

LONESOME BLUES

by

Alan Govenar and Akin Babatunde

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(The stage is dark. As the lights slowly come up, a train is heard in the distance. Blind Lemon enters, carrying a suitcase and wearing a suit and hat. It is winter. A lone figure in silhouette is upstage holding a guitar, sitting in place without moving as if he is suspended in time.)

BLIND LEMON.

Papa Solly! Papa Solly! Where is you? Where is my chauffeur? Just goin' to leave me out here at this train station here in Chicago? Ooh ... ooh ... cold ... nothin' like this December cold ... Anybody out there? Anybody? Nobody behind me? Goin' home to Texas to see my mama ... my mama.

(The lone figure plucks a haunting note on the guitar, conjuring thoughts within Blind Lemon that emerge as melodic sounds that take shape as a song. He sings a cappella)

I'M JUST SITTING HERE WONDERING
WILL A MATCHBOX HOLD MY CLOTHES?

JUST SITTIN' HERE WONDERING
WILL A MATCHBOX HOLD MY CLOTHES?

WELL, I'VE GOT SO MANY MATCHES
GOT NO WHERE TO GO

I'M JUST SITTING HERE WONDERING
WILL A MATCHBOX HOLD MY CLOTHES?

YES, SITTING HERE WONDERING
WILL A MATCHBOX HOLD MY CLOTHES?

WELL, I'VE GOT SO MANY MATCHES
GOT NO WHERE TO GO

I WENT DOWN TO THE RIVER
WALKED DOWN BY THE SEA

I WENT DOWN TO THE RIVER
WALKED DOWN BY THE SEA

BLIND LEMON. Any time you need some clarity, better take a walk by the river somewhere.

WELL, I GOT SO MANY FISHES ARGUING OVER ME

BLIND LEMON. I can't see them, but I sure can feel them.

I AIN'T AGAINST MARRIAGE
JUST CAN'T SETTLE DOWN

BLIND LEMON. You know, it's some variety in variety if you have a variety.

SAID, I AIN'T AGAINST MARRIAGE
JUST CAN'T SETTLE DOWN

You know, one of somethin' ain't worth nothin'. You understand?

YES, I'LL MAKE OUT LIKE A PREACHER
AND MOVE TOWN TO TOWN

Thank ya (*as if asking for a tip*) ... Thank ya (*reflection*)

Standin' at the corner, shakin' my cup, waitin' for a ... I'd say, "Thank ya."

TRACK 01 I Got Your Picture

BLIND LEMON. (*Sings with guitar accompaniment*)

I'VE GOT YOUR PICTURE
AND I'M GOING TO PUT IT IN A FRAME
I'VE GOT YOUR PICTURE,
I'LL PUT IT IN A FRAME, SHUCKING SUGAR
AND THEN IF YOU LEAVE TOWN,
I CAN SPY YOU JUST THE SAME

NOW, IF YOU DON'T LOVE ME,
PLEASE DON'T DOG ME AROUND, SHUCKING SUGAR
IF YOU DON'T LOVE ME,
PLEASE DON'T DOG ME AROUND

IF YOU DOG ME AROUND,
I KNOW YOU'LL PUT ME DOWN

LORD, I'M WORRIED HERE,
WORRIED EVERYWHERE

LORD, I'M WORRIED HERE,
WORRIED EVERYWHERE, SHUCKING SUGAR
MAN, I'VE JUST STARTED HOME,
AND I'LL NOT BE WORRIED THERE.

BLIND LEMON.
Papa Solly! Papa Solly!

(Guitar dissonance invokes an uncomfortable memory.)

TRACK 02 Dissonance

BLIND LEMON.
I know people talk about me.

I, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW

(Gossip music starts)

TRACK 03 Gossip

BLIND LEMON. They do.

I, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW
I ... I'LL TELL YOU LATER
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW

I, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW
I ... I'LL TELL YOU LATER
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW

I, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW
I ... I'LL TELL YOU LATER
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW

I, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW
I ... I'LL TELL YOU LATER
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW

FADE TRACK 03

(Blind Lemon becomes different people, evoking his memories of the gossip he heard in his community. The words are spoken in a kind of talking Blues with musical accompaniment. A taunting chant underlies the musical dialogue and gossip rap.)

BLIND LEMON.
Folks would say ...

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.
He moves from town to town, h'mmff.

BLIND LEMON.
I hear them say ...

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE.
Why does a man who's supposedly blind sometimes wear glasses?

BLIND LEMON.
And my friend Quince would say ...

BLIND LEMON AS QUINCE.
He's blind all right.

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE.
I don't mean sunglasses, just plain glasses.

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.
Ain't that weird? And if he was really blind, how could he tell the difference between a five-dollar bill and a one-dollar bill?

BLIND LEMON AS QUINCE.
Oooh, believe me, he's definitely blind.

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE.
Now, you know they say if you put a penny in his cup, he'll take it out and throw it away.
And he'll just say... Don't play me cheap.

CUT OUT TRACK 03

BLIND LEMON.
Don't play me cheap.

TRACK 04 Gossip part 2 (repeat of Track 03)

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.
I don't know why he looks so evil all the time.

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE.
I know what you mean. And, every time I pass by him, he don't say nothin'.

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.
He just looks at me with an attitude or like he wants to slit my throat.

BLIND LEMON AS QUINCE.
Well, he does speak to me.

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.
Yeah, what does he say?

BLIND LEMON AS EMMA.
Now, chile, I didn't even know the man could talk!

CUT OUT TRACK 04

(The Gossip Rap comes to an abrupt end.)

BLIND LEMON.
You don't know me ... you don't know me ...
You don't even know who I am.

(BLIND LEMON imagines his own birth.)

TRACK 05 Baby Born

BLIND LEMON.
Baby born ...

Baby born ...

A Jefferson baby born.

BLIND LEMON. *(Sings with guitar accompaniment)*

SAY, GATHER 'ROUND ME PEOPLE
LET ME TELL YOU A TRUE FACT

BLIND LEMON.
It's a boy!

GATHER 'ROUND ME PEOPLE
LET ME TELL YOU A TRUE FACT

BLIND LEMON.
Got them strange eyes ...

BLIND LEMON.
Can he see?
BLIND LEMON.

THAT TOUGH LUCK HAS STRUCK ME,
AND THE RATS IS SLEEPING IN MY HAT.

BLIND LEMON.
Blind. The youngest of seven children.

