

Johnny Got a Gun  
Words and Music by Tom Paxton

Johnny's mum and dad both worked long hours,  
They worked on the weekends too.  
Johnny was eleven, but they had no notion  
Of what Johnny was going through.  
Johnny got pushed and Johnny got robbed  
And it made him feel chicken to run.  
Big kids picked on Johnny every day,  
Till Johnny went and got him a gun.

Johnny got a gun, he didn't bring it home;  
He covered it with rags and dirt.  
On his way to school he looked both ways,  
Then he hid it under his shirt.  
Johnny was afraid of going to school;  
There was always trouble in the halls.  
Fights in the boys' room, guns in the lockers,  
And little kids bouncing off the walls.

[Cho:]  
Johnny was afraid of dying young;  
Everybody he knew had a gun.  
So Johnny got a gun,  
And every little thing looked cool.

First time Johnny flashed his gun,  
Everybody backed off fast.  
Everybody treated him differently, then.  
Johnny felt safe at last.  
Johnny had a gun and everybody knew.  
Everybody left him alone.  
Till he bumped a kid who was coming down the stairs,  
And the kid had a gun of his own.

The kid pushed Johnny, Johnny went down,  
And the kid had something to say.  
Pulled his gun; Johnny shot first,  
And he blew the other kid away.  
The police came and they took away the gun;  
Said he wouldn't need a gun any more.  
Took him to the station, sat him in a chair,  
And his feet didn't reach the floor.

[Cho:]

Johnny had a hearing plead self defence,  
Prosecutor said, "No way."  
Judge said "you're eleven, but you're killing like a man,

And it's gonna be a long, long stay."  
Johnny's mum and dad still work long hours,  
And knock on the unit door.  
Sit with Johnny in the visitor's room,  
And his feet don't reach the floor.

[Cho:]

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Everybody he knew had a gun.  
So Johnny got a gun,  
And every little thing looked cool.  
And his feet don't reach the floor.