



BROWNIE
McGHEE
BLUES

FA 2030

FOLKWAYS RECORD AND SERVICE CORP., N.Y.

BROWNIE MCGHEE BLUES

CARELESS LOVE
GOOD MORNING BLUES
SPORTING LIFE
ME AND SONNY
PAWNSHOP BLUES
MOVE TO KANSAS CITY
BETTY AND DUPREE

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David S. Thompson

BROWNIE

McGHEE

BLUES

FOLKWAYS RECORD AND SERVICE CORP., N.Y.

"Most of our blues were originals; they came from hollers. I very seldom heard my father sing a blues of someone else, though some old ones, like "Careless Love" he could sing any night, verse after verse, without a repeater. Well, his blues -- mostly they'd be about his work, or love, or worries, his ups and downs." - Brownie McGhee

Back in the depression decade Brownie McGhee had his own unwanted part of it, right in his pocket. He strummed his guitar, thinking of blues verses, snatches of melody, thinking of night and day and the last meal that was now a complaining grumble in his stomach, thinking of the "jook" joints and "mansions" where he'd made a hand-to-mouth living, on out-of-tune pianos, or with the voice that was his own and the guitar that was a warm, familiar friend. He thought of his mother, whom he hadn't seen since she'd gone north... and he thought it would be nice to go see her, and to bring her a blues like you'd bring your girl a store-bought brooch. But New York state, where she lived, seemed far away in those drab dusty days and he wasn't sure he'd ever make it. He began to whang his guitar, 'til it made a kind of sobbing sound, and he sang, at first softly and then with confidence as he re-shaped words and phrases, as tone and rhythm responded to the urging of his mood:

Well, I'm tired of runnin' around,
Well, I want to marry and settle down,
This old sportin' life, it is a mean life,
and it's killin' me.

Brownie is a natural, unaffected folk singer whose style has gained strength and stature, unobtrusively but steadily. He is a fine folk guitarist, with what Pete Seeger has called a "wonderful thumb-and-forefinger guitar picking style." His guitar sings and rings and whangs and talks to you. The spring of 1955 found him in a theatre off Broadway, where he sings a song and has a line or two in Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer Prize play, "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." He's sung in cellar taverns and concert halls, slab-sided churches, bordellos and at leading universities -- and in all of these places the same way, the way he sang in Tennessee, where he first learned the hollers, spirituals, blues and all manner of "jookin'" tunes from his father, George D. McGhee.

Folk singers do not think of making up a tune in quite the way most of us are prone to envision the process, as something rare and original, pulled out of the blue and put together with mysterious ingenuity. (This is, rather unfortunately for our understanding, the way more than one popular songsmith has explained it.) The folk meth-

od, to employ a broad cultural analogy, is more like that of the basket weaver who has use for a new basket and wants to make one of a certain utility (to carry its burden), with sure craftsmanship and beyond all this, with the feeling of art that has existed since the beginning of the human family. His material is at hand and he weaves with the dexterity of his craft, thoughtfully creating his design with the inner eye of the artist.

The hollers, that provide an inexhaustible source material for blues and other types of American Negro music are among the most ancient forms of Afro-American music, thought to derive from African music directly. In them rhythm and tone are ineffably interwoven, never disparate; the essence of style is contained in smallest shadings of tone, the most subtle off-beat rhythms, and these are as ineluctantly one as the components of an atom. In the same way the smallest phrase is charged with the full weight of the music, the full import of the song being sung. In an art in which creation begins with one note, both the freedom and discipline of art begin there as well. Nonetheless or perhaps partly because of it, this is a malleable style in which brief songs and snatches are moulded freshly each time they are re-created by a gifted singer. The biblical songs of Deborah and Miriam may have been very similar to blues and hollers in structure. (Both, in style, are most certainly of a venerable antiquity.) And when Brownie says of his father's blues that they were often original, that he made them up from hollers, he was referring to this process we've been discussing. (When you need a drink you dip the dipper in the well!)