BLIND LEMON.
The Seventh Son.

BLIND LEMON.
Born to Alec and "Classie" Banks Jefferson.

BLIND LEMON.
This boy was born September 24, 1893.

BLIND LEMON.
The Seventh Son.

BLIND LEMON.
On a farm in Couchman, a small community near Wortham.

BLIND LEMON.
(singing in a Blues-like tone)
WHICH WAS A STOP
ON THE HOUSTON & CENTRAL LINE
ABOUT EIGHTY MILES
SOUTH OF DALLAS

BLIND LEMON.

SOUTH OF DALLAS

BLIND LEMON.
The Seventh Son.

(BLIND LEMON refutes the gossip about him, as if he is in the midst of the people in his community but is isolated from them.)

TRACK 06 Gossip Reprise

BLIND LEMON.

I, I KNOW SOMETHING THAT YOU DON'T KNOW
I, I'LL TELL YOU LATER
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW

I, I KNOW ...

BLIND LEMON AS QUINCE.

What do you mean you didn't know the man could talk? Of course, he could talk.

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.

He can sing, can't he?

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE.

Listen to the way you all sound. Do you think you could earn some money just standing out there on the corner singing?

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE.

That takes talent.

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE.

Y'all just a bunch of crabs in a barrel.

BLIND LEMON.

H'mmmpph. You! Yeah, you! Don't tell me that I'm nobody.

BLIND LEMON.

I, I KNOW SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW

BLIND LEMON.

You! Yeah, you ... You.

Don't you tell me that I'm nobody.

Your very own folks are sometimes the first to bring you down. I don't ask nobody for nothin', I take care of myself and if I choose to sing in a chock house on Saturday night and in a church house on Sunday morning ... that's my business. Mama told me, "Honey, when folks stop talking about you, that's when you have to worry."

TRACK 07 Baby Born Reprise

BLIND LEMON.

Baby born.

BLIND LEMON.

So, let them talk. I'm my own person. I'm my own man. I don't need nobody. I don't need nobody. A blind man don't see nothin' but darkness, and darkness ain't got no companion.

BLIND LEMON.

(sings "Steal Away" a cappella)

STEAL AWAY, STEAL AWAY
STEAL AWAY, TO JESUS

STEAL AWAY, STEAL AWAY HOME

I AIN'T GOT LONG...
I AIN'T GOT LONG (mmmm)
TO STAY HERE

MY LORD, HE CALLS ME
HE CALLS ME BY THE THUNDER
THE TRUMPET SOUNDS WITHIN MY SOUL
I AIN'T GOT LONG TO STAY HERE

GREEN TREES ARE BENDING
POOR SINNER STANDS A-TREMBLING
THE TRUMPET SOUNDS WITHIN MY SOUL
I AIN'T GOT LONG TO STAY HERE

STEAL AWAY, STEAL AWAY
STEAL AWAY, TO JESUS
STEAL AWAY, STEAL AWAY HOME
I AIN'T GOT LONG TO STAY HERE

TRACK 07.5 Steal Away End

BLIND LEMON.

All kinds of things ... people come to mind when you're sitting in the cold ... humpf ... like Leadbelly, Leadbelly. If he was he was here, he would give me a shot a liquor to warm me up, or say something stupid to make me laugh. Not just desert me out here.

Lead Belly hear me play for the first time in Deep Ellum ... Deep Ellum. Lead Belly come from East Texas with a 12-string guitar around 1912 and we travel together for the next four years. Deep Ellum.

TRACK 08 Deep Ellum Blues

BLIND LEMON.

WHEN YOU GO DOWN IN DEEP ELLUM
KEEP YOUR MONEY IN YOUR PANTS
'CUZ THEM REDHEADS IN DEEP ELLUM
NEVER GIVE A MAN A CHANCE
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM DEEP ELLUM BLUES
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM DEEP ELLUM BLUES

WHEN YOU GO DOWN ON DEEP ELLUM
JUST TO HAVE A LITTLE FUN
BETTER BRING FIFTEEN DOLLARS
WHEN THAT POLICEMAN COMES
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM DEEP ELLUM BLUES
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM DEEP ELLUM BLUES

WHEN YOU GO DOWN IN DEEP ELLUM
PUT SOME MONEY IN YOUR SOCK
OH, THEM RED-HEADED WOMEN
GONNA THROW YOU ON THE ROCKS
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM DEEP ELLUM BLUES
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM SWEET ELLUM BLUES

ONCE I KNEW A PREACHER
PREACHED THE BIBLE THROUGH AND THROUGH
BUT HE WENT DOWN ON DEEP ELLUM
NOW HIS, PREACHIN' DAYS ARE THROUGH
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM DEEP ELLUM BLUES
OH, SWEET MAMA,
DADDY'S GOT THEM SWEET ELLUM BLUES

BLUES ... BLUES ... BLUES

BLIND LEMON.

Lead Belly, is that you?

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

Hey, Lemon, is that you? You remember?

BLIND LEMON.

Yeah, I remember ... do you remember?

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

I remember ...

BLIND LEMON.

I brought to where I from – Wortham, south of Dallas, 80 miles. And when we get there I take you past Eddie Lee’s mercantile

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

What’s a mercantile?

BLIND LEMON.

A general store, fool. Then I take you to Jake Lee’s barbershop to get your haircut.

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

Yeah, I remember that. How can I forget? You always talking about Jake Lee’s. How you know where all the places be and can’t see?

BLIND LEMON.

Remember, I used to tell you, don’t be so smart. Just lead me on.

Jake Lee always let me stand in front of his shop – play my music. He say people listenin’ to me more likely to get their hair cut.

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

I don’t remember that ... But I remember you messin’ your shirt with that rib sandwich we buy with your tips when we got down the road, somewhere outside of Wortham.

BLIND LEMON.

Lead Belly, you remember ...

TRACK 09 Elm St. Blues

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

We used to travel from here to there.

BLIND LEMON.

There to here, man. Movin’.

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY.

Always movin’.

BLIND LEMON.

Hey, and them women we would meet and the hearts we would break ...

BLIND LEMON AS LEAD BELLY. (laughing)

Got us in a lot of trouble.

BLIND LEMON.

Uh ... Uh ... Oh ... Trouble ... Uh... Uh ... Oh ... (*Music fades in as Blind Lemon remembers Ida Mae Mack*) Now, that's some trouble.

FADE TRACK 09 (Music fades in)

BLIND LEMON AS IDA MAY MACK.

