

Monday Morning Blues

by John Farrow

*I woke up this morning
I woke up this morning
with the Monday morning blues.*¹

It was Monday with a vengeance and all of the week-end's race was hitting home. My body was wracked with some kind of pain just about everywhere and this muscle or that was either sore or stiff and my energy level was at rock bottom. All this and my head was a mess, too. Yes, it was time to see my shrink.

*I couldn't hide inside
I couldn't hide inside
my Monday morning blues.*¹

My shrink wasn't hard to find – you just had to know where to look. He went by the name of Blind Melon Fillmore and he usually hung out somewhere around Fat Boy's Snooker & BBQ over on the East Side. A chat with him usually put things in their proper place.

*John Boy! How you been, son? You look a bit
rode hard and put up wet!*

Hey, Fillmore. Good to see you, man. Cool song. How come so many blues songs seem to start with "Woke up this morning?"

*Don't rightly know, but lots of'em do. Guess
if'n you cain't start out that way, like if'n you
didn't wake up this mornin', then maybe you got
worse problems than th' blues. Like maybe you is
dead. So tell me -- what you been up to?*

Man, I went up to this race in Kansas City and had no idea they had hills up there. I thought I was going to die in the last couple of miles. Even had to walk a bit on the hills.

Well, that do sound like th' blues to me.

*Walkin' play a big part in th' blues. So does fixin'
to die. Plus, Kansas City a good place fo' th'
blues. Same as St. Louie or N'awlins or Chicago.
Tucson or Des Moines, now that just be
depression.*

*I woke up this morning
Felt around for my shoes.
I woke up this morning
Had them ol' walkin' blues.*²

*Now if'n you coulda caught yo'self a a ride on
a Greyhound bus or a south-bound train, we'd
have ourselves th' makin's of a good ol' song.
Yessir, th' blues don't travel in no Volvo or SUV.*

So if I had died, you'd write a song about me?

*Naw, that ain't th' blues, son. It ain't th' blues
you die running like that 'cept if th' police is after
you. Same for playin' tennis or gettin' liposuction
or somethin'. You got to die lonely on a broke-
down cot in a cheap motel or get stabbed by a
jealous lover. You get th' chair after six long years
in jail, you got a right to sing th' blues, too.*

You never have told me about your early career. How'd you get started?

*Used to run all th' time -- we wuz good, too.
Black folks been runnin' a long time, you know.
Used to be we'd get chased by white folks wearin'
sheets. That hep' you get good real quick. Now
we're chased by white folks wearin' shorts and
singlets.*

But how'd you get into singing the blues?
Have you always been into music?

*Son, th' blues ain't about choice. You stuck in
a ditch, you stuck in a ditch. Ain't no way out.
Same with me. It's all I know.*

*My pay goes down and my tax goes up
I drink my tea from a broken cup.
Between my woman and Uncle Sam,
I cain't figure out just what I am.
Oh Lord, it's so hard.*³

Say, what's that ol' low-life roommate a' yours doin' these days?

He busted a leg running up in the mountains last week. Cramped his style big time. Guess he's got a right to sing the blues, too.

That's too bad, but that ain't th' blues. Th' blues is about hard times. Break your leg 'cause a ol' gator be chewing on it, that's th' blues. Break your leg fallin' off a mountain, that's just tough.

Tell me about your name. Where does it come from? I know you're not really blind.

Well, it's kinda traditional to take a stage name, you know. First, you gotta have a physical infirmity, like be blind or cripple or somethin'. Me, I don't see too good outa one eye, so I kin use 'blind.' You runners got problems with that part, though. You too healthy. Then you add your favorite fruit in there like orange or lemon or melon. Kiwi don't work too good, if you ask me. Finally, add a respected Pres'dent. Jefferson and Washington are popular. Fillmore less so, but I thought it'd add a little mystery. But that's all there is to it.

Hey, you look a little dry. You want something to drink? I got some Gatorade and some bottled water out in the car.

C'mon now, John Boy. That stuff may be good for yo' runnin' but them ain't no good for a bluesman. Gotta have me some black coffee or straight whiskey or cheap wine. And if yo' woman slip some gasoline or Red Devil lye in yo' coffee, you know you got a right to sing th' blues.

*Oh, I asked her for water,
she brought me gasoline
That's the troublingest woman,
that I ever seen.*⁴

Listen, Fillmore, always good to talk with you. It doesn't sound like I have the kind of problems I thought I had. There's another race this weekend and I want to try and get it right.

Now you just do that, John Boy. Got just th' song for you, too.

*I got the key to the highway
Yes, I'm billed out and bound to go.
Gonna leave here runnin'
'Cause walkin's just too slow.*⁵ □

ARR News, September 2001
Albuquerque Road Runners Club

1. Mississippi John Hurt, "Monday Morning Blues."
2. Robert Johnson, "Walkin' Blues."
3. Bobby 'Blue' Bland, "Poverty."
4. Chester Burnett a/k/a Howlin' Wolf, "I Asked For Water."
5. Big Bill Broonzy, "Key to the Highway."