

Death Letter Blues

(original "My Black Mama, Parts 1 & 2" version from 1930)

Words & Music:

Eddie "Son" House

The song "Death Letter Blues" seems to have originated with the Delta blues singer Son House, although its roots may go back before that. Son House recorded "My Black Mama Parts 1 & 2" in 1930, and Part 2 has these lyrics. Son House seems to have learnt a version of "My Black Mama" from another Delta musician, James McCoy, but it's not clear how much of what Son House recorded was his own and how much was from James McCoy.

A

Hey, I solemnly swear, Lord, I raise my right hand,

A

That I'm goin' get me a woman, you get you another man.

D

A

I solemnly swear, Lord, I raise my right hand.

E

D

A

That I'm goin' get me a woman, you get you another man.

I got a letter this morning, how do you reckon it read?

"Oh, hurry, hurry, the gal you love is dead"

I got a letter this morning, how do you reckon it read?

"Oh, hurry, hurry, the gal you love is dead"

I grabbed my suitcase, I took off, up the road.

I got there, but she was laying on the cooling board.

I grabbed my suitcase, I took on up the road.

I got there, but she was laying on the cooling board.

Well, I walked up close, I looked down in her face.

Good old gal, you got to lay here till Judgment Day.

I walked up close, and I looked down in her face.

Yes, been a good old gal, got to lay here till Judgment Day.

Oh, my woman so black, she stays apart of this town.

Can't nothin' "go" when the poor girl is around.

My black mama stays apart of this town.

Oh, can't nothing "go" when the poor girl is around.

Oh, some people tell me the worried blues ain't bad.

It's the worst old feelin' that I ever had.

Some people tell me the worried blues ain't bad.

Buddy, the worst old feelin', Lord, I ever had.

Hmmm, I fold my arms, and I walked away.

"That's all right, mama, your trouble will come someday."

I fold my arms, Lord, I walked away.

Say, "That's all right, mama, your trouble will come someday."