(*Sings "Elm Street Blues," channeling Ida Mae Mack*)

I WOKE UP AROUND MIDNIGHT
STARTED WALKING THE FLOOR

That's Ida May Mack singin', probably about me.

I WOKE UP AROUND MIDNIGHT
STARTED WALKING THE FLOOR

She really used to let me have it.

TRYING TO FIND MY BABY
AND SOME PLACE TO GO

I WALKED UP ELM, STARTED BACK DOWN MAIN
I WALKED UP ELM, STARTED BACK DOWN MAIN
AND THE WAY THAT I CRIED,
LORD, IT WAS A DIRTY SHAME

WALKIN' AIN'T SO EASY
WORRYING AIN'T SO GOOD,
WALKIN' AIN'T SO EASY
WORRYING AIN'T SO GOOD
FOR THESE MEN WILL MAKE YOU WORRY
MAKE YOU FEEL YOU WERE IN THE WOODS

Ida Mae, one sweet, but needy gal.

BLIND LEMON.

Now, Bobbie Cadillac ... oooh ... she could sing but she was as mean as they come.

TRACK 10 Carbolic Acid

BLIND LEMON.

She'd say ...

BLIND LEMON AS BOBBIE CADILLAC. (*sings "Carbolic Acid Blues"*)

MY HAND IS ITCHING,
MY HEART BEGAN TO BURN
MY HAND IS ITCHING,
MY HEART BEGAN TO BURN
I KNOW MY MAN DON'T WANT ME
DON'T WANT ME
AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE

BLIND LEMON.

AFTER WHAT SHE'S DONE

SHE TOLD ME SHE LOVED ANOTHER MAN
GRAVE WOULD BE MY RESTING PLACE
SHE TOLD ME SHE LOVED ANOTHER MAN
GRAVE WOULD BE MY RESTING PLACE
SHE LOOKED AT ME WITH BURNING EYES
THREW CARBOLIC ACID IN MY FACE

BLIND LEMON AS BOBBIE CADILLAC.

CARBOLIC ACID IS POISON,
THEY TELL YOU THAT IS SO
CARBOLIC ACID IS POISON,
THEY TELL YOU THAT IS SO

BLIND LEMON.

I GOT BURNED BY THE GAL I LOVE
CHILD, I HAVE TO LET HER GO

BLIND LEMON AS BOBBIE CADILLAC.

MY HAND IS ITCHING,
MY HEART BEGAN TO BURN

BLIND LEMON AS CONDUCTOR.

All Aboard!!

(We hear a train sound that invokes the memory of Blind Lemon travelling with Lead Belly)

TRACK 11 Choo Choo

BLIND LEMON.

Choo, choo, choo, choo!

BLIND LEMON (*Sings*)

IF I COULD CHOO CHOO ON AN ENGINE RUNNIN' SOMEWHERE, SOMEWHERE
IF I COULD CHOO CHOO ON AN ENGINE RUNNIN' SOMEWHERE, SOMEWHERE
DOUBLE SPEED

IF I COULD CHOO CHOO ON AN ENGINE RUNNIN' SOMEWHERE, SOMEWHERE
TRIPLE SPEED

IF WE COULD CHOO CHOO ON AN ENGINE WE COULD TRAVEL, UNWIND,
COME BACK HERE ANY TIME

IF I COULD CHOO CHOO ON AN ENGINE WE COULD TRAVEL, UNWIND,
COME BACK HERE ANY TIME

IN MY MIND THAT'D BE FINE

TRACK 12 Indiana Harbor

BLIND LEMON.

Me and Lead Belly wouldn't have to pay no money in them days to ride that train. We'd just get on. And the conductor would say ...

BLIND LEMON AS CONDUCTOR.

You boys sit down. You going to play music?

BLIND LEMON.

And Leadbelly tell him ...

BLIND LEMON AS LEADBELLY.

Yes, sir. And we'd like to get on and off whenever we want.

BLIND LEMON.

And when we get to Silver City, Lead Belly, you too busy gamblin', shootin' dice, and whatever you used to,
and still do. And over in the corner, Lillian Miller justa muckin' me up.

FADE TRACK 12

BLIND LEMON AS LILLIAN MILLER.

(*Blind Lemon uses the scarf he is wearing as a boa.*)

(*Sings Lillian Miller's "Indiana Harbor"*)

INDIANA HARBOR IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE
INDIANA HARBOR IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE

YOU SEE, WHEN MEN THEY GET THEIR PAYDAY,
THEY SPEND THEIR MONEY FREE

I DON'T WANT NO MAN GOT OTHER WOMEN ON HIS MIND
I DON'T WANT NO MAN GOT OTHER WOMEN ON HIS MIND
HE CAN NEVER PLEASE ME, SO THERE'S NO USE TRYING

MY MAN COME HOME LAST NIGHT
AND REALLY FELT LIKE GOLD
MY MAN COME HOME LAST NIGHT
AND REALLY FELT LIKE GOLD
HE DON'T THINK ABOUT HIS MAMA UNTIL HE THROUGH

I'LL STAY OUT THERE IN THE HARBOR LONG AS I PLEASE
I'LL STAY OUT THERE IN THE HARBOR LONG AS I PLEASE
ALL THE MEN WILD WHEN I GRAB MY DRESSES
ABOVE MY KNEES

FADE TRACK 12

BLIND LEMON AS LEADBELLY.

And when we get back to the railroad crossing at Deep Ellum, Hattie Hudson be waiting at the station with one of her girls to welcome us home, and we all know what she can do.

TRACK 13 Doggone My Good Luck Soul

BLIND LEMON AS HATTIE HUDSON.