You might, if you wished to put definition to the blues singer's art, say that originality is the re-arrangement of materials. But in clarifying the method, there is the danger of putting too much stress on improvisation for its own sake. The aim of the blues singer, were he suitably prodded to explain himself, might turn out to be not at all the uniqueness of his song (though he is proud of that, too) but the rightness of it. Poetry is a captured art, its freedom confined to the meter, the rhythm, the cadence and the rhyme, and blues are often poetry and may be printed as such. But blues to be sung are always an as yet unwritten poetry. They wait upon the singer. They are a living poetry, to be moulded to the singer, the voice, the guitar, to be fused with them in the fire of singing so that words and music are, for that moment of creation, inseparable.

"I worked for five or six years on a farm out near Kingsport. My uncle John Evans raised corn, tobacco, watermelon, hogs... There were country parties like Quiltin's and Corn Shuckin's. Someone might say, --
'We're gonna have a Chitlin' Strut tonight...'
- Brownie McGhee

How old was he when Brownie first wanted to be a singer, a musician? He shook his head. He couldn't remember a time when he hadn't wanted to sing. And that was not so hard to understand. In the home, it was true, his father went out to work, but he did so in order that he might come home and eat and kiss his wife and children and sing, sing any time he felt like it, so that if anyone was there to catch it, it would come on as naturally as breathing. It caught on, like that, with Brownie and his brother "Sticks" who have worked at it more or less all their lives. How could you say when he began. Do you remember when you first wanted to walk?

Christened Walter Brown McGhee, Brownie was born November 30, 1914, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He had two sisters and a brother as well as some half-sisters and half-brothers. At the age of four he had polio and he remembers that all right, because ever since then one leg has been shorter than the other.

He blew a bazooka, built it up with a tin horn to curve like a soprano sax of the meerschau type, but without keys. But his first home-made instrument, a banjo, as near as he can place the chronology of it, was made for him by Uncle John, the one who raised corn, tobacco, watermelon, hogs. The head was based on a round marshmallow tin and, because seasoned popular is brittle, Uncle John used a somewhat broad, out-sized piece for the neck, complete with the peg for the fifth string. That should make it visual and somewhat of an ugly duckling from which you brought forth swans, when you got the hang of it.

He played piano, beginning that some time after he'd first strummed the strings of his father's guitar, at the age of eight or thereabouts. As a youngster in Venore, where he went to grade school, there was an unpainted, slab-sided church, the Solomon Temple Baptist, where he sometimes played an old fashioned, foot-pumping organ. When no one was around he played blues on it. (As is well known, the Negro Baptists separate sharply between sacred and secular songs.) He also sometimes played guitar and piano for the Sanctified Church, which gave more of a jump beat to its hymns.

Brownie got to know many white hillbilly and folk singers, as well as Negroes. Among the blues singers who have been his friends and of whose influence he is proud, one notes that, while many of them are truly among the great blues singers, three are renowned guitarists -- Blind Boy Fuller, Lead Belly (Huddie Ledbetter), and Lonnie Johnson, the latter one of the pioneer links between folk blues and jazz. And of course there was blind Sonny Terry whose harmonica talks, has talked often to Brownie's guitar, and the guitar has talked right back, as you'll find in listening to "Me and Sonny"!

In grade school days, when most of us were changing our voices and getting an unmusical croak in the bargain, Brownie had it both ways -- a flexible voice enabled him to sing base parts and lead! He did this in one of several vocal groups that he either organized or helped to get together. One he organized was called The Golden Voices. They sang for churches, social gatherings, and the like, in Tennessee and nearby West Virginia. They knew spirituals, hillbilly ballads, folksongs, blues and popular standards such as "Let Me Call You Sweetheart."

When he was out of knee pants but couldn't prove it, he was kicked out of traveling shows, taken in by others, such as one run by an improbable character called "Jailhouse" who danced on roller skates. The Mighty Hagg Carnival had a Colored Minstrel Show attached to it and in the latter Brownie played some piano, guitar, and sang.

