

## Hawaii to Selma

Vicki Viotti

On March 25, 1965, Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>1</sup> led a march from Selma, Ala., to the state Capitol building in Montgomery<sup>2</sup>, an event of massive impact in the annals<sup>3</sup> of the civil rights movement<sup>4</sup>. The movie, "Selma," which opened Friday, is a retelling of that event, a half-century later.

But before the history was written, before the event even happened, the mere idea of it reverberated<sup>5</sup> with enough force to draw in marchers from across the country, even from across the Pacific Ocean. Hawaii's participants in the march brought flower leis that they draped on King's neck and on others in his group, leaving a stamp of aloha<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. : noun : Martin Luther King, Jr. "Born Michael King, Jr., January 15, 1929, [in] Atlanta, Georgia....Died April 4, 1968 (aged 39), Memphis, Tennessee....Cause of death, Assassination. " "Martin Luther King, Jr., was an American pastor, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs." *Martin Luther King, Jr.* – *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin\\_Luther\\_King,\\_Jr.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King,_Jr.) (Accessed January 18, 2015)

<sup>2</sup>Locate Selma and Montgomery, Alabama on the provided map. Map 01, Map 02

<sup>3</sup> annals : plural: noun : a record of events year by year; historical records

<sup>4</sup> civil rights movement : noun : [African-American] Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) or 1960s Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goals were to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and to secure legal recognition and federal protection of the citizenship rights enumerated in the Constitution and federal law." *Civil Rights Movement (1954-68)* – *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. [https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil\\_Rights\\_Movement](https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Movement) < accessed April 9, 2020 >

<sup>5</sup> reverberate : verb : (of a sound noise) be repeated several times as an echo; have continuing and serious effects

<sup>6</sup> aloha : noun : please write a definition of aloha

The concept that Selma represented — peaceful mobilization for justice<sup>7</sup> — resonated<sup>8</sup> with people in the young state of Hawaii, say those who have tracked the state's history of political movements. Despite its remoteness<sup>9</sup> from the struggles in the South, the islands had been dealing with their own civil rights awakening for decades.

For all the images of the "melting pot" — King himself acknowledged Hawaii as such when he spoke to the new state Legislature in 1959 — civil rights were part of the realignment<sup>10</sup> of Hawaii government and society, before and after statehood.

And so, when word came to a news reporter at the Honolulu Star-Bulletin that a contingent<sup>11</sup> from Hawaii wanted to join the march, Tomi Knaefler knew she wanted to chronicle<sup>12</sup> the event. Already interested in civil rights, Knaefler had contacts within the movement in Hawaii who called her only days before they were supposed to leave. Her editor and publisher agreed to send her to Alabama and, after the requisite<sup>13</sup> kamaaina chore of borrowing a warm coat, Knaefler was off.

Right from the start, being in the highly charged environment was an emotional experience, Knaefler said. She felt an almost instinctual<sup>14</sup> understanding of what was happening.

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<sup>7</sup> justice : noun : please write a definition of justice

<sup>8</sup> resonate : verb : produce or be filled with a deep, full reverberating sound; evoke or suggest images, memories, and emotions; (of an idea or action) meet with someone's agreement

<sup>9</sup>remoteness : noun : situated far from the main centers of population; distant; distant in time; having very little connection with or relationship to

<sup>10</sup> realignment : noun : change or restore to a different or former position or state

<sup>11</sup> contingent : noun : a group of people united by some common feature, forming part of a larger group

<sup>12</sup> chronicle : verb : record (a related series of historical events) in a factual and detailed way

<sup>13</sup> requisite : adjective : made necessary by particular circumstances or regulations

<sup>14</sup> instinctual : adjective : a natural or intuitive way of acting or thinking

"I knew what discrimination<sup>15</sup> was. ... You saw it all in their faces," she said.