(sings Hattie Hudson's "Doggone My Good Luck Soul")

I'VE GOT A GOLD HORSESHOE
GONNA PUT IT ON MY DOOR
DOGGONE MY GOOD LUCK SOUL
HEY, PUT IT ON MY DOOR
BAD LUCK IS GONE FROM HERE
IT CAN'T COME BACK NO MORE

OH LORD, I JUST GOT LUCKY
BELIEVE I'LL BET AND WIN
DOGGONE MY GOOD LUCK SOUL
HEY, BELIEVE I'LL BET AND WIN
THE MAN I GOT RIGHT NOW
TOOK HIM FROM MY BEST FRIEND

OH, LORDY, I CAN'T BE GOOD,
BELIEVE I'LL JUST QUIT TRYING
DOGGONE MY GOOD LUCK SOUL

HEY, BELIEVE I'LL JUST QUIT TRYING
AND IF HE SHOULD QUIT LOVING ME
I'LL THROW MYSELF AWAY

OH, WHERE'S THE MEAN FORTUNE TELLER
AND THE BLACK CAT THAT FAILED
DOGGONE MY GOOD LUCK SOUL
HEY, THE BLACK CAT THAT FAILED
COME 'ROUND TO SEE ME IN THE MORNING
WITH THE KEY TO THE JAIL
I GOT THREE GOOD MEN
BUT IT'S TWO MORE IN MY WAY
DOGGONE MY GOOD LUCK SOUL
HEY, TWO MORE IN MY WAY
IF THIS GOOD LUCK DON'T LEAVE ME,
I'LL THROW MYSELF AWAY

BLIND LEMON.

Yeah, we was travelin', lovin' and playin' ... And that made us tough. Now, they call him Lead Belly 'cause he had a belly of lead, and a stomach of steel. And he could work like no other.

BLIND LEMON AS THE FOREMAN.

We got work outside Wortham, work leading to Mexia! We need strong backs!

BLIND LEMON.

Oh, them fields, miles and miles of corn and oats, and cotton fields.

BLIND LEMON.

MM-MM MMM

MM-MM

MMM MMM

MM-MM MMM

MM-MM

MMM MMM

MM-MM MMM

MM-MM

MMM MMM

BLIND LEMON.

What is it like to be blind? Folks always ask me that. Now, I talked to some people who also blind, some could see a little, some who used to could see, and some, just like me.

Blind folks say, imagine seeing behind you with your eyes open, just open. That's the feeling of being blind.

TRACK 14 Blues Come to Texas

BLIND LEMON. (*sings "Blues Come To Texas"*)

WELL, THE BLUES COME TO TEXAS
LOPING LIKE A MULE
SAY, THE BLUES COME TO TEXAS
LOPING LIKE A MULE
GET YOU A HIGH BROWN, AND MAN,
SHE'S HARD TO FOOL

TRACK 15 Living in Darkness

BLIND LEMON.

Sometimes, when you sing the blues ... h'mmm

Well, when a man hurts within, he sings a church song; he's asking God for help. When a man sings the blues he's more or less singing out of himself. He's not asking anybody for help. He's simply crying out how he feels.

Ever feel them feelings in the back room of a dark and steamy blues joint? Seems like it's cut off from the rest of the world. Blues hits a nerve and that nerve hurts. It's dangerous. It can cause a man to hurt someone else.

BLIND LEMON.

LIV-ING IN DARK-NESS

IT'S A LONG JOHN
HE'S A LONG GONE
IT'S A LONG JOHN
HE'S A LONG GONE

LIKE A TURKEY THROUGH THE CORN
HE'S A LONG GONE
LIKE A TURKEY THROUGH THE CORN
HE'S LONG GONE

BOSS MAN, BOSS MAN
CAN'T YOU SEE
WHAT THIS WORK
IS DOING TO ME

(*African Calls*)

KA-KA KA BOO SHAY
A-KA-KA KA-KAI-YAY
KA-KA BOO NAI-NEH
AH-HA-HA HA-HAI BEY

I'M GONNA WORK THIS SUMMER
AIN'T GONNA WORK NO MORE
IF I WORK THIS SUMMER
BE IN BALTIMORE

HE'S A LONG JOHN
HE'S A LONG GONE
HE'S A LONG JOHN
HE'S A LONG GONE

HE'S A LONG JOHN
LONG GONE
HE'S A LONG JOHN
LONG GONE

AUTO-FOLLOW TRACK 16 Disgusted Blues

BLIND LEMON.

(Sings "Disgusted Blues")

I FEEL SO DISGUSTED
SO LOWDOWN IN MIND

SAID, I'M BLUE
AND DISGUSTED
SO LOWDOWN IN MIND
I AIN'T GOT NO MONEY
AND MY HONEY'S SO UNKIND

EVERY SATURDAY,
I WORKS AND I DRAW MY PAY,
EVERY SATURDAY, MAMA,
I WORKS AND I DRAW MY PAY
BUT AS SOON AS NIGHT COMES,
GOES OUT FOR A SPELL AND PLAY

EVERY SATURDAY
I FEEL SO DISGUSTED
I WORKS AND I DRAW MY PAY
SO LOWDOWN IN MIND
EVERY SATURDAY, MAMA
SAID, I'M BLUE AND DISGUSTED

I WORKS AND I DRAW MY PAY
SO LOWDOWN IN MIND
I AIN'T GOT NO MONEY
GOES OUT FOR A SPELL AND PLAY
AND MY HONEY'S SO UNKIND.

BLIND LEMON.

Water ... water (*coughing*) I need some water ... oooh, I can't feel my toes ... numb ... numb ... I been waitin' in this train station in Chicago ... seems like two hours ... seems like them days in Deep Ellum, standin' on that corner in front of R.T. Ashford Shoe Shine Parlor and Record Shop, tryin' to make a dime.

(The scene changes to a street in Deep Ellum.)

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

Blind Lemon ... errr... ahh.. Mr. Lemon.

BLIND LEMON.

Yeah, that's me.

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

I'm R.T. Ashford.

BLIND LEMON.

I know who you are. You own the R.T. Ashford Shoe Shine Parlor and Record Shop.

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

Ever heard of Paramount Records?

BLIND LEMON.

Yeah, I heard. (*aside*) Mr. Ashford liked what he heard when he heard me playing in front of his shop, and wrote off to Paramount Records, tellin' them about this blind street singer ... me ... Blind Lemon Jefferson.

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

Well, I wrote to them and got a reply back from a Mr. Mayo Williams.

BLIND LEMON.

Mayo Williams?

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

That's right. Mr. Mayo Williams, the first colored executive in a white recording company. And he's interested in recording you.

BLIND LEMON.

You never talked to me before. Now you come knocking on my door. I just used to be a blind man to you ... now there's something you want for me to do?

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

You see all these gals? I mean, I'm sure you heard about all these gals hanging around my shop.

BLIND LEMON.

Yeah, I see 'em.

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

They think they're going to make records and be the next Bessie Smith or Lillian Glinn. There's never been an opportunity like this for a down home bluesman like yourself.

BLIND LEMON.

What's it gonna pay?

BLIND LEMON AS R.T. ASHFORD.

