

WOODY GUTHRIE

Sings Folk Songs with Leadbelly, Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry, Bess Hawes

Introduction by Pete Seeger

Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40007



Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs

With Leadbelly, Cisco Houston,
Sonny Terry, Bess Hawes



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1. **Hard Travelin'** 2:10
2. **What Did the Deep Sea Say?** 2:36
3. **The Rising Sun Blues** 2:55
4. **Nine Hundred Miles (instrumental)** 2:42
5. **John Henry** 2:42
6. **Oregon Trail** 2:46
7. **We Shall Be Free** 3:00
8. **Dirty Overhalls** 1:55
9. **Jackhammer Blues** 2:36
10. **Springfield Mountain** 2:36
11. **Brown Eyes** 2:58
12. **The Boll Weevil** 3:11
13. **Guitar Blues (instrumental)** 2:20
14. **Will You Miss Me?** 2:29

Woody Guthrie made these spirited 1940's recordings in New York for Moses Asch's Folkways label. This diverse collection includes many of Guthrie's well-known originals and interpretations of traditional material.

This classic reissue, carefully remastered, includes the original notes by Pete Seeger, complete song lyrics, and extensive information about Guthrie's many Folkways recordings.



**Smithsonian
Folkways**

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings
Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560

Woody Guthrie Sings Folk Songs

With Leadbelly, Cisco Houston, Sonny Terry, Bess Hawes

Recorded by Moses Asch

Originally issued in 1962 as Folkways FA 2483

1. **Hard Travelin'** 2:10
(Woody Guthrie/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
2. **What Did the Deep Sea Say?** 2:36
(Gilbert Houston/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
3. **The Rising Sun Blues** 2:55
(John A. & Alan Lomax, Georgia Turner/TRO-Ludlow Music, Inc., BMI)
4. **Nine Hundred Miles (instrumental)** 2:42
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(Huddie Ledbetter/TRO-Folkways Music Publishers, Inc., BMI)
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An Introductory Note About the Man and His Music

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, one of the great folk song balladmakers of this century, wrote more than a thousand songs between 1932 and 1952. Some may never be worth singing. Others may stand the test of time and, like "Auld Lang Syne" or "Go Tell Aunt Rhody," become world classics. His method of composition was to pound out verse after verse on the typewriter, or in his precise, country style handwriting, and try it out on his guitar as he went along. Later the song could be pruned down to usable size.

He put his rhymes to tunes which were, more often than not, slightly amended versions of old folk melodies. Thus "Philadelphia Lawyer" used the tune of "The Jealous Lover of Lone Green Valley." "Pastures of Plenty" used one of the many versions of "Pretty Polly," and "Roll On Columbia" adapted "Goodnight Irene." He was often not exactly conscious of where he got the tune, until it was pointed out to him.

"So Long" used the melody of "The Ballad of Billy the Kid" and "Reuben James" used "Wildwood Flower," a tune recorded by the

Carter Family, well-known country recording artists of the 1930s (and from whose records Woody learned many songs, as well as his style of guitar playing).

To both of these last songs, however, he added a chorus worthy of any good composer. He fiddled around with the melody of the verse, until he compounded and developed elements of it into a singable refrain.

The songs were rarely written to order. Anything worth discussing was worth a song to him: news off the front page, sights and sounds of the countryside he traveled through, and thoughts brought to mind by reading anything from Rabelais to Will Rogers. Though some songs became top sellers on the hit parade, he never composed with the hit parade in mind. In fact, he had a rather disparaging attitude toward Tin Pan Alley and any kind of commercial success. Songs were composed for himself and his friends to sing, and he had faith that a good song would get around in spite of the music industry.

Pete Seeger (1962)

1. HARD TRAVELIN'*(with Sonny Terry & Cisco Houston)*

I've been a-havin' some hard travelin', I
 thought you knowed
 I've been a-havin' some hard travelin', way
 down the road
 I've been a-havin' some hard travelin', hard
 ramblin', hard gamblin'
 I've been havin' some hard travelin' Lord.