In Kingsport, Tennessee outside which his uncle had the farm, Brownie got in some high school and more and more outside jobs, not merely summer jobs. This part of the state is historical country. Daniel Boone, currently riding along on the Davy Crockett boom, cut through here and Jackson took the route when it was almost equally rough going.

Brownie's father worked in manufacturing firms early in this Century. The new urban South was on its way to becoming a reality, and was soon to be brought into a period of phenomenal growth, thanks to those everlasting hills and rivers -- and a dream called TVA. As in the instance of the pre-Emancipation period, when the economic drive spurred the moral one, so in the new South, smoke stacks and steel mills offered economic arguments for equality long before the Supreme Court brought once again into clear focus the facts of life in democracy. Perhaps this has nothing to do with the blues and Brownie, per se, but it cannot but be pertinent to anyone in this democracy, and was especially so to someone growing up there, where the schools were separate but the songs had been de-segregated for so many years no one could tell you when the process began!

At country parties, Brownie recalled, couples danced the slow drag and the "belly rub" to "Careless Love." The quilts were in patterns familiar to all country people, such as common patchwork and the more formal designs such as Lone Star. And at the Quiltin's, couples strayed off, so that in some respects it was like Aunt Dinah's party of the same name. The music was of course distinctive. Yet many tunes, such as "Careless Love", were played and sung all through the South, by all sorts of people and in all sorts of places.

In the course of his young days in Tennessee and thereabouts, Brownie sang in cellar places called "hole-in-the-wall taverns," in "jook joints" the early road houses that were bush league sporting houses and in the big houses that looked like mansions "but there were always two or more ways to get in -- or out." Of these, he said, "Each place had a different type of music but they all seemed to like blues. There were no amplifiers in those days and people listened to what you were singing."

The term "jookin'" (or "jukein'") as applied to music was already well established when Brownie first heard it from his father. "I'm goin' jookin'", meant taking the guitar and going somewhere to sing and play, not necessarily at a "jook joint." The curious will find this word described in A Dictionary of Americanisms, edited by Mitford M. Mathews (U. of Chicago Press) and in Menchan's The American Language, suppl. vol. II, p. 710. In these excellent works we learn that the word is clearly of West African origin, by way of Gullah, but is neither is the musical application of the word mentioned so that this may be a new usage in the American environment (as is the case with many words in jazz jargon of the early days.) If so, it becomes clearer why it came to be applied to the mechanical monster that nowadays flares in technicolor and spits corn!

"This poem, trying to ease heartbreak, uses the simplest of words. They go to a soft, brave melody." - Carl Sandburg, writing of "Careless Love" in The American Songbag (Scribner's)

"What I was mostly doing was making that guitar talk." - Brownie McGhee, speaking of guitar work in "Careless Love."

In the blues the song and the singer collaborate. This is not always because a singer tries to be different but because -- in physiological make-up and environmental influences -- he always is. Each singer brings to the song his own personality so that it inevitably bears the stamp of it. Of those who know only how to conform to a pattern, this would be barely discernible and of little importance, but of those who have found themselves and sing their own songs, it makes all the difference in the world.

Brownie, then, works with these materials, his voice, his guitar, and the words of songs that are traditional and songs that he has made up out of the welter of his own experience. The guitar adapts to the mood of the song. It may employ repetitive treble phrases, as in "Good Morning", which we may assume Brownie has heard Huddie sing many times, or it may, as in "Sportin' Life", provide a sort of counter-melody to the voice. In "Worried Mind" there are the warm chords, the sad lonely chords.

Oftentimes, in blues singing, there is a loose stringing together of verses, and it is likely every singer, including Brownie, does this from time to time. With Brownie, however, once he sets out to establish a blues as a part of his repertoire, he re-works the material to fit the song. He consciously strives for this unity of effect and, as a result, his blues have a convincing flow of narrative. Even in "Move To Kansas City" the type of blues where verses are tossed in, as it were, he builds up an amusing little story of amorous restlessness. This blues, incidentally, was often the music for a Chitlin' Strut, a kind of square dance with free couple steps, and his father was a caller at such dances. (Chitlin's: a Southern delicacy that was also known elsewhere in the days when farmers butchered their own pigs for their own tables. Chitlin's are chitterlings.)