Knaefler was covering a group that included Glenn Izutsu, student government head at the University of Hawaii; Dr. Robert Browne, a psychiatrist<sup>16</sup> who took a lot of the photos in Knaefler's photo collection that are shown on these pages; Charles Campbell, a teacher before becoming a state lawmaker; and Dr. Linus Pauling Jr., a physician and the son of the famed Nobel Prize<sup>17</sup>-winning scientist.

There was also Nona Ferdon, who then was a research fellow<sup>18</sup> at UH. Now in London, where she still maintains a clinical psychology<sup>19</sup> practice, Ferdon told the Star-Advertiser that "we went because we truly believed in the words on the banner we carried: 'Hawaii Knows Integration<sup>20</sup> Works,' and it seemed so at that time. Sadly I understand that those words aren't so apt today."

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<sup>15</sup> discrimination : noun : the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, esp. on the grounds of race, age, or sex; recognition and understanding of the difference between one thing and another

<sup>16</sup> psychiatrist : noun : a medical practitioner specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness

<sup>17</sup> Nobel Prize : noun : any of six international prizes awarded annually for outstanding work in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, economics (since 1969), and the promotion of peace. The Nobel Prizes, first awarded in 1901, were established by the will of Alfred Nobel and are traditionally awarded on December 10, the anniversary of his death. Both Sweden and Norway decide who will be awarded the prizes (Norway, the peace prize).

<sup>18</sup> research fellow : noun : a student or graduate [student] receiving a fellowship for a period of research

<sup>19</sup> clinical psychology : noun : the branch of psychology concerned with the assessment and treatment of mental illness and disability

<sup>20</sup> integration : noun : the action or process of integrating; integrate: verb: bring (people or groups with particular characteristics or needs) into equal participation in or membership of a social group or institution; desegregate (a school, neighborhood...), esp. racially

Ferdon recalled a quotation of Theodore Parker, the American abolitionist<sup>21</sup> whom King famously paraphrased in a speech observing that "the arc of the moral universe is [sic<sup>22</sup>] long, but it bends toward justice."<sup>23</sup>

"He speaks of bending the arc of history, and I think we did," she said. "Probably few people alive remember how it was before 1960. My childhood was spent in southern states — and I do remember."

Ferdon said a friend she knew from studies at Berkeley arranged for someone to transport her from Montgomery to the start of the march in Selma. Along the way, tension over the event was rising. One morning, three tires in their car went flat, likelier the result of sabotage<sup>24</sup> than a chance encounter with three nails on the road, she said.

"It began to dawn on us that we were in some danger. There were a lot [of] white<sup>25</sup> people lined up, saying, 'Bye-bye, blackbird,'<sup>26</sup> to us.

"The march was three or four days," she added. "President Johnson had sent out the National Guard<sup>27</sup>, and there were helicopters over us all the time."

For Knaepler, who met Ferdon as the march began, the experience was intense, despite her journalistic effort to remain a detached observer. She said it was the

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<sup>21</sup> abolitionist: noun: one who takes action to abolish a system, practice, or institution, such as slavery or child labor.

<sup>22</sup> sic : adverb : used in brackets after a copied or quoted word that appears odd or erroneous to show that the word is quoted exactly as it stands in the original

<sup>23</sup> Write your interpretation of the meaning for the Martin Luther King, Jr. quotation: "the arc of the moral universe is [sic<sup>23</sup>] long, but it bends toward justice."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>24</sup> sabotage : noun : the action of deliberately destroying, damaging, or obstructing (something), esp. for political or military advantage

<sup>25</sup> White : noun : belonging to or denoting a human group having light-colored skin (chiefly used of people of European extraction)

<sup>26</sup> Bye, Bye, Blackbird is a song originally published in 1926, and was played as a taunt over loudspeakers by segregationists opposed to the American Civil Right Movement. See Appendix A.

<sup>27</sup> National Guard : noun : (in the US) the primary reserve military force, partly maintained by the states but also available for federal use

conditions on the ground that affected the Hawaii contingent in much the same way as any of the other marchers.