More than you ever gonna get in that tin cup.

BLIND LEMON. *(aside)*

More than you ever gonna get in that tin cup.

BLIND LEMON.

Well, when Mr. Mayo Williams got to Dallas, he couldn't find any place to record me.

Can't come in here.

Can't come in here!

Record what here?

Get away from here!

So, we had to do it in Chicago.

In Chicago.

(We hear the sound of a train and the scene changes. A lone spotlight focuses on BLIND LEMON, sitting in front of a 1925 recording studio microphone singing "Broke and Hungry Blues.")

BLIND LEMON as RECORDING ENGINEER.

Blind Lemon, Take Three!

TRACK 17 Broke and Hungry Blues

BLIND LEMON.

(Sings "Broke and Hungry" Blues)

BROKE AND HUNGRY
HUNGRY, HUNGRY
BROKE AND HUNGRY
HUNGRY, HUNGRY

DO-DO DOO DO DO DO-DO-DO DO DO DO

BROKE AND HUNGRY
RAGGED AND DIRTY TOO
BROKE AND HUNGRY
RAGGED, DIRTY TOO
IF I CLEAN UP, SWEET MAMA,
CAN I COME HOME WITH YOU?

MOTHER, FATHER, SISTER, BROTHERLESS TOO
YES, I'M MOTHER, FATHER, SISTER, BROTHERLESS TOO
I REALLY WANT TO BE RIGHT AT HOME WITH YOU

BLIND LEMON.

Are we through yet, up here in these daggone studios in Chicago?

(Blind Lemon remembers the recording sessions and how he was bombarded with instructions.)

BLIND LEMON.

All I heard was ... Another take, please!

And Mr....

Jefferson ...

Can ...

You ...

Get ...

Mr. Jefferson, can you get ...

Can I get what? Can I get where?

Aaaaaaaaaaaaanotheerrr ... take, please.

Where's the microphone? Where's the microphone?

Another take, please. Blind Lemon ... take ... take ... take ...

TRACK 18 Broke and Hungry Blues 2

BLIND LEMON.

(singing the phrase like a broken record)

BROKE AND HUNGRY
BROKE AND HUNGRY
BROKE AND HUNGRY
I REALLY WANT TO BE ...

BLIND LEMON.

Are we through yet?

Yes. I was through.

And when they took me to the train to go back to Dallas, I barely had the time to count the money they give me ... kept thinkin' it not enough ... Snakes. Snakes. How much money I make from them snakes?

(Blind Lemon rocks back and forth and dozes. He hears dissonant voices that evoke a haunting presence in his dreams.)

TRACK 19 Black Snake Moan

BLIND LEMON.

I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
BLACK SNAKE WAS MAKIN' SUCH A RUCKUS IN MY ROOM
I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
BLACK SNAKE WAS MAKIN' SUCH A RUCKUS IN MY ROOM
BLACK SNAKE IS ALL I SEE
I WOKE UP THIS MORNING, BLACK SNAKE
WAS MOVED IN ON ME.

I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
SNAKES!

RUCKUS IN MY ROOM

I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
SNAKES!

RUCKUS IN MY ROOM

BLACK SNAKE IS 'CEITFUL,
CRAWLING ALL IN MY BED,
SAID, BLACK SNAKE IS 'CEITFUL,
CRAWLING ALL IN MY BED
I HAD A DREAM LAST NIGHT,
BLACK SNAKE KILLED MY BABY DEAD

Ruckus in my room.

LOOKA HERE, MAMA,
BLACK SNAKE IS WEARIN' MY CLOTHES
SAID, LOOKAH HERE, MAMA,
BLACK SNAKE IS WEARIN' MY CLOTHES
I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT
YOU THREW MY TRUNK OUTDOORS

YES, YOU DID

BLACK SNAKE IS CRAWLIN',
SAY HE DON'T MEAN NO HARM
SAID, BLACK SNAKE IS CRAWLIN',
HE DON'T MEAN NO HARM
I'M SICK AND TIRED
OF THAT BLACK SNAKE CAUSING ME HARM.

Yeah!

I WOKE UP THIS MORNING
I WOKE UP THIS MORNING

I don't know why I just keep on just letting you be wrapped around me.
I don't know why I just keep on just letting you be wrapped around me.

I - AY - AY - AY - AY
DON'T KNOW WHY-AY-AY

I don't know why I just keep on just letting you be wrapped around me.
I don't know why I just keep on just letting you be wrapped around me.

I - AY - AY - AY - AY
DON'T KNOW

I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M HERE
I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M THERE
I CAN'T TAKE IT NO MORE
IT'S TOO MUCH TO BEAR

I DON'T WHY I JUST KEEP ON
JUST LETTING YOU

I - AY - AY - AY - AY
DON'T KNOW WHY-AY-AY
I - AY - AY - AY - AY
DON'T KNOW WHY-AY-AY
I - AY - AY - AY - AY
DON'T KNOW WHY-AY-AY
I - AY - AY - AY - AY
DON'T KNOW WHY-AY-AY

BLIND LEMON.

(Wakes up and gasps for air) HA!

BLIND LEMON.

(making the sounds of a train)

Shhh ch ch ch ch,, Shhh ch ch ch ch...

BLIND LEMON.

Well, when I get back to Dallas, I go back to the same corner in Deep Ellum.

Folks on the street say ...

(Blind Lemon becomes people on the street, who haunt and admonish him in the distance.)

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE:

Didn't tell nobody those first couple of recordings didn't do too well.

BLIND LEMON AS SMITTIE:

After all that.

BLIND LEMON AS MISS ANNIE:

Didn't do too well.

BLIND LEMON.

What do you mean, after all that?

TRACK 20 Somebody's Calling My Name

BLIND LEMON.

(starts singing "Somebody's Calling My Name")

HUSH ... HUSH
SOMEBODY'S CALLING MY NAME
OH MY LORD, OH MY LORD, WHO CAN IT BE?
WHO CAN IT BE?

TRACK 21 Who Can It Be Underscore

(Blind Lemon hums.)

BLIND LEMON.

They sure can say they never heard me criticize nobody. Because wasn't nobody else playing like I played. Everybody else was standing around watching me, hoping they could do what I could do.

Everybody except Blind Willie Johnson.

Blind Willie Johnson who was standing on that same corner I used to stand on before I went to Chicago. There to become a star.

I heard him, and I said, Excuse me, man, but you standing on my corner. And Blind Willie Johnson said ...

