

**BLOWIN' DOWN THIS ROAD (I AIN'T GOING TO BE TREATED THIS WAY)
(trad./WOODY GUTHRIE) (1930s)**



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The first and hardest-hit victims of the [Great Depression](#) were the farmers in the dry western prairies. To the unemployed of the cities, that era was "the hungry 'thirties," but to western dirt farmers it was "the dirty 'thirties." Driven from their homes by dust storms and grasshoppers and mortgage companies, they loaded their few possessions into broken-down jalopies and headed down the road "looking for a job at honest pay." They were America's "displaced persons" long before the term "DP" became a familiar label in the Old World. They were the [Joads](#), whose tragic history was immortalized by John Steinbeck in *Grapes of Wrath*. John Greenway reports:

While directing the filming of the *Grapes of Wrath*, John Ford needed background music for a group scene. He asked the Okies whom he had recruited as character extras to sing something that was known to every Okie, Arkie, and Mizoo. Without hesitation, they began singing "Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad."

This old blues song had long been a favorite with America's [tramps](#), [hoboes](#) and [Wobblies](#), but it took on a new lease of life because it so well described the plight of the [dust-bowl refugees](#).

Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest*, New York, NY, 1973, p. 129.

Lyrics as recorded by Woody Guthrie, RCA Studios, Camden, NJ, 26 Apr 1940; released on "[Dust Bowl Ballads](#)," transcribed by Manfred Helfert.

© 1960 Hollis Music Inc., New York, NY (as "Going Down the Road")

I'm blowin' down this old dusty road,
I'm a-blowin' down this old dusty road,

I'm a-blowin' down this old dusty road, Lord, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this a-way.

I'm a-goin' where the water taste like wine,
I'm a-goin' where the water taste like wine,
I'm a-goin' where the water taste like wine, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

I'm a-goin' where the [dust storms](#) never blow,
I'm a-goin' where them dust storms never blow,
I'm a-goin' where them dust storms never blow, blow, blow,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

They say I'm a [dust bowl refugee](#),
Yes, they say I'm a dust bowl refugee,
They say I'm a dust bowl refugee, Lord, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

I'm a-lookin' for a job at honest pay,
I'm a-lookin' for a job at honest pay,
I'm a-lookin' for a job at honest pay, Lord, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

My children need three square meals a day,
Now, my children need three square meals a day,
My children need three square meals a day, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

It takes a ten-dollar shoe to fit my feet,
It takes a ten-dollar shoe to fit my feet,
It takes a ten-dollar shoe to fit my feet, Lord, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

Your a-two-dollar shoe hurts my feet,
Your two-dollar shoe hurts my feet,
Yes, your two-dollar shoe hurts my feet, Lord, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

I'm a-goin' down this old dusty road,
I'm blowin' down this old dusty road,
I'm a-blowin' down this old dusty road, Lord, Lord,
An' I ain't a-gonna be treated this way.