From childhood on, Brownie got in the habit of making up blues from his own experiences. On traditional blues he re-arranged verses, added new ones, developed his own remarkable guitar style. In making up the sad, lonely chords of "Worried Mind" he was "playing to a feeling." Strange towns and strange women went into the inspiration of his blues.

In Brownie's singing, as it becomes poetry in song, there is deliberate enunciation, syllabic emphasis, and articulation of phrases. This latter feature is particularly notable in "Pawnshop Blues." In the first stanza an abundance of words crowds into each verse line, not as a technical feat of squeezing words into a melodic line but a forceful projection of theme. (Flamenco singers are so fond of this kind of thing that they say "ole"! at the conclusion.)

Before the last stanza, he says, "Play it one time before you sell it, guitar," and his guitar builds a fantasy of the three pawnshop balls as three bells, tinkling. Barely has the guitar ceased to delight in their ping than his voice worries about their possible sting!

This is a thoughtful presentation -- similar blues, sung sloppily, come a dime a dozen and have no poetry in their words -- and, drawing upon his own sweet-sour memories, Brownie makes a wallop good story of it. Blues, like spirituals, have the power to exorcise.

We have implied that "Move To Kansas City" is far from being lugubrious. In fact, it's a gutty blues with a boogie beat. But back in Tennessee the running chord, or barefoot ostenato, style was known otherwise. Where a string bass was played, this was termed a walking bass. Brownie's father called it "Walkin' the bases," and it was usually played by two guitars. Brownie does both and calls it his "jookin'" style. (He once had a band, His Jook House

Rockers.) It reminds me of a pick-up bass, played by a pianist with a short reach. But Brownie wasn't short on reach, merely doing the work of two guitars. "It's a follow-up rhythm," Brownie explained, "jumpin' from one note to another, rather than rolling into it."

In the best blues playing, as in the best jazz, rhythmic control is diffused in what one might term the tensions of tonal surfaces; one thinks of the rhythm as having a somewhat tactile quality. While this sounds in the best tradition of gobble-de-gook, one has often heard mentioned the texture of orchestral work in a Lunceford or Ellington job and it is this quality, in a different milieu, that we are thinking of in relation to Brownie's voice and guitar.

Some of Pete Seeger's remarks about Brownie's "thumb-and-forefinger guitar-picking style," are apropos. "Huddie," he said, "used a variation of it. But Brownie's is the classical early blues finger-picking style. Mississippi John Hurd uses it. Also, some modern hillbilly guitar pickers, like Merle Travis. I have been told by Merle personally that it is a traditional Negro style. The thumb keeps a steady downbeat, and the forefinger picks melodies and counter-melodies, usually off the beat but occasionally on the beat." Pete mentioned also how blues guitarists, "slur the note upward by stretching the string by pushing it to one side. Standard jazz knowledge, but new to most music teachers."

Brownie met Sonny Terry about the time of the latter's appearance at a Carnegie Hall concert in 1938. Brownie and Sonny have been friends ever since that time, and have gone through hard times and come into good -- for there is every now and then a kind of localized depression in the music business, that the statisticians don't get to hear about. Sonny is from North Carolina, and his background is like that of Brownie in many respects. The long, hard road North. The first break, through which he got the invitation to appear at the concert, was through phonograph records. (He's just brought out an exciting new "Washboard" album for FOLKWAYS, Album No. FP 6).

Sonny Terry combines voice and harmonica in a strange, elusive, haunting style completely his own. His dexterity of technique enables him to produce almost simultaneously -- the impression often is simultaneous -- harmonica wails and queer falsetto vocal sounds. He uses subtle tonal shadings and graduations of pitch to create unconventional folk music, a new and strange beauty of sound.

