harlan County, Kentucky, by the Indian Removal Act. But Mama Mason and her husband Joe refused to be separated from their home - it took them almost two years, but they made their way back to Black Mountain, and had a daughter, Liza, Martha's great grandmother. But in the years the family had been gone, Black Mountain had changed.

MARTHA

The new settlers kept arriving and driving Indians off the land and as a child, Great Grandmother Liza lost her whole family and found herself completely alone. ... sometimes she

was silent for weeks or months even.

Some people thought she was a mute because she rarely spoke,

SONI

You can't just speak to just anyone now... cuz the devil's always listening

SAM

In the aftermath of the death of her parents, Joe and Mama Mason, Liza found herself living in the home of one of the European settlers on Black Mountain.

MARTHA

"Mr. Whitaker"-- a white man from England who's recently become a clerk for US Coal. Now Mr Whitaker is 45 years old. Brought his wife over from England

MR. WHITTAKER'S LETTER (*underscore*)

AARON (MR. WHITTAKER)

My Dear Brother Henry,

Please forgive me my tardiness writing but my first year in this wondrous new land has been a veritable whirlwind. They call it Black Mountain but to me it is Phoenix Mountain. A place of rebirth and renewal. And in these serene mountains the heavens are closer and our Lord ever present and the land empty for we Christians.

MARTHA

New land? Empty? Really?!

AARON

Brother I beseech you to reconsider your decision to remain in London. It would be false for me to claim that the streets here are paved with gold, but in this good country if you work hard you will be rewarded.

MARTHA

Uhh... This theory worked better for some... you know what I'm saying

AARON

And brother the opportunities are not just pecuniary. Suffice to say my sweet wife Gladys has a delightful and obedient Indian girl helping out with the house. Imagine that – a proper housemaid!

MARTHA

Bingo! And that would be 13 year old , great grandmother Liza. ...

AARON

And I am pleased to give her a Christian home and serve as her mentor.

MARTHA

Mentor! Rapist more like...

AARON

Dear brother, I would lie if I said that I miss the crowded streets of London. But I miss you Henry.

Ever Faithfully

William (*underscore ends*)

MARTHA

My family always said Great Grandma Liza was married to Mr Whittaker. I guess because of the 10 children she bore him. 6 of those babies died before they'd made it to 4 years old.

It wasn't right how men could have a wife and take what women they wanted – and slavery was supposed to be over!

But try as they might those Whittakers can't force Great Grandma Liza to talk.

Mrs. Whittaker called her “obstinate as a terrier.”

But everyday Great Grandmother Liza sings to those precious little babies that lived...

LITTLE BEAR LULLABYE

Usdi yona

usdi yona

Osda kle gi

Osda kle gi

Usdi yona

usdi yona

Osda kle gi

Osda kle gi

Gi v ki la dv

Gi v ki la dv

Osda kle gi

Osda kle gi

Gi v ki la dv

Gi v ki la dv

Osda kle gi

Osda kle gi

MARTHA

When Mr. Whittaker dies, Mrs. Whittaker puts my Great Grandmother Liza out. Her and her four remaining children. No house. No money. And this being the good ol' US of A, the young common law widow doesn't get any help from the government.

SAM

And so, Liza finds herself kicked out of the Whitaker's house, with no means of supporting herself and her four surviving children - despite the fact that Mr. Whitaker fathered those children. But Liza, determined to preserve her family's place on Black Mountain, eventually manages to find a small house for herself and the kids. It's a hard life, but Liza finds a way to keep going, even though she doesn't have anyone else to rely on.

MARTHA

But every 10 years or so she can count on a faithful knock on the door from the Census Man who comes around to tell her what race she and her kids are. It changes every decade.

CENSUS MAN/MARTHA

All right now, get out here you coloreds. Line 'em up – tallest to shortest. You there – Freckles! Step out and let me take a good look at you!

Says here, you're an Injun. There ain't no Indians in these parts no more.

Uh uh uh! This pencil here will be the judge. Sit down so I'll throw it at your hair, Stays in – you're colored, boy! And you, why you're almost white as me with your pretty little self.

I know you're one of them mulatto Whittakers, ain't ya? Who knows who the daddy is to the rest of y'all. Line 'em up, c'mon now. I ain't got all day!

CENSUS MAN (KNOCK KNOCK)

Martha: One, two, three.

CHORUS Knock Knock

Who's there?

I'm the Census man coming to town

Gonna judge you by your hair

By our hair? That ain't fair

Please Census Man, do what you can

Everything but our hair!

VERSE

Well you say that you're an Injun

How can this truly be?

There ain't been Injuns in Virginia

Since 1850

MARTHA

As of this day in the year of 1850, I declare that the State of Virginia is Indian--Free!

And North Carolina, Kentucky, and West Virginia followed suit!

How could you be Injun?

Your hair is curly brown

I'll take this pen, throw it at your head and it better fall to the ground

CHORUS Knock Knock

Who's there?

I'm the Census man coming to town

Gonna judge you by your hair

By our hair? That ain't fair

Please Census Man, do what you can

Everything but our hair!

How can you be Injun?

You're just as White as me?

Well okay, if you say you come from Cherokee (or Chickasaw or Osaaaage!!!)

You went to Oklahoma

Then turned around came back

Only a fool who never been to school

Would do something like that!

MARTHA

In the event the Indians become extinct the land exchange shall revert to the United States!

CHORUS Knock Knock

Who's there?

I'm the Census man coming to town

Gonna judge you by your hair

By our hair? That ain't fair

Please Census Man, do what you can

Everything but our hair!

You say you play the banjo?

Only Nigras play that thing

I'm writing Black on this here slat

Cause the banjo's Africaaaah!