"Part of the intensity of the march, one, there was the fear," she said. "There had been killings. You could just sense the negative feeling.

"The other part of the intensity was this coming together, this group with one purpose, you know? That was very, very strong. I suppose it's the same thing when you go to war, this feeling of brotherhood. And yet there's this fear, so the intensity is two ways, really."

Hawaii residents did generally sympathize with the African-American sensibilities about racial injustice, she said.

"More so, the people who really thought about it," she said. "The people at the university, the intelligentsia<sup>28</sup> were much more aware of things.

"But you could pick somebody in Nanakuli, and they would have feelings about it," Knaefler added. "They would understand. The Asians, you know, could understand it. But it was all sort of in their heart. ... I really call it part of their DNA to understand it."

In Hawaii, a lot had already changed by 1960, said William Hoshijo, executive director of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission. But before World War II there had been an historical experience that in some ways paralleled the discrimination of the South, he said. Some of the infamous<sup>29</sup> racially charged criminal cases of early 20th-century Hawaii were part of that.

"We lived in a very segregated society here, with segregation in housing and employment and, to some extent, in public accommodations," Hoshijo said. "We lived in a plantation economy. ... there was actually a consciousness that people who weren't white didn't get a fair shake."

Civil rights movements in Hawaii were tied to the labor union organizing, and that proved to be a fulcrum<sup>30</sup> for the establishment of a more integrated society,

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<sup>28</sup> intelligentsia : noun: intellectuals or highly educated people as a group, esp. when regarded as possessing culture and political influence

<sup>29</sup> infamous : adjective : well known for some bad quality or deed

<sup>30</sup> fulcrum : noun : the point on which a lever rests or is supported and on which it pivots; a thing that plays a central or essential role in an activity, event, or situation

Hoshijo said. Initial attempts at strikes<sup>31</sup> were made within discrete<sup>32</sup> ethnic groups, he said, but they failed.

"Through the labor movement there was a recognition here, though it was a hard realization, that racially or ethnically exclusive organizing in unions wouldn't work," he said. "It was only when as a strategy they realized we're all brothers under the skin; that's when they started to have success."

The Selma experience left indelible<sup>33</sup> marks on the marchers. Ferdon continued on a path of advocacy, for the Equal Rights Amendment<sup>34</sup> and other causes. In the intervening decades and in conversations with family members still in Hawaii, she has noted an increase of ethnic tension here beyond what she recalled from her time in the 1950s and '60s.

And she's disheartened to learn of the decrease in voter participation across the U.S.

"People died, people I know personally, for their right to vote, and now they can't be bothered," Ferdon said. "If we're going to have a democracy, we've got to work on it."

Still, Selma was an inspiration and Ferdon said she remains basically an optimist. And where Hawaii is concerned, Martin Luther King himself found this to be a hopeful place. He said as much when he addressed the first special session of the new state's Legislature, speaking before the House of Representatives on Sept. 17, 1959.

"You can never know what it means to those of us caught for the moment in the tragic and often dark midnight of man's inhumanity to man," he said, "to come to a place where we see the glowing daybreak of freedom and dignity and racial justice."

As for the new film, "Selma," Knaefler is anticipating a poignant experience, given that her emotional response is so strong, even now.

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<sup>31</sup> strike : noun : (of employees) refuse to work as a form of organized protest, typically in an attempt to obtain a particular concession or concessions from their employer

<sup>32</sup> discrete : adjective : individually separate and distinct

<sup>33</sup> indelible : adjective : not able to be forgotten or removed

<sup>34</sup> Equal Rights Amendment : noun : first proposed in 1923, then again in 1972, and ended in 1981. The Equal Rights Amendment seeks to give women equal rights: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

"I'm dying to see it," she said. "Friends have been asking to go together, and I said, 'I think the first time I see it, I just want to see it alone.' You know? I just want to ... I don't know, I just want to see it alone.