In "Me and Sonny" the guitar explodes in sound as Brownie rips into a take-off of Sonny in which you will hear bell-like lonesome train sounds and perhaps detect Sonny's falsetto coming through the reeds. Brownie lets his guitar talk as he reminisces on the strings, recalling to the listener those exchanges between guitar and harmonica; to listeners familiar with their "answer-back" sessions, the effect is especially amusing and astounding. To all listeners, however, the stanzas of this blues tell the story.

Brownie's guitar on "Betty and Dupree" leads into a song of violence with a plaintive melody and an easy rock. The song, in his interpretation, has the terrible pathos of an old ballad; not a word seems out of place, nor an accent; the sordid story of the last man to die by the hangman's noose in the state of Georgia has become a poignant saga and in the process of becoming a folksong it has taken on an objective, impersonal intimacy.

This song, and "Careless Love" are the earliest traditional blues he remembers his father singing. His version is based upon that of his father, as might be expected, and it was from him Brownie heard the story behind the song, or this one, because it has variants, too. In Atlanta, Georgia, a poor Colored boy was in love with a white girl who asked him for a diamond ring. In the course of robbing a store, he killed a man. Got away at first, made his way to Tennessee and then to Chicago. They caught him there, accepting mail, (not from the girl) and carried him back to Atlanta. He beat the law, hung himself in his cell, left word, "Be sure my mother gets my clothes." The scandal (as distinguished from the homicide) came out when he was returned to the jail and the girl came down to the jail to see if she could do anything for him.

There are many versions of "Betty and Dupree" including a white hillbilly tune. In a version quoted in Our Singing Country*, Dupree also went to Chicago, by which time he had "A forty-five in his bosom and a Colt kickin' in his hand." This shows white ballad influences. Another Dupree song, "Dupree's Jailhouse Blues", is said to have originated on a chain gang and is somber, deep and very blue. Odum and Johnson's Negro Workaday Songs (U. of N. C. Press) includes it.

According to a summary in Morris' Folk Songs From Florida, Frank Dupree of Abbeville, S.C., killed an Atlanta patrolman... Bur. of Vit. Stat. records list execution September 1, 1922. In this account, which has drama and incident of its own to offer, City Comptroller B. Graham West states: "On December 15, 1921, Dupree entered a jewelry store in Atlanta, snatched a diamond ring and, in his attempt to escape, he killed a policeman. He then ran down the street and into a hotel lobby. I was coming out of the hotel at the time, and, evidently, someone attempted to stop Dupree and he shot me twice -- once through the head and once through the shoulder. After several weeks in the hospital I recovered. Dupree escaped and, after a chase, through several states, was captured in Detroit, Michigan... Dupree was the last man in Georgia to be hanged, as all subsequent executions have been by electrocution."

As a final footnote to the confused story-behind-the story of the song, in one story Dupree makes his escape by car, in Brownie's and others, by train. In Brownie's version only, so far as we know, he "blind the passenger." This refers to riding "on the blind" i.e. to steal a ride on the baggage car behind the engine, a car that had no end doors, hence was called "the blind baggage." Brownie uses the term as a verb.

In Folk Song, USA (Duell, Sloan & Pearce) a relationship of "Careless Love" to "Dink's Blues" is noted. The refrain in the latter is "Fare thee well, oh honey, fare thee well." This is one of many references to near and distant relatives. In a familiar version it's a pregnancy song; the one in which "hung her apron low" comes in. It has been noted that it has a different harmonic structure than most blues but that lyrically it is a blues in general character. This is about as sound an educated guess as one could make.

However, it will be of interest to quote a stanza and chorus from a "white" version, the stanza of which, slightly varied, appears in variants of "John Henry" and may also be found in the Oxford Book of Elizabethan Verse. This "Careless Love" the editor tells us, is related to "The Lass of Roch Royal." It is from Folk Tunes From Mississippi, edited by Dr. George Herzog (now Professor of Anthropology at Indiana University), collected by Arthur Palmer Hudson, as sung by Mrs. Theodosia Bennet Long. (A mimeo publication of the Federal Theatre Project.)