CHORUS Knock Knock

Who's there?

I'm the Census man coming to town

Gonna judge you by your hair

By our hair? That ain't fair

Please Census Man, do what you can

Everything but our hair!

There, that fixes it! Now everybody's white or black, white or black, white or black, colored colored colored, white or black, white or black, colored colored colored...

MARTHA

Over time, our same family – in the same house -- go from Indian to mulatto to colored....And eventually the Census Man

ALL

makes EVERYONE black!

MARTHA

You see, Indians are wards of the state with at least some “rights”. Blacks on the other hand...Seems the government knew that making Indians black would get them out of all of that... knew reparations was never going to happen... even back then when the ink was still wet. but we digress....

(40 Wheels underscore) My Great Grandma Liza outlives 8 of her 10 children. Of the four who make it to adulthood two die before the age of 25. One in an accident in the mine and another in a bar fight.

Only two daughters are left. One goes off and forgets Harlan County. Her last daughter, my Grandma Easter, is the one who stays and cares for Great Grandma Liza all her life, looking after the home while Great Grandma Liza just sits on the porch and watches those wheels roll by. The rolling of the wagon wheels that took her people away on that Trail of Tears was deep in her bones. And the wheels of those coal trains just roll on in... *(underscore ends)* Coal was big money!

By this time my Grandma Easter is a young mother who has just kicked out her worthless husband, a Cherokee baseball player named Tibby and unfortunately, a drunk - sorry for the cliché but there were only 2 in our family who DIDN'T drink. *(underscore - v light tinkles)* She has a baby, Junior, from this very brief marriage and she takes care of the baby and her mother – cleans houses, does hair, cooks, and bakes cakes, everything just to make ends meet.

FRED

Oooh -- but that Easter was purty! You could just sop her up with a biscuit!

MARTHA

Ah, the fellas didn't stand half a chance. She didn't have time or eyes for no one but her baby. I can still remember them cakes she made. People said she baked with the Lord in her hands.

ALL

Oh Lord, those cakes!

CAKE SONG

Couldn't tell by her smile or her little blue dress

Not a hair or a word out of place

But if you look a little deeper at her peepers you'd guess

Mama's pretty face was depressed

She'd smile with sigh and huff and a puff

And we were tickled by her ways

Cause she was headed for the kitchen with a bowl and all the fixins just a mixin and a stirrin all the days

For goodness sakes, Mama's gonna bake another cake!

CHORUS

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake another cake

Ol Miss Lucy was a hundred and one

When the Lord met her at the pearly gates

Well, the word around town Mr. Frank had a frown

His tears filled Cranks Creek Lake

Mama hung up the phone with sigh and moan

And we were hiding by the door

Cause she was headed for the kitchen with a bowl and all the fixins just a mixin and a stirrin once more

For goodness sakes, Mama's gonna bake another cake!

CHORUS

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake another cake

Applesauce and devil's food

Lemon bundt and macaroons

baked Alaska, coconut, 7 layer, weddings too

danish rings, frosting crème

cheese, and lots of pies

sweet potato, pumpkin, apple, peach and cobblers

dump and berries, cinnamon, and again and again...

As the sun went down she'd holler out the back

Get the children in for the night

We could tell she was reeling cause somebody hurt her feelings

She was huffing and a puffing with a sigh

Mama never said a word but her thoughts can be heard

by her smells from her cooking through the town

Cause she was headed for the kitchen with a bowl and all the fixins just a mixin and a stirrin til the sun goes down...

For goodness sakes, Mama's gonna bake another cake!

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake another cake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake another cake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake

Mama's gonna bake another cake

MARTHA

Even as a very young woman my Grandmother Easter cares for everyone,

--and she makes the most delicious stews-- her bean bread ooh boy her bean bread—

She makes the family's clothes. Quilts everything she puts her hands on, and every evening, in the still mountain night, she sings lullabies to baby Junior. I think she sings them so she can coax Great Grandma Liza to sing with her.

AMAZING GRACE (CHEROKEE)

U ne la nv i u we tsi

I ga go yv he i

Hna quo tso sv wi yu lo se

I ga gu yv ho nv

MARTHA

Isn't that the sweetest picture? But let me back up a sec. (*Violin Sound effect here - Rewind*) There's one thing Great Grandma Liza has a bone to pick with her daughter Easter about. It's a big black bone from Mississippi, named Billy Bone.

My Granddaddy Billy Bone, a Choctaw and Black handsome somethin' from Mississippi! He's come to Harlan County with his brother to work in the mines.

HARDWORKING MINER COAL

No more sharecroppin'

No more pickin cotton

Now we finger poppin'

As we ride on up the road

We got coooal

We're working in the mines

*No more bushel pushin
No more stuffing cushion
No more field calling
Cos we gonna be a-hauling
Black goold, coal... we're working in the mines*

*Ain't nothing finer than a hard working miner
Yes, a hardworking miner in the coal mines.
(you ain't lying! That's right! Ad lib, laughter, conversations etc)*

*Got my sack for packin
Ain't no back a-trackin
I walked a good long while
Alabama, Arkansas
500 miles
Get that work up in the mine*

*Gonna hitch a ride
Maybe find my bride
Gonna make her my wife
I Got a brand new lease on life*

*Black gold, coal... we're working in the mines
Ain't nothing finer than a hard working miner
Yes, a hardworking miner in the coal mines.
(Ad lib, laughter, conversations etc)*

*And if they ask me if I ever used a hammer, YES SIR
And if they're telling me to hunk o haul that coal, YES SIR
And if they tell me to dig deeper in that hole in the ground YES SIR!*

There's nothing that I can't be told.