I've been ridin' in fast rattlers, I thought you
 knowed
 I've been ridin' in flat wheelers, way down
 the road
 I've been ridin' in blind passengers, dead
 enders, pickin' up cinders
 I've been havin' some hard travelin' Lord.

I've been a-hittin' some hard-rock mining, I
 thought you knowed
 North of Dakota to Kansas City, way down
 the road
 Cuttin' that wheat, stackin' that hay, and I'm
 tryin' to
 make about a dollar a day
 An' I've been havin' some hard travelin'
 Lord.

I've been a-workin' that Pittsburgh steel, I

thought you knowed
 I've been a-dumpin' that red-hot slag, way
 down the road
 I've been a blastin', I've been a-firin', I've
 been apourin' that red-hot iron
 An' I've been a-hittin' some hard travelin'
 Lord.

I've been a-layin' in a hard-rock jail, I
 thought you knowed
 I've been a-layin' out ninety days, way down
 the road
 Damned old judge he said to me, ninety
 days for vagrancy
 I've been a-hittin' some hard travelin' Lord.

2. WHAT DID THE DEEP SEA SAY?*(with Cisco Houston)*

Oh captain, tell me true, does my sailor sail
 with you?
 No, he does not sail with me, he sleeps on
 the bottom of the sea.

Chorus:

What did the deep sea say, tell me, what
 did the deep sea say?
 It moaned and it groaned and it splashed
 and it foamed and it rolled on its weary
 way.

Well he promised he'd write to me, but his
 promise he never kept true
 Never a word from my sailor have I heard
 since he sailed on that ocean blue.

(Chorus)

A beautiful rose every day, I placed on the
 crest of the waves
 Said, "take it please, and let the petals fall,
 above his watery grave."

*(Chorus, three times)***3. THE RISING SUN BLUES**

There is a house in New Orleans, you call
 the Rising Sun
 It's been the ruin of many a poor soul, and
 me, oh God, I'm one.

If I had listened to what mama said . . . be at
 home today
 Being so young and foolish, poor girl, let a
 gambler lead me astray.

My mother, she's a tailor, sews those new
 blue jeans
 My sweetheart, he's a drunkard, Lord God,
 he drinks down in New Orleans.

He fills his glasses to the brim, passes them
 around
 The only pleasure that he gets out of life, is
 a-hoboin' from town to town.

The only thing a drunkard needs is a suit-
 case and a trunk
 Only time he's half satisfied, is when he's on
 a drunk.

Go tell my baby sister, never do like I have
 done
 Shun that house down in New Orleans, that
 they call the Risin' Sun.

It's one foot on the platform, one foot on the
 train
 I'm a-goin' back down to New Orleans to
 wear my ball and chain.

My life is almost over, my race is almost run
 Goin' back to New Orleans to that house of
 the Risin' Sun.

**4. NINE HUNDRED MILES
(instrumental)***(with Cisco Houston, guitar &
Woody Guthrie, fiddle)*

5. JOHN HENRY

(with Cisco Houston)

John Henry when he was a baby
Settin' on his mammy's knee
Picked up a hammer in his little right hand
Said, hammer'll be the death of me, me, me
Said, hammer'll be the death of me
Said, hammer'll be the death of me, me, me
Said, hammer'll be the death of me.

Well, some said he's born in Texas
Some said he's born in Maine
I just said he was a Loo-siana man
Leader of a steel-drivin' gang
Leader of a steel-drivin' gang
Leader of a steel-drivin' chain gang
Leader of a steel-drivin' gang.

Now the captain said to John Henry (what'd he say?)
I'm gonna bring my steam drill around
Gonna bring my steam drill out on the job
I'm gonna whup that steel on down, down,
down
Gonna whup that steel on down
Gonna whup that steel on down, down,
down
Gonna whup that steel on down.