"O who will shoe your little feet,
O who will glove your little white hands,
O who will kiss your red rose cheeks
When I am in some foreign land?"

"Careless love, careless love,
Has broken this sad heart of mine,
You've broken many a poor boy's heart
But you'll never break mine any more."

As one listens to Brownie's guitar, which is very fine indeed on this famous song, the song's exact ancestry no longer seems to matter. And on the second stanza, the insistent repetition of "Careless Love," is like the tolling of a bell, as sense and sound build up to the mournful inevitability of the last line of the stanza. This is a kind of re-woven poetry, with a quality of its own, and in poetry, as in all art, one kind does not exclude another.



SIDE I

CARELESS LOVE

Love, oh, love, oh, careless love,
Love, oh, love, oh, careless love,
(ohuh) Love, oh, love (um-umn...)
They call it careless love -
Don't you see what careless love has done.

(What'd it do...?)

Made me weep and it caused me to moan,
Careless love made me weep, careless love
has made Brownie moan,
Careless love, careless love made me weep,
Careless love have made this old boy moan,
Careless love made me lose my happy home.

Please don't never drive a stranger from your door,
Don't never drive a stranger way from your door,
Don't never drive a stranger
Well, away, way from your door,
Well, it may be your best friend you don't know.

(How you gonna sound?)

If I had-uh listened what my mama said,
(what would you've done?)

If I had listened what my mama said,
Well, if I had-uh listened
To what my dear old mama said,
I'd-uh been at home in mama's bed.

GOOD MORNING BLUES

Woke up this morning
Blues all around my head. (2)
Walked in to eat my breakfast,
I had the blues all in my bread.

I got the blues so bad,
I could feel 'em baby, with my natural hand. (2)
Well, I'm having so much trouble,
Blues I just can't understand.

I got the blues so bad
'Til it hurts my feet to walk. (2)
Well, I got the blues so bad,
That it hurts my tongue to talk.

I got blues in my water,
Blues all in my tea,
Blues in my water
Puts blues all in my tea.
Well, I got blues in my home, Lord,
They're between my wife and me.

Well, the blues aint nothin'
But a workin' man feelin' bad. (2)
Well, it's one of the worst old feelin's
That any poor man's ever had.

(Well, all right...)

Well, the blues got on me one morning,
Followed me to my good gal's door.
Well, the blues got on me one morning,
Followed me to my good girl's door.
Blues are just like my shadow
Follows me everywhere I go.

(How do you know where I'm going?)

SPORTING LIFE

Well, I'm tired of runnin' around,
Well, I want to marry and settle down,
This old sportin' life, it is a mean life,
and it's killin' me.

I got a letter, got a letter from my home,
All of my friends are, they are dead and gone,
It'll make you worry, it'll make you wonder
about days to come.

My mother, she used to talk to me,
Young and foolish and I could not see;
I have no mother, my sisters and brothers
won't talk to me.

She used to fall on her knees and pray,
These are the words Mother, she used to say:
"Brownie, oh, Brownie, please change
your ways."

I'm going to change my ways,
I'm getting older each and every day,
When I was young and foolish I was
easy led astray.

I've been a gambler and a cheater, too,
But now it's come my time to lose,
This old sportin' life is got the best hand,
what can I do?

There aint but one thing that I think that
I've done wrong,
B'lieved I lived this sportin' life, my friend,
most too long,
I say it's no good, please believe me,
please leave it alone.

SIDE II

ME AND SONNY

Well, just me and old Sonny Boy,
Well, old Sonny Terry is my friend. (2)
Well, you know we can drink more whiskey
Yes, than a gang of men.

Just me and old Sonny,
We been friends for a great long time. (2)
Well, when I didn't have the price of whiskey
Old Sonny had the price of a bottle of wine.

Well, me and old Sonny,
Aint gonna never have no fallin' out. (2)
Well, we done got wise to women, boys,
An' we know what it's all about.