No more sharecroppin'

No more pickin cotton

Now we finger poppin'

As we ride on up the road

We got cooal

We're working in the mines

Ain't nothing finer than a hard working miner

Yes, a hardworking miner in the coal mines.

Coal...Coal...Coal...Coal...Coal...Coal...Coal.....

MARTHA

Those two brothers come up to the mountains with big dreams for a better life far away from sharecropping, which is just a fancy new word for slavery after the fact. But they don't know those ads they saw in Mississippi were meant to bring them in as strikebreakers.

STRIKE BREAKER SONG

Strikebreaker! Scab!

Don't cross that line

Strikebreaker! Scab!

No, we ain't colorblind

This ain't no open door

Our soul's at the company store

We ain't gonna take no more

Strikebreaker, gotta goooo!

No time to break no sweat

Or hunk a load, you better hit the road

You better backtrack 35, 45 miles

Strikebreaker! Scab!

No, you ain't gonna take our husbands' jobs!

Strikebreaker! Scab!

This ain't your world

Strikebreaker! Scab!

You play with fire you're gonna get burned

Taking sides is stirring the pot

Think again, you'll be forgot,

You're filthy, rotten, go pick some cotton

Strikebreaker, sca-a-a-b!!!

Scabby do wee, scabby do wah, scab, you can't stay here

You gotta go hooome!!

SAM

Bone Hill will continue, after the break.

SAM

Welcome back to Bone Hill. Before the break, the man who would become Martha's grandfather, Billy Bone, came to Kentucky with his brother to find work in the coal mines. Billy and his brother had seen ads back in Mississippi for coal mining jobs on Black Mountain - ads which had conveniently left out the fact that they'd have to cross a picket line in order to *get* those jobs. But once they arrive on Black Mountain, they don't have much choice - so they take the work, thrusting them into the midst of a simmering labor dispute that, as we'll hear, will continue to haunt the family. But before we get there - how did Billy Bone become part of Martha's family? Let's get back to Martha.

MARTHA

One day Billy Bone goes into town to get a haircut at the colored barber shop and that's where he sees my Grandma Easter... or as Grampa would put it, where she first caught his eye...

CAUGHT MY EYE

Dirty clothes from the mine

But a smile that warmed my soul

As you held the door for me.

Hello ma'am, good tidings

And my heart just a' pounding

Cause you were so beautiful to me

And we danced in the yellow moonlight

Round and round, a-spinning, a-spinning, spinning....

Underneath the stars you caught my eye.

You asked for my hand

And I asked for your family

A miner, nothing finer by me

A gentleman, I understand

Good kindness and humble ways

Be mine for the rest of my days

And we danced in the yellow moonlight

Round and round, a-spinning, a-spinning, spinning....

Underneath the stars you caught my eye.

And we danced in the yellow moonlight

Round and round, a-spinning, a-spinning, spinning....

Underneath the stars, catch me when I fall, you caught my eye.

MARTHA

Easter can't wait to run home and tell her mama her big news!!

EASTER (MARTHA)

Mama – I met someone!!! He's a miner!! They gave him the house next to the church. He's got his own house!

That's right mama, Old Man Turner's house -- who passed on last month. The one on the hill! And he wants to marry us!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA (SONI)

Thank you Jesus Lord, that's a good house.

EASTER

Mama, mama –it is!!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

My prayers are answered.

EASTER

My prayers!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

Praise Jesus!

EASTER

Things are going to change for us – and Junior, mama! They changin' already!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

We can finally hold our heads up!

EASTER

Little Junior's gonna have him a good daddy!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

Yes Lord! What's this fine miner's name?

EASTER

Mr. Billy Bone! His brother has a good job too!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

Bone? Who are his people? What camp's he from?

EASTER

His people are from Mississippi – he and his brother come all the way up from that way. And they have good jobs!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

Mississippi... They Choctaw people? What family they in?

EASTER

Yeah Choctaw....and Colored.

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

What?! You mean he's dark-

EASTER

Uh... He's Colored.

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

Well what color? You said he's Choctaw.

EASTER

And Colored, Mama.

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

No. You can't be marrying no Colored man. The whole town will be talking. Why, they already talking about how we had to put out Junior's daddy. People and their talk – I ain't having it!

EASTER

Wait, wait! Ain't this somethin' Mama? He's a good man!!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

A Colored man! They gonna call you a Jezebel! They gonna say that we--

EASTER

We, Mama, can't go on living like this – Junior's sleeping in a dresser drawer! This place is falling down. He's gonna marry us!

GREAT GRANDMOTHER LIZA

Bring me my bible – I'm gonna pray over you! Bring me my sage! We need to smudge this house down!

EASTER

Mama please – you gotta give him a chance, just meet him. I know you'll change your –
(DRUMMER Knock, knock knock)

MARTHA

And right then Billy Bone knocks on the door. Great Grandma Liza opens that door, sees him

standing there, big smile, holding two bouquets of flowers. Great Grandma Liza lets her flowers drop to the ground and she does not let him over that doorstep.

I AM UNDONE (Liza's verse)

I see my children

Vanish before me

Into the blackness

Far away from me

I am undone, a child is torn

I have no place to go

Heavy rain come and wash away the pain

But the stories of our lives

Roll on...

MUSIC FADES OUT

SAM

That concludes Act One of *Bone Hill*. Our story continues in Act Two - it's waiting for you in your feed right now.

END OF ACT ONE

INTERMISSION

BEGINNING OF ACT TWO

SAM

Welcome back to the Season Two finale of *Family Ghosts*. You're listening to a story called *Bone Hill*, by Martha Redbone, and you're about to start Act Two - which means if you haven't already listened to Act One, halt! Go back and do that before you listen to this episode.