BLIND LEMON as BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON.
Nobody's fault but mine. Nobody's fault but mine.

BLIND LEMON.

Blind Willie. He saw the Devil the first time in the face of his mother ...

his mother cheating on his father ...

taking up with another man

Mother threw lye in little Willie's face.

Poor Willie blind ... burned out his eyes with lye.

Blind Willie Johnson ... he seen the devil too many times in his mind's eye.

Blind Lemon, man of the flesh; Blind Willie, man of the spirit.

And Blind Willie Johnson said ...

BLIND LEMON as BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON.

I'm standing on God's corner. Just like you I can't see ... so every corner is heavenly to me.
Praise God.

BLIND LEMON.

I guess all God's children got a guitar, huh, man? Well, let me tell you something, I've been making my way playing up and down central track for as long as I can remember, playing in and out of these chock houses, from house parties with bootleg liquor to Saturday night suppers

serving iced tea, to church picnics, just to stay out of them cotton fields and make it back again to this corner.

BLIND LEMON as BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON.

Don't let the Devil steal the beat from the Lord. I don't strum the devil's chord.

BLIND LEMON.

Got a surprise for you, man. You standing on the Devil's corner.

TRACK 22 Blood of Jesus

BLIND LEMON as BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON.

(sings "Blood of Jesus")

I KNOW HIS BLOOD CAN MAKE ME WHOLE
I KNOW HIS BLOOD CAN MAKE ME WHOLE
JUST TO TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT
I KNOW HIS BLOOD CAN MAKE ME WHOLE

BLIND LEMON.

I WAS A SINNER JUST LIKE YOU
I WAS A SINNER JUST LIKE YOU
JUST TO TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT
I KNOW HIS BLOOD CAN MAKE ME WHOLE

BLIND LEMON as BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON.

BREAD OF HEAVEN
MAKE ME WHOLE
BREAD OF HEAVEN
MAKE ME WHOLE

BLIND LEMON.

JUST TO TOUCH THE
HEM OF HIS GARMENT
I KNOW HIS BLOOD CAN ...
WALK WITH ME
WALK WITH ME
WALK WITH ME

BLIND LEMON.

Humpf!

TRACK 23 Motherless Child

BLIND LEMON.

From that day on, Blind Willie Johnson had his corner, and I had mine.

BLIND LEMON.

(sings "Motherless Child")

SOMETIMES I FEEL
LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD.
SOMETIMES I FEEL
LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD,
A LONG WAY FROM HOME

A LONG WAY FROM HOME

BLIND LEMON.

Lonely... *(laughing to himself)* lonely.

There was the time I never thought I'd have nobody ... nobody. I don't know what I look like, but I think that I'm pretty ... pretty. And now the ladies tell me that I'm pretty. Well, pretty well down there. Hah! Jumpin' in and out bed is fun when it's fun. But when the fun runs out, it would be fun if somebody was just holding you closely ... without having to ... you know ... pay them. I like it. I like the touch of ... and ... uh ... well, just like anybody else, but I can't help thinking my little issue gets in the way. What is that issue? I can't see, dammit. But when it comes to a gal, I can tell you just what she looks like.

BLIND LEMON. *(sings "Teddy Bear Blues")*

I'M GONNA MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE FISH
IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA
I'M GONNA MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE FISH
IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA
AND STOP THESE TEXAS WOMEN
FROM ARGUING OVER ME.

BLIND LEMON.

Like, for instance, I just rub my hand down the side of this, I think, young thing, who feels like she's fine as wine. And from her fingertips, I can tell if she got a small or a big waist. And then, there's another, where I can run my hand down her arm, and if it feel like a turkey thigh instead of a drum stick, that's a big gal. But still, fine as wine. But I like big women. Now, that happened when I touched and rubbed the fingertips of a gal who became my wife, Roberta. Roberta. Let me tell you about Roberta. I don't care if she was ten years older than me but the way she love and take care of me made feel like I could truly see. So, who was Roberta?

The first time I heard her voice, felt like a bird done pecked at my heart. She was working at the bank when I come home from Chicago, a little afraid to take them ten-dollar bills home. I needed

a security box, and Roberta show me how. She lifted that key into my hand ...and put the key into that lock.

Then, she lead me outside, and we go to the café on Main, and we talk. I never been to that café, never thought they let someone like me inside. Make me think Roberta a light-skinned gal, high yellow. Well, Roberta say she live in Mexia, and that where go to get married, said she ready to settle down.

BLIND LEMON.

(sings "Teddy Bear Blues")

COME HERE, PRETTY MAMA,
GONNA TAKE YOU FAR ACROSS THE POND
COME HERE, PRETTY MAMA,
GONNA TAKE YOU FAR ACROSS THE POND
I'M GONNA MAKE MY STOP IN CHICAGO
WHERE THESE MONKEY MEN DON'T BELONG

THESE WOMEN IN CHICAGO,
THEY LIKES THEIR FASHIONS AND FORMS
THESE WOMEN IN CHICAGO,
THEY LIKES THEIR FASHIONS AND FORMS
BUT THESE WOMEN FROM TEXAS
SWEAR THEY JUST WON'T STAY HERE LONG

BLIND LEMON.

I'd sing that song and say, "Whup that piano, Mr. Piano Whupper. Whup it to the bricks. Oh, my. I feel just like a Teddy Bear."

BLIND LEMON.

I SAID, FAIR BROWN, LET ME BE YOUR TEDDY BEAR,
OH, CAN I BE YOUR TEDDY BEAR?
TIE A STRING ON MY NECK
AND I'LL FOLLOW YOU EVERYWHERE

BLIND LEMON.

Well, I went back here to Chicago many a time. But Roberta never came.
But them record Company executives couldn't get enough of me.

(Blind Lemon as if awaiting a train, speaks in a talking blues rap-like beat.)

TRACK 24 Tick Tock Underscore

Tick tock!

And I went back and forth, not once, but many times.

Tick tock!

From train to train.

Tick tock!

Back and forth from Chicago to Dallas, Dallas to Chicago.

Tick tock!

Hoping he'd become...

Hoping I'd become...

...a star.

...a star.

Tick tock!

From March, back again in May.

Tick tock!

From May, back again in June.

Tick tock!

All in 1926.

Best-selling blues singer to date.

Tick tock!

From October 26, and back again on March 15.

Tick tock!

From 1926 to 1929.

