

Death Letter Blues

(first Son House "Death Letter Blues" version)

Words & Music:
Eddie "Son" House

You can see things common to the old blues songs in this version. There are threads of lyrics from other songs (like "Walking Blues") through this. You can also see how later covers picked & chose which verses they wanted to use.

A
I got a letter this mornin', how do you reckon it read?
A
It said, "Hurry, hurry, yeah, your love is dead."
D A
I got a letter this mornin', I say how do you reckon it read?
E D A
You know, it said, "Hurry, hurry, how come the gal you love is dead?"

So, I grabbed up my suitcase, and took off down the road.
When I got there she was layin' on a coolin' board
I grabbed up my suitcase, and I said and I took off down the road.
I said, but when I got there she was already layin' on a coolin' board.

Well, I walked up right close, looked down in her face.
Said, "The good ol' gal got to lay here 'til the Judgment Day."
I walked up right close, and I said I looked down in her face.
I said, The good ol' gal, she got to lay here 'til the Judgment Day."

Looked like there was 10,000 people standin' round the buryin' ground.
I didn't know I loved her 'til they laid her down.
Looked like 10,000 were standin' round the buryin' ground.
You know I didn't know I loved her 'til they damn laid her down.

Lord, have mercy on my wicked soul.
I wouldn't mistreat you, baby, for my weight in gold.
I said, Lord, have mercy on my wicked soul.
You know I wouldn't mistreat nobody, baby, not for my weight in gold.

Well, I folded up my arms and I slowly walked away.
I said, "Farewell honey, I'll see you on Judgment Day."
Ah, yeah, oh, yes, I slowly walked away.
I said, "Farewell, farewell, I'll see you on the Judgment Day."

You know I went in my room, I bowed down to pray.
The blues came along and drove my spirit away.
I went in my room, I said I bowed down to pray.
I said the blues came along and drove my spirit away.

You know I didn't feel so bad, 'til the good ol' sun went down.
I didn't have a soul to throw my arms around.
I didn't feel so bad, 'til the good ol' sun went down.
You know, I didn't have nobody to throw my arms around.

I loved you baby, like I love myself.
You don't have me, you won't have nobody else.
I loved you baby, better than I did myself.
I said now if you don't have me, I didn't want you to have nobody else.

You know, it's hard to love someone that don't love you.
Ain't no satisfaction, don't care what in the world you do.
Yeah, it's hard to love someone that don't love you.
You know it don't look like satisfaction, don't care what in the world you do.

Got up this mornin', just about the break of day.
A-huggin' the pillow where she used to lay.
Got up this mornin', just about the break of day.
A-huggin' the pillow where my good gal used to lay.

Got up this mornin', feelin' round for my shoes.
You know, I must-a had them old walkin' blues.
Got up this mornin', feelin' round for my shoes.
Yeah, you know bout that, I must-a had them old walkin' blues.

You know, I cried last night and all the night before.
Gotta change my way a livin', so I don't have to cry no more.
You know, I cried last night and all the night before.
Gotta change my way a livin', you see, so I don't have to cry no more.

Ah, hush, thought I heard her call my name.
If it wasn't so loud and so nice and plain.

Well, listen, whatever you do.
This is one thing, honey, I tried to get along with you.
Yes, no tellin' what you do.
I done everything I could, just to try and get along with you.

Well, the minutes seemed like hours, hours they seemed like days.
It seemed like my good, old gal outta done stopped her low-down ways.
Minutes seemed like hours, hours they seemed like days.
Seems like my good, old gal outta done stopped her low-down ways.

You know, love's a hard ol' fall, make you do things you don't wanna do.
Love sometimes leaves you feeling sad and blue.
You know, love's a hard ol' fall, make you do things you don't wanna do.
Love sometimes make you feel sad and blue.