At the end of Act One, Martha told us that her grandmother, Easter, had fallen in love with Billy Bone, a Black coal miner from Mississippi. And Easter's mother, Martha's great-grandmother Liza, was fearful about what would happen to the family's reputation if Easter married Billy.

But Easter and Billy were deeply in love with each other - and eventually, Liza relented.

Let's get back to Martha.

MARTHA

(BLUES INTRO)

Time passes. And my grandma Easter did move into that coal miner's house on the hill. And My Grandpa Billy IS a good man. He takes Easter's son as his own, even gives him his name, William Bone Jr. – so he's still Junior. They have two more children, my mama Janice and the baby girl, Sweetcake.

These are some happy years for Grandma Easter in that house up on the hill.

It's the turn of the 1960's.. Junior's a young man getting ready to make his way in the world, My Mama Janice is the soon--to--be valedictorian looking to get out of those mountains so she doesn't have to bake cakes and be stuck at home forever; daydreaming Sweetcake is a romantic teenager and Great Grandma Liza? Still sittin' up on that porch.

Back then in our house, the radio reigns supreme! It's the center of family entertainment. In fact we're the LAST family in the camp to own a TV. There was only one radio station, WHCN Harlan County, but it had everything on it, from the blues to the news.... The house was always brimming with activity, somebody was always doing something-- there were beans on the stove, bread in the oven, schoolwork doing and most of all, prepping the table for supper to be RIGHT ON TIME when Grampa Billy came home from another grueling day in the mine. But, no matter how tired he was, he always had a twinkle in his eye for Easter and his kids and a big ol hug that made everything alright! If Grampa Billy had his way, he'd be out fishing or hunting for possum, groundhog or squirrels for Grandma Easter to fix for stew, anything to keep from having to go back down in that hole.

But on this particular day, none of that mattered. There was another strike brewing, heard people were getting beat up over in Slab Fork. But Grampa Billy was in the Union now, an integrated Union, and he was prepared to stand with his brothers, Black AND White.

40 WHEELS second verse (coal strike)

40 wheels up high on our mountainside

Twass the coal trucks loading up a thousand miners

Haunt me.

Haunt me.

Haunt me.

Haunt me.

Heya heya haaa weya heya haaa

Heya heya haaa haa ha aho!

MARTHA

(Sorrowful Violin underscoring)

Hard times follows for our family up on Bone Hill.

Two years go by and with folks starvin' and no end in sight, we end up back down in that hole again. Grandpa Billy got hurt bad on the strike line but more than that, his spirit's been broken.

All the ladies set to work baking more cakes than ever to sell, trying to make a dollar outta fifteen cents. Billy Bone is only working part time and Junior gets pulled out of school some days to help him.

Got to be that Junior ended up working more at the mine than at his schoolwork. Two days one week, three days the next. And he was not pleased with this at all! Junior was a happy-go-lucky dreamer on his way to becoming a fine young man. And not to gossip... but I will- Junior was no bookworm like my Mama Janice. But what Junior DID know was that he wasn't fixing to be hauling coal the rest of his life, like my Grandpa Billy, who Junior watched slowly get ground down to a pulp and damn near lost his life in that hole but managed to escape with losing half his leg... Mm-mmm... Junior didn't want none of that.... he had dreams of seeing the world, making his mark. Junior had other plans...

MY COUNTRY TIS OF THEE

Mama loves me, she told me so

Her favorite baby, first born to go go go

Like Baby Jesus, grew to be a man

Got to branch out, see some of this land

I love my Papa, but can't follow his steps

I'm not going underground, I'm over that!

Cause my Country is calling me

And my Country Tis of Thee

I'm a soldier, brave and bolder,

Unafraid, I got it made

In the sweet land of liberty

My Country is calling me

Just like my Daddy, I'm a leader

I got my eyes on the prize, I got goals

And that coooool, black gold of the mountain

That's just something that I can't be sold

My mama love me down to my soul

I love my family, but I gotta go, go, go

My Country is calling me

And my Country Tis of Thee

I'm a soldier, brave and bolder,

Unafraid, I got it made

In this sweet land of liberty

My Country is calling me

There's a warmth in her heart, like a candle that flickers

*It reminds me that home will forever be
There's no place I love more than the land I was born
But there's a whole world out there for me to see*

*My Country is calling me
And my Country Tis of Thee
I'm a soldier, brave and bolder,
Unafraid, I got it made
In this sweet land of liberty
My Country is calling me*

*My Country Tis of Thee
Sweet Land of Liberty
I'm a soldier, brave and bolder,
Unafraid, I got it made
In this sweet land of liberty
My Country is calling me*

My Country is calling me, My Country is calling me, My Country is calling me....

SAM

Bone Hill will continue in a moment.

SAM

Welcome back to Bone Hill. Before the break, Martha's uncle, Junior, signed up for the US Army, and left Black Mountain. But the rest of the family is still living there in that house on the hill, with the porch overlooking the valley - Martha's great grandmother, Liza, Liza's daughter Easter and her husband Billy Bone, and Easter and Billy's remaining children - Janice and Sweetcake.

MARTHA

After Junior signs up for the Army and heads overseas, Grandma Easter keeps on baking and the two now teenage girls, Janice and Sweetcake, step up to bake and deliver cakes all across

the mountain to keep the family afloat. One regular customer was Mrs. Sizemore, the doctor's wife.

Not to gossip- but I will... Her son Tommy has taken a little shine to our Sweetcake and Sweetcake jumps quicker than white on rice to deliver those cakes.... Mrs Sizemore wouldn't approve but everyone knows our family. All hell would break loose if the town found out Tommy Sizemore was courtin' a colored girl, much less an INDIAN! But you know how love goes...

