## California Blues (Blue Yodel No. 4)

Words and music by Jimmie Rodgers



Tim O'Brien has been playing Jimmie Rodgers' "California Blues" for at least 20 years, dating back to his time in Red Knuckles and the Trailblazers. For the version on Cornbread Nation, he combines elements of Rodgers' 1929 original, Lefty Frizell's 1953 cover version, and floating verses from any

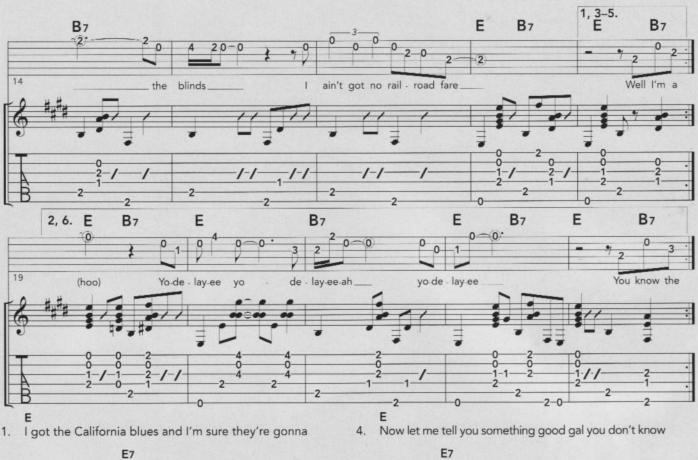
number of blues standards to make the song his own. On acoustic guitar, O'Brien sets the tempo at an even clip—swinging much more than Rodgers' down-home

recording—while Kenny Vaughan plays jazzinflected electric-guitar fills that float smoothly between 1945 and the present. It's a period piece from a time that exists only in O'Brien's imagination, embracing old and new with a rambling, exuberant sense of release.

O'Brien slides sixth shapes up and down the fretboard in the intro to elicit the signature yodel of the song. Throughout the verses, he plays root-position chords with pick and fingers. To get the feel that O'Brien achieves on the recording, play the bass notes with conviction, but don't worry about strumming exactly the same string combinations. Finally, add a touch of string damping with either or both hands to keep things bouncy.

-KENNY BERKOWITZ





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leave you here

A7

I got the California blues, I'm sure they're gonna

E B7 E7

leave you here

B7 E B7 E B7 I might ride the blinds, I ain't got no railroad fare

E E7

2. Well I'm going to California where they sleep out every night

A7 E B7
I'm going to California where they sleep out every night

B7

You know the New York women, they don't know

E B7 E B7

how to treat me right, wahoo

E B7 E B7 E B7 Yodelayee yodelayee ah yodelayee

E

7. You know the water in California, it tastes just like cherry wine

A7 E B7 E
Yeah the water in California, it tastes just like cherry wine

**B7**You just jump in the water and then you stay tight

E B7 E B7 all the time, wahoo you don't know

A7 E B7 E
Now let me tell you something good gal you don't know

B7 E
I'm an easy-riding papa, I got a home wherever I go

B7 EB

E E7
5. If your house catches fire and there ain't no water 'round

A7 E B7 E
If your house catches fire and there ain't no water 'round

B7 Push my suitcase out the window and let your

E B7 E B7

fool house burn on down

6. I went to the gypsy woman down at the fortune-teller's place

E P 2 E 2

Yeah I went to the woman at the fortune-teller's place

Well she read my mind and then she slapped my face, wahoo

Repeat Verse 1

E B7 E Yodelayee yodelayee ah yodelayee