Now John Henry says to the captain
Bring your steam drill around
You can bring your steam drill out on the
job
An' I'll beat your steam drill down, down,
down
Beat your steam drill down
Gonna beat your steam drill down, down,
down
Gonna beat your steam drill down (down,
yes I can).

John Henry said to his shaker,
Shaker you had better pray
If you miss your six feet of steel
Tomorrow'll be your buryin' day, Mr. Shaker
Tomorrow'll be your buryin' day.
Now the shaker said to John Henry
Well a man ain't nothin' but a man
I'm throwin' a hundred pounds from my
hips on down
Doin' all that any man can, can, can
Doin' all that any man can
Doin' all etc. . . .

6. OREGON TRAIL

I've been a-grubbin' on a little farm on a flat
and windy plain
I've been a-listenin' to the hungry cattle
bawl
I'm gonna pack my wife and kids, I'm gonna
hit that western road
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this coming
fall.

Chorus:

I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this
coming fall
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this
coming fall
Where the good rain falls a-plenty and
the crops and orchards grow
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this
coming fall.

Well my land is dry and cracklin' and my
chickens they are cacklin'
'Cause the dirt and dust is a-gittin' in their
craw
They been layin' flint-rock eggs, I had to
bust them with a sledge
I'm gonna hit that Oregon Trail this coming
fall.

(Chorus)

Well the hogs and pigs are squealin', they're
a-rockin' and a-reelin'
'Cause there ain't no water to water in the
draw
I'm gonna grab one by his tail, I'm gonna
take him down a western trail
And we'll hit that Oregon Trail this
coming fall.

Now my good old horse is boney, yes he's
dry and hungry too
You can see his ribs three quarters of
a mile
Throw the kids upon his back, and the Bay
horse, and the Black
And we'll hit that Oregon Trail this
coming fall.

(Chorus)

Well my wife gets sort of ailin' when that
mean old dust is sailin'
And she wishes for the days beyond recall
If the work there's in the future in that north
Pacific land
So we'll hit that Oregon Trail this coming
fall.

7. WE SHALL BE FREE

(with Leadbelly, Cisco Houston & Sonny Terry)

In the morning . . . we shall be free
All day . . . we shall be free
Hear me say . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

I was down in the hen house the other night
Awful dark I didn't have no light
I reached for a chicken, got me a goose
A man come out, I had to turn him loose.

I jumped a gully . . . we shall be free
I jumped a rose bush . . . we shall be free
Got some flapjacks . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

Preacher and the rooster had a terrible fight
Preacher knocked the rooster clean out of sight
Preacher told the rooster that would be all right
Meet ya at the hen house tomorrow night.

In the mornin' . . . we shall be free
In the mornin' . . . we shall be free
In the mornin' . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

I was down in the hen house on my knees
I thought I heard a chicken sneeze
Only the rooster sayin' his prayers
Thanking his God for the hens up stairs.

Here's to the preacher . . . we shall be free
He's a-singin' . . . we shall be free
Take up collection . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

Oh some folks say you think too hard
Put all your faith and trust in God
Matter's no difference, don't you see
A hog can't run too fast for me.

Get my hopes up . . . we shall be free
Get that hog eye . . . we shall be free
Get them chitt'lin's . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

Some people say a preacher won't steal
But I caught two down in my corn field
One had a bushel, the other had a peck
The other had a roastin' ear down his neck.

In the kitchen . . . we shall be free
Gettin' roastin' ears . . . we shall be free
Gettin' dried corn . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

Oh the gun said boom and the hog [?]
He jumped on it with all his will
Pulled off his overcoat and hung it on a rail
[?] that hog, guess I'll go to jail.
We shall be free . . . I don't care
Now let's hear . . . we shall be free
Forget about the jailbird . . . we shall be free
When the good Lord sets you free.

8. MY DIRTY OVERHALLS

(with Cisco Houston)

Well the guns of war has roared and the
bombs and shells have fallen
The war clouds they rumbled as they rolled
I was a soldier in the fight and I fought till
we won
My uniform's my dirty overhalls.