LOVE IS A SIMPLE THING

Don't want to be a shadow you'll forget,

Don't want to be a cardboard silhouette

I'm longing for the light...

Don't want to be the secret you keep today,

Don't want to be the kiss you blow away

I'm holding on tight as the world starts to quake.

CHORUS

And I'm not wrong

When it feels so right

Because LOVE.... is a simple thing

LOVE is a simple thing.

Gazing out the window, a silver moon

Whippoorwill singing his same old whippoorwill tune

In the same damn town, in the same dreams...

Will they ever change?

CHORUS

And I'm not wrong

When it feels so right

Because LOVE... is a simple thing

LOVE is a simple thing.

*And I'm not wrong
When it feels so good
Because LOVE... is a simple thing
LOVE is a simple thing.*

*And we're not wrong
When we are true
Because LOVE... is a simple thing
LOVE is a simple thing.*

*And we're not wrong
No, we're not wrong!
Because LOVE... is a simple thing
LOVE is a simple thing.*

MARTHA

Trouble is, that feller Creech and some peckerwoods was layin' for them at the bottom of the hollow. You know his kind – dumber than a coal bucket and meaner than a striped snake -- and just spoilin' for a fight.

MARTHA plays the entire CREECH/TOMMY/SWEETCAKE scene.

CREECH (MARTHA)

Hey Sweetcake, you gonna give the fellas a slice of that sweet cake you got?

SWEETCAKE

Go on Creech. You know I can't do that – I'm takin' these over to your daddy's soda shop – you can ask him the favor yourself –

CREECH

But it wouldn't taste half as sweet as it would from your pretty hands) – ain't that right Tommy?

TOMMY SIZEMORE

Easy Creech, you-you leave her be--

CREECH

'Tough titty said the kitty.....but the milk sho is sweet!' Hey mama's boy ... ain't your mama learn you to share?

TOMMY SIZEMORE

You shut your yap. You- you way cross the line now.

SWEETCAKE

Don't pay him no never mind – Come on, let's walk on now.

CREECH

Oh, so you gonna keep it all for yourself Tommy? You got yourself] a taste for that sweet nigger cake?

TOMMY SIZEMORE

Watch it now, Creech – Sweetcakes. she ain't no nigger she just as white as you--

CREECH

Oh you sayin' old nigger Bones ain't her pappy? Maybe it was YOUR daddy what done the deed!

TOMMY SIZEMORE

You take that back Creech or I'll knock you in the middle of next week you--

CREECH

--or maybe it's HER daddy that's YOUR Pappy – I hear tell you got some coons hidin' up in your family tree – or is it Injuns you got swingin' from that tree— C'mon fellas let's get these coons -

SWEETCAKE

Stop!! Noooo!! Stop!! Tommy!! No, get away!!!

CHARLIE

Those sorry good for nothin's had been out spreein' on moonshine – they lit into Tommy and he barely escaped with his life.

MARTHA

And Sweetcake?

Sweetcake got beat somethin' awful – lucky thing her screams set the dogs a barkin' throughout the holler and those boys stopped short their treachery. Sweetcake's body was badly bruised, but the thing that broke her heart was to see Tommy Sizemore just lizzardin' out of there, so scared he ain't even look back.

Grampa Billy just about lost his mind. He said "Bring me my shotgun! I've got a bullet with his name on it, I'm gonna put him where even the devil won't find him! NO ONE does my baby girl like that no –

Where does this end? They done beat us on the strikeline – and now my baby girl's been–“

MARTHA

But Mrs. Sizemore, she doesn't call the law – all her money won't open her mouth– because she don't want the whole camp to find out her golden boy's fraternizing with a colored girl. Much less an Indian. Them Sizemores send their precious son away to school in a 30 second minute. And my grandparents know that without the Sizemore's say, the law ain't gonna do nothin' to those white boys. Sweetcake's traumatized by the whole experience. Her sparkle disappears, and she never hears or sees Tommy ever again....

SWEETCAKE

I am undone, a child is torn

I have no place to go

MARTHA

With Grandpa Billy out of work, Junior overseas, Grandma Easter, Sweetcake and my mama Janice baking around the clock to take up for the family, my mother Janice starts to feel walled in by all those mountains. She sees mountains everywhere and makes a vow to get as far away as soon as possible.

MARTHA

Gampa Billy Bone starts driving my mama Janice to deliver the cakes and they keep an eye on Creech's soda shop. Now, they can't refuse to deliver cakes there – as they need the money -- but they won't ever forget what happened to their Sweetcake.

(UNDERSCORE 1960's Civil Rights blues)

(FADE UNDERSCORE OUT TO AD BREAK)

SAM

Our story continues after the break.

(UNDERSCORE FADES BACK IN)

SAM

Welcome back to *Bone Hill*. Before the break, Martha's mom, Janice, had been reluctantly forced into the family business of selling cakes made by Martha's grandmother, Easter, at the local soda shop. The shop was owned by a white family, whose son Creech had brutally attacked Janice's sister, Sweetcake, when he saw Sweetcake walking through town with her white boyfriend. But Martha's family needs the money too much to stop doing business with Creech's parents, so Janice and her father, Billy Bone, keep delivering Easter's cakes to the soda shop. It's been a few years since the attack, and Janice has been dreaming of a life beyond Black Mountain for a long time.

MARTHA

It's the Civil Rights era. And one day when Grampa Billy is feelin' poorly my Mama Janice drives herself to Creech's soda shop. She'd had just about enough of bringing her cakes round the back to the hot, smoky kitchen, without so much as even an offer of water.

It was hotter than hell's basement that day, so she just went in the front door, sat herself down, ordered her a pop and a slice of her mama's lemon cakes

Wasn't nothing she planned or decided. She was just hot, tired, and thirsty.