"The emotional impact is still there. I mean, how long has it been?"

*Images from the reading:*



01: A crowd gathered outside Brown Chapel in Selma, Ala., as Martin Luther King Jr. began the march with a sermon and prayers. The Hawaii contingent unfurled a large banner that read, "Hawaii knows integration works."





02: Dr. Martin Luther King wore a lei brought to him by participants from Hawaii.



03: From left: Henry Giugni, later to be a sergeant-at-arms in the U.S. Senate, Pauling, Tomi Knaefler, Glenn Izutsu and Dr. Robert Browne.



04: Among those who traveled from Hawaii to Alabama for the civil rights marches were, from left, Dr. Linus Pauling Jr. (son of famed chemist Linus Pauling), Nona Springel (now Nona Ferdon) and Glenn Izutsu.



05: Former Star-Bulletin writer Tomi Knaefler thumbed through one of the notebooks she used during that time.





06: Activist and comedian Dick Gregory, left, participated in the marches.



07: 2015 January 2 EDT - Selma Civil Rights March. Selma to Montgomery, AL., March 21 to 25, 1965. Upon arrival in Montgomery, these ladies put on an A-class lunch before driving us to Selma. PHOTO BY TOMI KNAEFLER



08: Spectators lined the side of the road to watch as the civil rights marchers passed by.



09: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., upper right, nearly disappeared in the crush of lei-draped civil rights leaders being interviewed by the news media.



Selma to Montgomery marches - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selma\\_to\\_Montgomery\\_marches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selma_to_Montgomery_marches)

# Selma to Montgomery marches

The three Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965 were part of the Selma Voting Rights Movement and led to the passage that year of the Voting Rights Act, a landmark federal achievement of the 1960s American Civil Rights Movement. Activists publicized the three protest marches to walk the 54-mile highway from Selma to the Alabama state capital of Montgomery as showing the desire of black American citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote, in defiance of segregationist repression.

A voters' registration campaign in Selma had been launched in 1963 by local African Americans, who formed the Dallas County Voters League (DCVL). Joined by organizers from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), they began working that year in a renewed effort to register black voters. Most of the millions of African Americans across the South had effectively been disenfranchised since the turn of the century by a series of discriminatory requirements and practices. Finding resistance by white officials to be intractable, even after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ending segregation, the DCVL invited Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the activists of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to join them. SCLC brought many prominent civil rights and civic leaders to Selma in January 1965. Local and regional protests began, with 3,000 persons arrested by the end of February.

On February 26, activist and deacon Jimmie Lee Jackson died after being mortally shot several days earlier by a state trooper during a peaceful march in Marion, Alabama. The community was sorrowed and outraged. To defuse and refocus the anger, SCLC Director of Direct Action James Bevel, who was directing SCLC's Selma Voting Rights Movement, called for a march of dramatic length, from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery. Bevel had been working on his Alabama Project for voting rights since late 1963.

The first march took place on March 7, 1965. Bevel, Amelia Boynton, and others helped organize it. The march gained the nickname "Bloody Sunday" after its 600 marchers were attacked at the Edmund Pettus Bridge after leaving Selma; state troopers and county posse attacked the unarmed marchers with billy clubs and tear gas. Boynton was one of those beaten unconscious; a picture of her lying wounded on the bridge was published and televised around the world. The second march took place March 9; troopers, police, and marchers confronted each other, but when the troopers stepped aside to let them pass, King led the marchers back to the church. He was seeking protection by a federal court for the march. That night, a white group beat and murdered civil rights activist James Reeb, a minister from Boston, who had come to Selma to march in the second march, which had been joined by many other clergy and sympathizers from across the country.

