

Worried Life Blues

Words & Music:
John Lee Hooker or Big Maceo Merriweather

There are so many version of this - from John Lee Hooker to Nappy Brown to B. B. King. Many people have claimed to be the songwriter for this tune. But it was probably John Lee Hooker or (per Eric at Egypt-blues.com who cited Frankie from bluescruisers.net) Big Maceo Merriweather, who recorded it with the inimitable Tampa Red in 1940 or 1941. I've included lots o' verses for you to pick & choose.

Open A tuning (E A E A C# E) - capo on 4th fret (for the key of C#) or open (for the key of A) & use a slide. It is a basic blues - the I, IV & V chords of the key - so I'll indicate where those are. I is open strings, IV is 5 frets up & V is 6 frets up, if you're playing strictly open tuning chords.

Eric at Egypt-blues.com has the following deliciously specific notes for playing in C#: "Most of the song is based around two chords: C# - open F# - 4th string 2nd fret from capo - 2nd string 1st fret from capo (this is actually an F#9th for any clever clogs out there) Also C#7th - 1st & 2nd strings on 3rd fret from capo is used to create tension on the C# chord. This inversion of the 7th chord has no 3rd which gives it a distinctive sound which is often used in Delta Blues stuff by the likes of JLH etc. As far as I know Hooker would play this in the key of A The bottom (thick) string is rarely used in any of the chords."

CHORUS: [2x with vocal variations]

I

Oh, Lordy-Lord! Oh, Lordy-Lord!

IV

It hurts me so bad, 'bout to drive me mad.

I

V

I

But someday, baby, I ain't gonna worry my life anymore.

Got a job in a steel mill, truckin' steel like a slave.

But, oh, honey, I ain't gonna let you drive me to my grave.

Because someday, baby, I ain't gonna worry my life anymore.

Last night, pretty baby, when you lay across my bed

You were drinkin' that old Island Harbor,

Laughin' & talkin' all out your head.

But I said, someday, baby, I ain't gonna worry my life anymore.

INSTRUMENTAL VERSE:

My mother died. Died, and she left poor me.

But, oh, honey, I don't see how you can treat me...

I say, someday, baby, I ain't gonna worry my life anymore.

Cry and I cry, cry all night long.
Tryin' to give up, baby, tryin' to give up the right for the wrong.
But someday, baby, I ain't gonna worry my life anymore.

You're on my mind every place I go.
How much I love you, nobody know.
Yeah, someday babe, I ain't gonna worry my life any more.

So many days since you went away.
I've had to worry both night and day.
Yeah, but someday babe, I ain't gonna worry my life any more.

So many nights since you've been gone.
I've been worried, grieving my life alone.
Yeah, but someday babe, I ain't gonna worry my life any more.

So that's my story and this is all I've got to say to you:
Bye bye, baby, I don't care what you do.
'Cause someday darling, I won't have to worry my life any more.

Oh, Lordy-Lord! Oh, Lordy-Lord!
It hurts me so bad for us to part.
Oh, but someday baby, I ain't gonna worry my life any more.