Now the way my Mama tells it, she says that waitress wasn't having it – She said “We don't want no trouble. Y'all know we don't serve niggers. So just go on....GO ON! ”

So my mother left ...but..sometime later.. a match and a can of gas.

No one saw nothin' and no one said nothin' when that soda shop went up in flames. But after that my Mama needed to go. My mama Janice made her escape..... to New York City!

...1,2,3,4

BREAKDOWN FOR FREEDOM

We set off down that red dirt road

In my daddy's beat up Chevrolet

Saved my money, and I filled the tank

With nothing to fear, only goodness to thank

Maybe I'll be Queen for the day

Put my feet up, yeah, sleep in late

The world won't fall apart, just because I depart

And if you really need me, I'm not very far

I want to be freee, if only for a moment, Free....

Yeah yeah yeah

ALL

Jumped in my ride

Took the top down, let it all go

No He-males, just female

Breakdown for Freedom

Heya hey,

Heya hey,

Heya hey hey

No more waiting at old five and dime (doo doo doo!)

Don't ask the government, they ain't got the time for

Poor people, small people, we're all invisible

Take a number, keep my mouth shut, just tow the line

I want to be freee, for the rest of my life

Free.... Yeahyeahyeah

Jumped in my ride

Took the top down, let it all go

No He-males, just female

Breakdown for Freedom

Heya hey,

Heya hey,

Heya hey hey

I want to be freee, for the rest of my life

Free.... Yeah yeah yeah

Jumped in my ride

Took the top down, let it all go

No He-males, just female

Breakdown for Freedom

Heya hey,

Heya hey,

Heya hey hey

Heya hey,

Heya hey,

Heya hey hey

Breakdown, breakdown, breakdown for Freedom x8

MARTHA

Actually, she leaves with a one--way ticket on a Greyhound bus, but it felt like a convertible – My Mama was finally free!

But in the years after Janice left, black lung eventually got to Grandpa Billy Bone and he dies leaving Great Grandma Liza, Grandma Easter and Sweetcake alone -- left behind on Black Mountain.

EASTER/LIZA/SWEETCAKE

We are undone, a child is torn

We have no place to go

Heavy rain come, wash away the pain

But the stories of our lives

Roll on...

MUSIC FADES OUT

MARTHA

Fast forward, it's the 70's y'all . I know it sounds a bit crazy, but time is passing in the

mountains! Children have been born, cousins married – sometimes to each other...I'm joking... maybe.... I told you before we're the last family in the camp to own a TV, but it seems now we're just like any other American family... football on Sundays, beer in the fridge and lots of little secrets.

CHORUS

Hey Red!

MARTHA

Yep That's me. Back when I was 10 years old. Great Grandma Liza and Grandma Easter raise me cuz my mama's workin' up North and sending money.

LIZA

Red, get in here! I nearly finished your cousins' pretty hair. And we are late for revival.

(CHURCH ORGAN kicks in)

CHARLIE

Oh, you know they always make little Red sing in church.

[Sing Red, chatter, etc.]

ONE DROP RULE

LITTLE RED:

Ohhhh, Holyyyy...Shit.

What did I do wrong?

They say I'm different, but whyyyy??

JASON: *'Cause you're Black.*

LITTLE RED: *I don't fit in...*

And I ain't got good hair, chile.

But I'm the same as them

And we're family, have mercy on me!!!

All: You're One Drop...

LITTLE RED: *One Drop?*

All: One Drop...

LITTLE RED: *One Drop?*

All: One Drop... One Drop, One Drop, One Drop

LITTLE RED: When I crossed that river, I crossed the line

Found the reasons why we are blind

All: We are One Drop in the name of the law

We've been stripped down to the bone, all across this land

Tied up in shackles beside my fellow man

All: We are One Drop in the name of the law

Erased from our past, erased for the future

I guess my best might not be good enough for you, sir.

All: One Drop in the name of the law

ALL:

Invisible, disposable, replaceable, untraceable

Faceless and powerless, and what's the sense in all of this?

It's useless, excuses, but somehow we are used to it ALL OUR LIVES....

We can thank the good ol' US of A

That Old Divide and Conquer's the American Way

All: We are One Drop in the name of the law

And we are all the same in the eyes of the Spirit

Got to love one another, might as well get used to it

All: We are One Drop in the name of the law

All: One Drop... One Drop, One Drop, One Drop, etc

Ad libs: One Drop, Little bitty, Two Steps back, Three strikes and we're out

For what? Just like that , We're all the same, etc.

All: We are One Drop in the name of the... Law!!!

MARTHA

At the height of the revival, Great Grandma Liza gets winded. She sits down, weary, it's very peaceful, as if she's back on the porch way up on Bone Hill. And she falls asleep...

Great Grandma Liza passes away.

40 WHEELS

In our peaceful little world of Appalachia

Way up high, high on the hills among the clouds my people dwell

How sweet the silence, in the still of our hollows

We hear, the calling of our Lord Black Coal running through our veins

And in our blood

And in our land

And in these bones...

(Martha) From whence we came we shall return

(Soni) For the old ways our lessons learnt

(MARTHA/SONI) From whence all darkness comes the light

(Martha) I'll defend my right to rest my soul...

(ALL) Where our fathers dwell...

(ALL) And we will live forevermore...

Bloody Harlan, Kentucky

40 wheels up high on our mountainside

All our people coming to bring my Mamaw home... Haunt me.

Heya heya haaa weya heya haa

Wey hey na ha nv heya haaaa hey

SAM

After the break, a funeral for Liza - where the secret of her long-held silence is finally revealed.