(What do you know, guitar? Talk to
Sonny Boy for me now...)

When I was in trouble,
Had my hands and feet both tied. (2)
Well, I did not have to worry about old Sonny,
He was right there by my side.

(Whatcha say, Sonny Boy?)

PAWNSHOP BLUES

Well, I'm walkin' down the street this mornin',
Hear someone call my name and I could not stop,
(hey, hey)
Someone called me and I could not stop,
Well, boys, you know Brownie was broke and
hungry,
On my way to that old pawnshop.

Well, I went to the pawnshop, had my last suit
in my hand,
Yes, I went to the pawnshop,
Had my last suit of clothes in my hand,
I said, "Won't you give me a loan?
Try to help me, Mister Pawnshop Man."

Well, I went to the pawnshop,
Went down to pawn my radio,
(yeh)
Went down to pawn my radio,
Well, the man said, "Brownie, you aint got a
T. V. -
We don't take radios in no more."

(Kinda worried me a little bit.)

Well, I went to the pawnshop,
'Cause the man had come and took my car,
You know I had lost my job, man, that car-man
took my car.
Well, I'm goin' to the pawnshop in the mornin'
See if I can pawn my old guitar.

(Play it one time before you sell it, boy)

I asked the pawnshop man
What was those three balls doin' on the wall,
(hey, hey)
What was those three balls doin' on the wall.
"Well, I bet you two to one, buddy,
You won't get your stuff out o' here at all."

MOVE TO KANSAS CITY

Well, the river (is), long, deep and wide,
Woman I love, on the other side.
I'm gonna move to Kansas City,
I'm gonna move to Kansas City,
Gonna move, baby, honey,
Where they don't want you.

Well, if I was a catfish swimmin' in the sea,
Have all these women fishin' after me.
Refrain

Takes a rockin' chair to rock, rubber ball to roll,
A brownskin woman to satisfy my soul.
Refrain

If I were a jaybird flyin' in the air,
Build me a nest in some good girl's hair.
Refrain

BETTY AND DUPREE

Now, Betty told Dupree
She wanted a diamond ring; (2)
He says, "Oh yes, oh yes, my love,
I'll get you most, most anything.

(Wha'd he do? Wha'd he do?)

He got himself a pistol
And it was a forty-four; (2)
Well, you know to get that diamond ring,
He had to rob a jewelry store.

But he blind the passenger,
And he beat his way to Chicago,
You know, Dupree caught a passenger,
Beat his way into Chicago.
Don't you know, little Betty, she hung her
head and cried,
Said, "I won't see Dupree no more."

But the police they caught him,
Carried him back to the Atlanta jail,
The police they caught Dupree,
Carried him back to the Atlanta jail -
"Please send for my little Betty,"
Sayin' "Please come and go my bail."

She went to the jailhouse,
His face she could not see; (2)
Well, she said, "Please Mister Jailer,
Won't you give him this note?"

(This is how it read:)
"I was there to see you
But I could not see your face. (2)
Well, although you know I love you -
But I just can't take your place."

FOLKWAYS Records

AND SERVICE CORP., 43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C. 10023
Long Playing Non-Breakable Micro Groove 33-1/3 RPM

1955 by Folkways Records & Service Corp., N.Y.

BLUES with BROWNIE MCGHEE and Guitar

SIDE 1

FA-2030-A

1. CARELESS LOVE
2. GOOD MORNING BLUES
3. SPORTING LIFE

Recorded by Moses Asch

FOLKWAYS Records

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Long Playing Non-Breakable Micro Groove 33-1/3 RPM

1955 by Folkways Records & Service Corp., N.Y.

BLUES with BROWNIE MCGHEE and Guitar

SIDE 2

FA-2030-B

1. ME AND SONNY
2. PAWNSHOP BLUES
3. MOVE TO KANSAS CITY
4. BETTY AND DUPREE

Recorded by Moses Asch

FA 2030 B