The violence of "Bloody Sunday" and of Reeb's death led to a national outcry and some acts of civil disobedience, targeting both the Alabama state and federal governments. The

protesters demanded protection for the Selma marchers and a new federal voting rights law to enable African Americans to register and vote without harassment. President Lyndon Johnson, whose administration had been working on a voting rights law, held a televised joint session of Congress on March 15 to ask for the bill's introduction and passage.

With Governor Wallace refusing to protect the marchers, President Johnson committed to do so. The third march started March 21. Protected by 2,000 soldiers of the U.S. Army, 1,900 members of the Alabama National Guard under Federal command, and many FBI agents and Federal Marshals, the marchers averaged 10 miles (16 km) a day along U.S. Route 80, known in Alabama as the "Jefferson Davis Highway". The marchers arrived in Montgomery on March 24 and at the Alabama State Capitol on March 25. With thousands having joined the campaign, 25,000 people entered the capital city that day in support of voting rights.

The route is memorialized as the Selma To Montgomery Voting Rights Trail, and is a U.S. National Historic Trail.

African-American Civil Rights Movement (1954–68) – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American\\_Civil\\_Rights\\_Movement\\_\(1954–68](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_Civil_Rights_Movement_(1954–68)  
< link no longer active >

# African-American Civil Rights Movement (1954–68)

The African-American Civil Rights Movement or 1960s Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goals were to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and to secure legal recognition and federal protection of the citizenship rights enumerated in the Constitution and federal law. This article covers the phase of the movement between 1954 and 1968, particularly in the South.

The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations and productive dialogues between activists and government authorities. Federal, state, and local governments, businesses, and communities often had to respond immediately to these situations that highlighted the inequities faced by African Americans. Forms of protest and/or civil disobedience included boycotts such as the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–56) in Alabama; "sit-ins" such as the influential Greensboro sit-ins (1960) in North Carolina; marches, such as the Selma to Montgomery marches (1965) in Alabama; and a wide range of other nonviolent activities.

Noted legislative achievements during this phase of the civil rights movement were passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that banned discrimination based on "race, color, religion, or national origin" in employment practices and public accommodations; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that restored and protected voting rights; the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, that dramatically opened entry to the U.S. to immigrants other than traditional European groups; and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, that banned discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. African Americans re-entered politics in the South, and across the country young people were inspired to take action.

A wave of inner city riots in black communities from 1964 through 1970 undercut support from the white community. The emergence of the Black Power movement, which lasted from about 1966 to 1975, challenged the established black leadership for its cooperative attitude and its nonviolence, and instead demanded political and economic self-sufficiency.

While most popular representations of the movement are centered on the leadership and philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr., many scholars note that the movement was far too diverse to be credited to one person, organization, or strategy. Sociologist Doug McAdam has stated that, "in King's case, it would be inaccurate to say that he was the leader of the

modern civil rights movement...but more importantly, there was no singular civil rights movement. The movement was, in fact, a coalition of thousands of local efforts nationwide, spanning several decades, hundreds of discrete groups, and all manner of strategies and tactics—legal, illegal, institutional, non-institutional, violent, non-violent. Without discounting King's importance, it would be sheer fiction to call him the leader of what was fundamentally an amorphous, fluid, dispersed movement."

Voting Rights Act of 1965 – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting\\_Rights\\_Act\\_of\\_1965](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voting_Rights_Act_of_1965)  
< accessed April 9, 2020 >

## Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a landmark piece of federal legislation in the United States that prohibits racial discrimination in voting.7]8] It was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson during the height of the American Civil Rights Movement on August 6, 1965, and Congress later amended the Act five times to expand its protections.7] Designed to enforce the voting rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the Act allowed for a mass enfranchisement of racial minorities throughout the country, especially in the South. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the Act is considered to be the most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever enacted in the country.9]

The Act contains numerous provisions that regulate the administration of elections. The Act's "general provisions" provide nationwide protections for voting rights. Section 2, for instance, prohibits any state or local government from imposing any voting law that results in discrimination against racial or language minorities. Additionally, the Act specifically outlaws literacy tests and similar devices that were historically used to disenfranchise racial minorities.