This piece of land that I stand on is my battle field and home
My plow and my hoe is my gun
Clothes don't make no difference at all, we
are workers and fighters all
My uniform's my dirty overhalls.

Well I'll give you my sweat and I'll give you
my blood
And I'll give you your bread and your wine
Before I'll be any man's slave I'll be rottin'

down in my grave
And you can lay me down in my dirty overhalls.

Well we settled here to stay and I'll stick
here all my days
I'll keep marchin' in my dirty overhalls.

9. JACKHAMMER BLUES

(with Cisco Houston & Sonny Terry)

I'm a jackhammer man from a jackhammer town
Born with a jackhammer in my hand
Lord God, I've got them jackhammer blues
Jackhammer man from a jackhammer town,
I'll hammer and I'll hammer till the sun
goes down
Oh Lord, I got them jackhammer blues.

I hammered on the Bonneville, hammered
on the Butte
The Columbia river on a ten mile shoot
Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues
Hammered every port from Alaska down, I
built every port from Alaska down [?]
Lord God, got them jackhammer blues.

Lord I'll hammer and I'll hammer till I get
done

The sixty-six and the highway one
 Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues
 With a jackhammer woman as sweet as pie,
 I'll hammer and I'll hammer till the day I
 die
 Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues.

Jackhammer man from a jackhammer town
 Born with a jackhammer in my hand
 Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues
 Jackhammer woman as sweet as pie, I'll
 hammer and I'll hammer till the day I die
 Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues.

Well I hammered on my hammer all night
 long
 Hammered for my baby from a-midnight on
 Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues
 Jackhammer man as sweet as pie, hammer
 on my hammer till the day I die
 Lord God, I got them jackhammer blues.

10. SPRINGFIELD MOUNTAIN

(with Sonny Terry, Cisco Houston &
 Bess Hawes)

A nice young ma-wa-wa-wa-wan lived on a
 hill-I-will-I-will
 And a nice young ma-wa-wa-wa-wan, and I
 knowed him well-well-well-well-well
 Come a rood-i rood, a rood-i rood-i ray.

This nice young ma-wa-wa-wa-wan, that I
 do know-wo-wo-wo-wo
 See if he wee-wee-wee-wee-wee could make
 a show-oh-oh-oh-oh
 Come a rood etc. . . .

He had not nee-wy-nee-wy-walked but
 around the fie-wy-wie-wy-wield
 When around come a snattle-come a rattle-
 come a snake
 And he got him by the he-wy-wee-wy-weel
 Come a rood etc. . . .

Slap my pappy daddy's daddy, go tell my ga-
 wa-wa-wa-wal
 That I'm gonna dee-wy-dee-wy-die, and I
 know I sha-wa-wa-wawall
 Come a rood etc. . . .

Oh my pappy my daddy, daddy's daddy, go

send [?] for me-wywee-wy-woos
 Here comes Sally-alla-walla-willy-walla,
 without her she-wy-wee-wy-woes.

Oh John, oh Joh-wa-wa-wa-wanny, I've
 come for you to gi-wy-wee-wy-woe
 Down in the meadow, way, way down in the
 meadow [?]
 Come a rood etc. . . .

Oh Sally, oh Sally-wally-wally, why don't you
 know, dont you know
 When the hay gets high it's gotta be mowed
 Come a rood etc. . . .

Come all you young men a-when in the
 mornin' be-wy-wee-wy-wake
 And don't you get bit, bit by a rattle-come a-
 snattle-come-a-rattle-come-a-snake
 Come a rood etc. . . .

11. BROWN EYES

(with Cisco Houston)

Those brown eyes I love so well
 Those brown eyes that I long to see
 How I long for those brown eyes
 Strangers they have grown to be.

Just a year ago today
 When my brown eyes went away
 Up in the heaven I long to be
 Where a brown eyed angel waits for me.

(Chorus)

Last night I passed her on the street
 I bowed my head 'cause I could not speak
 Another man was at her side
 Soon, I thought, she'd be his bride.