SAM

Welcome back to *Bone Hill*. Before the break, Martha told us about the death of her great grandmother, Liza. Liza had been living on Black Mountain ever since her parents, Joe and Mama Mason, made their way back to Bone Hill and reclaimed the ancestral land that was taken from them. But not long after that, Joe and Mama Mason had died very suddenly when Liza was still young. Liza had never spoken to most of her family about her parents' death. She'd never spoken much at all, really. And with Liza's passing, the story of what happened in that pivotal moment is in danger of being lost forever.

MARTHA

All of Harlan County is coming to pay their respects. Everybody from the Clinch to the Smokies.

And Grandma Easter's children finally all come home.

Junior returns from Oklahoma. He moved there with army buddies, married a local Cherokee girl and he became a farmer.

My mama Janice returns from her cosmopolitan life in New York City where she joined in with the Black Arts movement.

And Sweetcake? Sweetcake stayed home to care for her mother and grandmother. She feels a mite superior to her siblings who she feels took the easy way out.

(DRUMMER: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK) And surprise! A white lady shows up...

(UNDERSCORE)

Remember way, way back in the story I said Great Grandma Liza had two children who survived? Well Aunt Nora is Grandma Easter's sister. She's been living in California and passing for white for decades!

Aunt Nora is the most estranged by far of those who left the mountains, she feels very superior to her old home. If not a shade guilty.

She hadn't seen her mother for almost 30 years and returns only now that she's dead.

Aunt Nora arrives with strong opinions about the funeral. Opinions she shares with Grandma Easter alone in a corner. Uncle Junior, my mama Janice and Sweetcake start muttering amongst themselves too. And Uncle Junior said...

JUNIOR

That strange old half white bird can't just show up and have a say in how it's gonna go. Great Grandma Liza's got to be buried the Cherokee way –

SWEETCAKE

Aunt Nora's whiter than flour!

MARTHA

My mama Janice is not having it. She said,

JANICE

Forget about Aunt Nora. I want to know why no fuss was never made when Daddy died? He barely got a pine box!

MARTHA

Sweetcake said,

SWEETCAKE

That ain't fair –there was no extra money to—

MARTHA

And my mama said,

JANICE

I ain't talking about the money, I'm talking about the how of it –

MARTHA

Sweetcake looked at my mama and said,

SWEETCAKE

Why you went and drove that convertible down here all big when we ain't had nothin'--

JANICE

Uh, excuse you, that was a rent-a-car! Besides I sent something every month! And you don't know how expensive it is up north, in New York City. And anyway it's Junior that ain't never send nothin'.

MARTHA

Uncle Junior said,

JUNIOR

That ain't true. I send money too. ...when I can...But farming ain't as easy as baking cakes, you know.

JANICE

Ohhhh you the one wanted to get far away from the hole and Daddy's life but you may as well be a sharecropper! You're right back in the mud where HE started!

MARTHA

Grandma Easter, tired of hearing that bickering across the room in front of extended family and guests, hushes everybody up with a big ol'

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

MARTHA

(DRUMMER: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK). And that's when, like Lazarus back from the dead, Grandma Easter's first husband, Junior's paw, that good ole cherokee baseball player, Tibby, enters, sober and lookin' as lost as last year's Easter eggs!

TIBBY (Charlie)

I-I come to pay my respects..... I see y'all still here praying to the Lord

MARTHA

Well shit fire and save the matches! It's Tibby!

TIBBY

I know it ain't my place, but I come to pay my respects and, and to stand by my son. We both out in Oklahoma now –

EASTER

Mm. Well, thank you for coming all the way back here for mamaw

TIBBY

I figured y'all could use our help. Son, take this here line and start measurin' out, I'll be out directly to get the poles in the ground – we're going to need some strong branches –

MARTHA

The rest of the family runs to the window.

MARTHA

What's he doin' out there with them sticks--?

TIBBY

We probably gonna need some string...

MARTHA

They building some kind of structure. Look like some kinda scaffolding – What is he doing?
No wait – look there – they haulin' branches and...piling firewood underneath....Looks like...They
buildin' a funeral pyre!

EASTER

He done hired hisself as a bonepicker. Tibby! What in Baby Jesus's name?!

MARTHA

Tibby looks up from the pile of wood and he calls out...

TIBBY

Woman you all over the place. You still singin' about baby Jesus with them Bible thumpers --
burnin' sage too. You all over the place! You know we got to do this right. Your mother
needs her homecoming the right way.

EASTER

The right way?! Wait, who nominated you to-

TIBBY

My son asked me to come here and help do this right. Great Grandma Liza was 102. We all
need to honor her right - We knew where y'all womens was gonna need some help. You
forget your ways but it's alright, Easter, I'm back.

EASTER

Back?! Back?? Help?!... Forget ?! How in hell's acre could I forget?... Had to drag you out the
gutter when Junior was just days old– you probably half drunk now – talkin' this mess—

TIBBY

Oh, never mind, I know you're all broke up. Easter, I'm sorry I done you wrong before. But
you ran me out of here before I found the red road. You ran me right out the life of my son.
But OUR WAYS saved me. And I can save this family as I saved myself.

EASTER

In all my born days! Save us? SAVE US?! No, Mamaw and I ain't never need no one...but
Billy...we...made this here family...

TIBBY

I ain't meant no harm. I brought tobacco, and sweet grass, and sage and...

EASTER

Well... just take that bearskin and wrap Mamaw up real good then.

TIBBY

Back in the old days when it was someone important, they'd hire people to cry. But we got our relations here -

EASTER

Gather round now y'all we gotta start our mournin'. And if there's something still unsettled, we gotta ask our questions. Ask anything you like, no matter what it is - no matter how strange it is. Just ask what's in your heart. Now's the time. Come round now y'all.