Tick tock! More than 80 records!

CUT OUT TRACK 24 Tick Tock Underscore

Tick...tick...tick...toooooooooooooock.

BLIND LEMON as EMCEE.

(Blind Lemon mimics the voice of the emcee and crowd)

It was March 15, 1927. And I'm sure that Paramount Records was proud to present me, their newest King of Country Blues, Mr. Lemon.

And...Crystal Springs, Texas, is proud to present the newest King of Country Blues, Mr. Lemon. Brought to you by Dr. Charlie's Medicine Show.

Stop the pushing.

Stop the shoving.

Move out the way.

Stop the shoving.

Excuse me. Excuse me.

You're in my way.

I want to get to the show.

Move, move.

Ladies and gentlemen, due to the large crowds of fans that have turned out today, and instead of turning you all away, we are going to have the show outdoors. And now, the newest King of country blues, Mr. Blind Lemon Jefferson.

BLIND LEMON.

Hey, y'all! How ya'll doing! Good evening, folks. I'd like to thank you all for buying my records. I can't tell you how glad I am to be back home in Texas. So, I'm going to ask a little favor of you.

I want to do a little bit of "Rabbit Foot Blues" - I thought you'd like that - because I feel just like a rabbit traveling up and down this countryside these days. But I'm doing it in style, 'cuz my record company bought me a new Ford, but I bought, and now am drivin' me a 1924 Dodge.

1, 2, whatcha gonna do?

TRACK 25 Rabbit Foot Blues

BLIND LEMON.

(sings "Rabbit Foot Blues")

BLUES JUMPED THE RABBIT
AND RAN IT ONE SOLID MILE
BLUES JUMPED THE RABBIT
AND RAN IT ONE SOLID MILE
RABBIT JUMPED DOWN AND CRIED
JUST LIKE A CHILD

YOU LOOK HUNGRY,
COME AND HAVE SOME LUNCH WITH ME
YEAH, YOU LOOK HUNGRY,
COME AND HAVE SOME LUNCH WITH ME
WELL, I'M TIRED OF THESE WOMEN CHASIN' AFTER ME

HITCH ME TO A WAGON
AND DRAG ME LIKE A MULE
HITCH ME TO A WAGON
AND DRAG ME LIKE A MULE
HITCH ME TO A WAGON
'CAUSE I AIN'T NOBODY'S FOOL
BLUES JUMPED THE RABBIT
AND RAN IT ONE SOLID MILE
BLUES JUMPED THE RABBIT
AND RAN IT ONE SOLID MILE
RABBIT JUMPED DOWN AND CRIED

BLIND LEMON.

Oh, look here no you don't hear me!

I SAID, HE CRIED

Poor little rabbit! Hah!

JUST LIKE A CHILD

Hah!

They say I sold more records than any other bluesman in my day ... Don't know what that means ... other than I got \$1,500 in the bank ... and a pocket watch with a gold chain ... and \$1,500 is a lot of money these days ...

Not everybody could afford to buy my records ... H'mmm... I may be high today and low tomorrow. Have somebody in the night, and nobody in the morning.

Like Roberta. Sometimes, you make it. And sometimes you don't. That's life, ain't it.

TRACK 26 In the Midst of the Blues

BLIND LEMON (*reflecting*).

IN THE MIDST OF THE BLUES
THERE'S A STRANGE HUE
IN THE MIDST OF A STEAMY ROOM
IN THE MIDST OF THE BLUES
THERE'S A STRANGE HUE
IN THE MIDST OF A STEAMY ROOM

IN THE MIDST OF THE BLUES
THERE'S A STRANGE HUE
IN THE MIDST OF A STEAMY ROOM
IN THE MIDST OF THE BLUES
THERE'S A STRANGE HUE
IN THE MIDST OF THE STEAMY ROOM

FADE TRACK 26

And what is this steamy room ... sometimes it takes a lifetime to figure it out... hmmpph. It's the room in which you face your blues ...

IN THE MIDST OF THE BLUES

Nobody really knows... Nobody knows what anybody knows. Just like nobody knows about me. Maybe I don't even know about me. I know I want to go home. I know I don't want to be lonely. Lonely.

BLIND LEMON. (*Sings "Christmas Eve Blues"*)

Oh, mama. This is going to be a hard winter. Look how it's snowing, Baby. Won't you hear me moan.

AH, JUST THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, MAMA
WON'T YOU HEAR ME MOAN?
AH, JUST THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, MAMA
WON'T YOU HEAR ME MOAN?
IF YOU TAKE ME BACK, BABY
I'LL GET YOU ANYTHING YOU NEED.

I HAD A GOOD CHANCE, BABY,
GIVE ME JUST ONE MORE,
I HAD A GOOD CHANCE, BABY,
GIVE ME JUST ONE MORE,
I'M GONNA CHANGE THE WAY I'M LOVING,
LIKE YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

I KNOW I DID YOU WRONG,
I'M JUST AS SORRY AS I CAN BE,
MMMM, SORRY AS I CAN BE
JUST THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, MAMA
DONE WETTED MY WHOLE COAT SLEEVE.

JUST THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS,
LET ME BRING YOU A PRESENT TONIGHT,
JUST THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS,
LET ME BRING YOU A PRESENT TONIGHT,
I'M GONNA BE YOUR SANTA CLAUSE
EVEN IF MY WHISKERS AIN'T WHITE

BLIND LEMON.
Christmas Eve Blues, folks!

BLIND LEMON. (*Shivers, acknowledging the cold*)
Hah! Is my livin' in vain? ... my livin' in vain ... 'course not.

TRACK 27 Happy New Year Blues

BLIND LEMON.
(*sings "Happy New Year Blues"*)

OH YEAH, GONNA TELL YOU A STORY
GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

WELL, I'M THINKING 'BOUT THE YEAR
NINETEEN AND TWENTY-NINE.

YES, I AM.

SAID, I'M THINKING 'BOUT THE YEAR
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE.

For sure.

GOT ME A POCKET FULL OF MONEY
HONEY, I'M DOIN' JUST FINE.

MM-HM ...