(Chorus)

12. THE BOLL WEEVIL

(with Sonny Terry & Cisco Houston)

Boll Weevil said to the farmer, I'll stay right
 in your field
 When I get through with your Cadillac
 you'll really wheel and deal
 And I'll git your home, git your home.
 Farmer said to the merchant I want some
 meat and meal
 Get out of here you son-of-a-gun, Boll
 Weevil in your field
 And I'll git your home, git your home.

Well the farmer went to the banker, I'd like
to cash a check
Get out of here you son-of-a-gun, Boll
Weevil down your neck
Gittin' your home, boy, gittin' your home.

Boll Weevil said to the merchant, like to
cash a note
Get out of here you rascal Boll Weevil's on
your coat
Gittin' your home, gittin' your home.

Oh the Boll Weevil went to the merchant, a-
[?] on his gate
Get to your cotton, boy, you'll sell that
Cadillac Eight
I'm a-gittin' your home, I'm a-gittin' your
home.

Yes, said the farmer, see you on the square
Yes sir, said the Boll Weevil, my whole fami-
ly's there
Gittin' your home, etc. . . .

Gittin' your home, gittin' your home
Hey, hey, hey, that Boll Weevil's gittin' your
home
Gittin' your home, boy, gittin' your home.

Well the farmer took that Boll Weevil, laid

him in the sand
Boll Weevil said thank you, stand it like a
man
I'm gittin' your home, etc. . . .

Farmer said to the Boll Weevil, treat you
mighty nice
[?]
It'll be my home, etc. . . .

Well, the Boll Weevil he made a trip from
Mexico they say
Comin' down to Texas, lookin' for a place to
stay
He's a-gittin' a home, etc. . . .

13. GUITAR BLUES (instrumental)

(with Cisco Houston)

14. WILL YOU MISS ME?

(with Cisco Houston & Bess Hawes)

When death'll close my eyelids and my race
on earth is run
Will you miss me when I'm gone?

Chorus:
Will you miss me, miss me, miss me, miss
me
Will you miss me when I'm gone
Will you miss me when I'm gone?

Come and set yourself beside me
Come and set beside my bed
Lay your hand upon my brow, while my
achin' heart grows dead.

(Chorus, two times)

Woody Guthrie on Folkways

Reissues and compilations available on CD and cassette:

- Folkways: The Original Vision* (with Leadbelly), 1988 (SF 40001)
Woody Guthrie Long Ways to Travel, 1944-1949; *The Unreleased Folkways Masters* (SF 40046)
Struggle, 1976 reissued, 1990 (SF 40025)
Songs to Grow On For Mother and Child, 1991 (SF 45035)
Nursery Days, 1992 (SF 45036)

Woody Guthrie also appears on:

- A Fish That's a Song* (SF 45037, cassette only)
Cowboy Songs on Folkways (SF 40043)

Available on cassette with original notes:

- Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti*, 1960 (FW 5485)
Bound for Glory, The Songs and Story of Woody Guthrie, 1956 (FW 2481)
Dust Bowl Ballads, 1964 (5212)
Woody Guthrie, Poor Boy, 1968 (31010)

- Sings Folk Songs Volume 2*, 1964 (FW 2484)
Songs to Grow On Volume 3, 1961 (FW 7027)
This Land is Your Land, 1967 (FW 31001)
Hard Travellin', 1964 (Disc Recordings D-110)

Related Recordings

- Leadbelly Sings Folk Songs*
 Smithsonian/Folkways 40010
Lead Belly's Last Sessions
 Smithsonian/Folkways 40068/71
Cisco Houston, The Folkways Years
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About Smithsonian/Folkways

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch and Marian Distler in 1947 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are now available on high-quality audio cassettes, each packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes, recordings to accompany published books, and a variety of other educational projects.

The Smithsonian/Folkways, Folkways,

Cook, and Paredon record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian/Folkways, Folkways, Cook, and Paredon recordings are all available through:

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