

DUST PNEUMONIA BLUES (Woody Guthrie) (1938)



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He [Woody Guthrie] wrote a bitter parody of Jimmie Rodgers, who'd sent so many people yodeling out to California on the promise that the water there would taste like wine. Woody called the song the "Dust Pneumonia Blues," and announced right off that "there ought to be some yodeling in this song," but he couldn't do it because of the dust rattling in his lungs.

Joe Klein, Woody Guthrie: A Life, London, 1981, pp. 115-116.

Lyrics as recorded by Woody Guthrie, RCA Studios, Camden, NJ, 26 Apr 1940, released on "[Dust Bowl Ballads](#)," transcribed by Manfred Helfert.
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I got that dust pneumony, pneumony in my lung,
I got the dust pneumony, pneumony in my lung,
An' I'm a-gonna sing this dust pneumony song.

I went to the doctor, and the doctor, said, "My son,"
I went to the doctor, and the doctor, said, "My son,
You got that dust pneumony an' you ain't got long, not long."

Now there ought to be some yodelin' in this song;
Yeah, there ought to be some yodelin' in this song;
But I can't yodel for the rattlin' in my lung.

My good gal sings the dust pneumony blues,
My good gal sings the dust pneumony blues,
She loves me 'cause she's got the dust pneumony, too.

It it wasn't for choppin' my hoe would turn to rust,
If it wasn't for choppin' my hoe would turn to rust,
I can't find a woman in this black ol' Texas dust.

Down in Oklahoma, the wind blows mighty strong,
Down in Oklahoma, the wind blows mighty strong,
If you want to get a mama, just sing a California song.

Down in Texas, my gal fainted in the rain,
Down in Texas, my gal fainted in the rain,
I throwed a bucket o' dirt in her face just to bring her back again.