THE QUESTIONS (chanted, sung, changes rhythm, plaintive, urgent, discordant, soaring, gorgeous harmonies, from earthly to the beyond to chaos, fever pitch. These initial lines repeat, shift, and build to crescendo with everyone asking "What did you see" and Easter singing/shouting "Shall I tell them the truth?")

EASTER

Who will I turn to now?

JANICE

Why couldn't you just accept my Daddy?

JUNIOR

What will happen to my crops without your prayers?

EASTER

Who will guide me now?

SWEETCAKE

What else haven't you told us?

TIBBY

What were your stories?

JASON

Why was there silence? What did you see?

FRED

Great Grandma Liza. Great Grandma Liza. Great Grandma Liza. Well

JANICE

What happened when you were a little girl?

CHORUS

What did you see? What did you see? What did you see? What did you see?

EASTER

Shall I tell them the truth? Shall I tell them your truth?

CHORUS

Tell us. Tell us. Tell. Great Grandma Liza. Tell. Tell

(the CHORUS and EASTER are building to a crescendo)

TIBBY

Junior, get the kerosene!

TIBBY AND JUNIOR

Let's move it on outside. We gotta light the FIRE!!

MARTHA

And then Aunt Nora yells, "What are we a bunch of backwood heathens? What's all this mumbo jumbo?"

EASTER

THAT TEARS IT!

You all want to know why Mamaw hardly never talked? It wasn't just them Sizemores, it wasn't even ol' Whittaker.

She protected all of y'all from what she knew. She kept that story inside her because her parents souls never rested - They was lynched! LYNCHED BY THOSE PEOPLE WHAT TOOK OUR LAND when they made it back.

TWO DEAD INDIANS

High on our mountainside

Chinquapin tree hang low low low

'Twas my father and my mother

Staring at me skin and bones

EASTER

They never got sent off right, she never knew where exactly, but they bones is right here.
The whole of Harlan County rests on the bones of our people.

ALL

Our ancestors are in those mountains, our people are in that land.

MARTHA

Liza was just a small girl when she saw them hanged. The old time people knew it and could only whisper, but Grandma Easter had heard bits and pieces and she held fast Great Grandma Liza's truth. She'd seen her parents die, and had to live knowing they're souls had never been laid to rest.

I am undone, a child is torn

I have no place to go

Heavy rain come, wash away the pain

But the stories of our lives

Roll on...

High on our mountain

Blood in the creek

Red water, dead in the water

We fish so we can eat

And the people stand around

And pointing at me

And the people start talking

They talking bout me

I am undone, a child is torn

I have no place to go

Heavy rain come, wash away the pain

But the stories of our lives

Roll on...

MARTHA

All her life, Great Grandma Liza carried that mix of fear, shame, and helplessness. Liza was the woman who protected the family with silence. Who had kept our family together, and now had finally brought the family all back home again. This was a chance to make it right - to properly honor their memory. Pine box or big funeral, Great Grandma Liza would go the Cherokee way. Our people built mounds.

The truth is, Harlan County sits atop these Cherokee burial mounds. Right there by the Cumberland River. Along the ancient Black Mountain Trail.

The bones of my ancestors are buried in these hills. And now my Great Grandmother Liza's bones rest there too. We may have been-

ALL

-- driven away, murdered, erased from the census records, our bones dug up, written out of history,

MARTHA

But some of us stayed, some of us made it back, and some of us live on in other lands.

We may have blended with every race who came to our mountains and some that we found when we went out in the world. But we never lost who we are. Heck, I was raised in Harlan County, but today I live in Brooklyn, munch on Chile spiced dried Mango slices from Trader Joe's and even married an Englishman!...(Sorry, Liza)

But our home never leaves us, our bones are in those hills and will always call us back to our land. Our sacred land. And a land which, when we travel, lives on in our stories and our songs....

ALL

We roll on....

ROLL ON INTO

Roll on...

Roll on...

Roll on...

Roll on...

SAM

Bone Hill was written by Martha Redbone and Aaron Whitby, and featured performances by Martha, Aaron, Soni Moreno, Charlie Burnham, Marvin Sewell, Jerome Harris, Fred Cash, and Rocky Bryant. All the music in this episode was produced and mixed by Jason Gambrell, and Engineered by Amon Drum at Bridge Studios in Brooklyn.

Family Ghosts is hosted and produced by me, Sam Dingman, with Odelia Rubin, Jennifer Lai, Jacob Smith, Lindsey Kratochwill, Jenna Hannum, and Janielle Kastner. Our story editor is Micaela Blei. This episode was mixed by Evan Arnett, and our theme music is by Luis Guerra. Special thanks this week to Mona Kayhan.. Executive producers for season two are myself along with Keith Reynolds and Alia Tavakolian at Spoke Media - find more great podcasts at [spoke media dot i o](http://spokemedia.io).

Ghost Family, this concludes our second season, and we want to thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for waiting out the long delay between seasons, and for listening to and sharing this season of stories once it finally arrived. We'll be back with a third season of *Family Ghosts* later this year, and between now and then, we'll be traveling to a few more cities to do some *Family Ghosts* live shows - please follow us for updates on Twitter and Instagram at [famghoshow](https://famghoshow.com) - that's f-a-m-g-h-o-show. In the meantime, keep an eye on this feed for bonus episodes all summer long, and if you want to help make the future of *Family Ghosts* even more exciting, please consider becoming a member of the Kindred Spirits on Patreon, at [patreon dot com slash family ghosts](https://patreon.com/familyghosts). Kindred Spirits get to hear exclusive bonus episodes that aren't available anywhere else, early access to season three, discounts on live show tickets, and a whole lot more.

Thank you, Ghost Family, for listening to *Family Ghosts*, where every house is haunted.