The Act also contains "special provisions" that apply to only certain jurisdictions. A core special provision is the Section 5 preclearance requirement, which prohibits certain jurisdictions from implementing any change affecting voting without receiving preapproval from the U.S. Attorney General or the U.S. District Court for D.C. that the change does not discriminate against protected minorities.10] Another special provision requires jurisdictions containing significant language minority populations to provide bilingual ballots and other election materials.

Section 5 and most other special provisions apply to jurisdictions encompassed by the "coverage formula" prescribed in Section 4(b). The coverage formula was originally designed to encompass jurisdictions that engaged in the most egregious voting discrimination in 1965, and Congress updated the formula in 1970 and 1975. In Shelby County v. Holder (2013), the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the coverage formula as unconstitutional, reasoning that it was no longer responsive to current conditions.11] The Court did not strike down Section 5, but without a coverage formula, Section 5 is unenforceable.12]

## APPENDIX A: LYRICS TO BYE BYE BLACKBIRD

BYE BYE BLACKBIRD – Lyrics – International Lyrics Playground.  
<http://lyricsplayground.com/alpha/songs/b/byebyeblackbird.shtml>  
 (Mort Dixon / Ray Henderson) < accessed April 9, 2020 >

BYE BYE BLACKBIRD  
 (Mort Dixon / Ray Henderson)

Gene Austin - 1926  
 Nick Lucas - 1926  
 Benny Krueger & His Orch. - 1926  
 Leo Reisman & His Orch. (Instr.)- 1926  
 Russ Morgan & His Orch. - 1948  
 Eddie Cantor (feat in the film "The Eddie Cantor Story") - 1953  
 Nina Simone - 1962  
 Debbie Reynolds (feat. in the film "What's The Matter With Helen") -  
 1971  
 The Smart Set (feat. in the film "Class Of '44") - 1973  
 Laura Dukes (feat. in the film "Things We Did Last Summer") - 1977  
 Joe Cocker (feat. in the film "Sleepless In Seattle) - 1993  
 Jon Hendricks (feat. in the film "People I Know") - 2002

Also recorded by:

Josephine Baker; Ray Charles; Frank Sinatra; Carmen McRae;  
 Mills Brothers; Carly Simon; Count Basie; Ricky Lee Jones;  
 The Bee Gees; John Coltrane; Ella Fitzgerald; Miles Davis;  
 Keith Jarrett; Judy Garland; Mitch Miller; Liza Minnelli;  
 Judy Henske; Albert Ayler; Ringo Starr: ..... and others.

[Lyrics:]

Blackbird, blackbird singing the blues all day  
 Right outside of my door  
 Blackbird, blackbird who do you sit and say  
 There's no sunshine in store

All thru the winter you hung around  
 Now I begin to feel homeward bound  
 Blackbird, blackbird gotta be on my way  
 Where there's sunshine galore

Pack up all my care and woe  
Here I go, singing low  
Bye bye blackbird  
Where somebody waits for me  
Sugar's sweet, so is she  
Bye bye blackbird

No one here can love and understand me  
Oh, what hard luck stories they all hand me  
Make my bed and light the light  
I'll arrive late tonight  
Blackbird, bye bye

Bluebird bluebird calling me far away  
I've been longing for you  
Bluebird bluebird what do I hear you say  
Skies are turning to blue

I'm like a flower that's fading here  
Where ev'ry hour is one long tear  
Bluebird bluebird this is my lucky day  
Now my dreams will come true

Pack up all my care and woe  
Here I go, singing low  
Bye bye blackbird  
Where somebody waits for me  
Sugar's sweet, so is she  
Bye bye blackbird

No one here can love and understand me  
Oh, what hard luck stories they all hand me  
Make my bed and light the light  
I'll arrive late tonight  
Blackbird, bye bye