

Preachin' Blues (Up Jumped the Devil)

(original Robert Johnson lyrics version)

Words & Music by:
Robert Johnson

This is a classic blues, but the most sublime of Johnson's tunes. It is a bone-simple, one-chord song, but has been covered in any number of ways (Peter Green plays it at a blistering pace!) and has more variations from the original lyrics than you can count. So, what to play? Well, Rory Block has an excellent set of DVDs from Homespun Tapes on how to play Robert Johnson in his original style (this tune is on DVD 1), if you want to start at the source. I've also given several different tabs and sets of lyrics. In true Delta Blues style, pick (or write) the words that are closest to your heart and play them in a way that fills your soul. That's the blues.

Mmmmm-mmmmm! I's up this mornin'; ah, blues walkin' like a man.
I's up this mornin'; ah, blues walkin' like a man.
Worried blues, give me your right hand.

And the blues fell mama's child, tore me all upside down.
Blues fell mama's child and it tore me all upside down.
Travel on, poor Bob, just cain't turn you 'round.

The blu-u-u-ues is a low-down shakin' chill.
[spoken: Yes, preach 'em now!]
Mmmmm mmmmm, is a low-down shakin' chill.
You ain't never had 'em, I hope you never will.

Well, the blues is a achin' old heart disease.
[spoken: Do it. now. You gon' do it? Tell me about it.]
The blues is a low-down achin' heart disease.
Like consumption, killing me by degrees.

It started raining. Whoa, drown, drown my blues away.
Started raining, drown my blues away.
Going to the 'stilery ("distillery"), gonna stay out there all day.