WELL, I HATE TO DRINK ON NEW YEAR,
'CUZ THAT WHISKEY THEY MAKE IS STRONG.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT
I HATE TO DRINK ON NEW YEAR
'CUZ THAT WHISKEY THEY MAKE IS STRONG.
AND NEVER BROUGHT TO MIND
WELL, A MAN DRINK ON NEW YEAR
HE WILL BE DRUNK THE WHOLE YEAR LONG
YES, HE WILL.
I KNOW FOR SURE
DOO DOO, DOO, DOO
DOO DOO, DOO, DOO
DOO DOO, DOO, DOO
DOO DOO, DOO, DOO
DOO DOO, DOO, DOO

FADE TRACK 27

BLIND LEMON.

I guess I touch people lives through just livin' ... and livin' is what I put in my songs ... longin' for love, need to escape ... simple things that make us laugh and help us get by, even when we don't have enough. My 80 songs talk about things we all live through ...

TRACK 28 Yo-Yo/Mosquito/War Medley

BLIND LEMON.

(BLIND LEMON sings a medley of his songs.)

I WOULD GO YO-YO-ING,
BUT I BROKE MY YO-YO STRING
I WOULD GO YO-YO-ING,
BUT I BROKE MY YO-YO STRING.
I BELIEVE MY BABY'S GOING CRAZY,
LOSING HER MIND, LORD,
THE WOMAN IS GOING INSANE.
I LOVE MY YO-YO

BETTER THAN ANYTHING I KNOW

I LOVE MY YO-YO
BETTER THAN ANYTHING I KNOW.

FUNNY
AND
FOOLISH,

I CAN'T
SHAKE THAT THING NO MORE.

BLIND LEMON.

LAMP SITTING IN MY KITCHEN,
MOSQUITOS ALL AROUND MY SCREEN
LAMP SITTING IN MY KITCHEN,
MOSQUITOS ALL AROUND MY SCREEN

IF I DON'T ARRANGE TO GET A MOSQUITO BOMB,
I'LL BE
SELDOM SEEN.

I BOUGHT ME A SPRAY LAST NIGHT
AND I SPRAYED ALL OVER MY HOUSE,
I BOUGHT ME A SPRAY LAST NIGHT,
AND I SPRAYED ALL OVER MY HOUSE,
MOSQUITOS ALL AROUND MY DOOR,
WON'T LEAVE NOBODY
WON'T LEAVE NOBODY OUT

BLIND LEMON.

WHATCH-A GONNA DO
WHEN THEY SEND YOUR MAN TO WAR?

WHATCH-A GONNA DO
WHEN THEY SEND YOUR MAN TO WAR?

WHATCH-A GONNA DO
WHEN THEY SEND YOUR MAN TO WAR?

I'M GONNA DRINK MUDDY WATER,
GON' SLEEP IN A HOLLOW LOG.

WHATCH-A GONNA DO?

WHATCH-A GONNA DO?

WHATCH-A GONNA DO?

BLIND LEMON.

Hup, two, three, four, left!

BLIND LEMON.

Never went to war ... at least not that kind of war. 17 million people died. I guess bein' blind and my music saved me ... but I'm at war now ... with the cold ... with the cold ... right now. Oh, Lord, don't let me freeze to death out here.

(BLIND LEMON gets out his guitar and sets it in his lap.)

TRACK 29 Where Shall I Be

BLIND LEMON.

(sings "Where I Shall I Be")

WHERE SHALL I BE WHEN THE FIRST TRUMPET SOUNDS?
WHERE SHALL I BE WHEN IT SOUNDS SO LOUD?
SOUNDS SO LOUD THAT IT RAISES THE DEAD,
WHERE SHALL I BE?

LOOK OVER YONDER
WHAT'S THAT I SEE?
WHERE SHALL I BE?
A BAND OF ANGELS,
COMING FOR ME,
WHERE SHALL I BE?

(BLIND LEMON puts down his guitar.)

TRACK 30 All I Want is That Pure Religion

(sings "All I Want Is That Pure Religion")

WELL, THE TRAIN IS COMIN'
DONE TURNED THE CURVE,

HALLELU

TRAIN IS COMING DONE TURNED THE CURVE,
FIXIN' TO LEAVE THIS SINFUL WORLD,
SO, YOU'RE GONNA NEED THAT PURE RELIGION.

HALLELU!

(BLIND LEMON talks to himself as he's close to death.)

BLIND LEMON.

Lord, it's cold up here in Chicago. It would be nice if somebody was waitin' with me. I wish they'd come on.

Lord, people came from everywhere to hear me sing.

Hey, hey! Anybody out there?!

Used to be a time, if they put their money down heavy, I'd sing heavy. If they put their money down light ... well ...

Papa Solly! Where is my chauffeur?

TRACK 31 So Cold in Chicago

BLIND LEMON.

DOO DOO DOO DOO

It's cold out here ... even the Devil himself needs a fur coat...

SO COLD IN CHICAGO
THE BIRDS CAN HARDLY SING.

DOO DOO DOO DOO

SO COLD IN CHICAGO,
BIRDS CAN HARDLY SING.
I DIDN'T GET MAD
'TIL YOU STOLE MY DIAMOND RING.

BLIND LEMON.

Where is my chauffeur...Papa Solly, where is you?

Ain't nothin' like a little rum to get you some...

A little gin can tell you when...

I GOT UP THIS MORNING,
BLUES WAS 'ROUND MY BED
I GOT UP THIS MORNING,
BLUES ALL IN MY HEAD
FIXIN' TO EAT MY SUPPER
AND THE BLUES ...
AND THE BLUES WAS IN MY ...

(Blind Lemon drops his cane and lowers his head as he dies.)

TRACK 32 My Casket Underscore

BLIND LEMON.

My casket was waitin' at the Post Office because no one was there to pick it up when they took it off the train.

My Mama had a premonition three days before I died. She was awakened by this bright white light that come in her room. She knew somethin' was wrong.

Miss Sarah, the white lady Mama worked for, says my belongings were mailed to her house and none of my jewelry was there.

Not even the fine pocket watch I used to wear.

Will I just be a forgotten memory? When you hear my name, will people say Who? Who? Not knowin' what I've done for all kinds of music. Who? I'm leavin' behind memories, but I want to leave so much more ...

TRACK 33 See That My Grave is Kept Clean

BLIND LEMON.

(sings "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean")

THERE'S JUST ONE KIND FAVOR I ASK OF YOU

See that my grave is kept clean.

THERE'S JUST ONE KIND FAVOR I ASK OF YOU
I ASK OF YOU

THERE'S JUST ONE KIND FAVOR I ASK
I ASK OF YOU

JUST SEE

JUST SEE THAT MY GRAVE

IS KEPT CLEAN.

END

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