

Steamboat Whistle Blues

John Hartford

Well I started out to be a towboat man
But I never got the hang of a ratchet bar
I was a -growin up a-deckin in the
Illinois trade with coal dust in my ear
I got stuck in the ice on Christmas Eve
And I froze my ass it's true
Just a shiv'rin and a-shakin with a Down South case of them
Steamboat whistle blues
Oh Captain Way I'm sorry, my hat is off to you
You've been a-hanging out by the old cook stove
With the steamboat whistle blues
Well way up North I called your phone
But I didn't get no one to answer
So I opened up the window and I smoked a little bit
And I watched the cars go by
I'm gonna hunt you up and ask you
If you found out anything new
Or are you a-hangin to the best you had
With the steamboat whistle blues
I've been right here since nine o'clock
And believe you me that's true
Just a-lookin at the water ways churning with the steamboat whistle blues
Well the city's growing up where it looks all square
Like a crossword puzzle on the landscape
It looks like an electric shaver now
Where the courthouse used to be
The grass is all synthetic
And we don't know for sure about the food
The only thing we know for sure is them steamboat whistle blues
I'd sit and watch my TV if I thought I could trust the news
About the only thing I trust these days
Is them steamboat whistle blues
Well "far out" Johnny well I heard him say
As he stretched out back on the water bed
Bluegrass music is a thing of the past
And the same for rock and roll
And I loaned him two or three dollars
And he gave me the latest news
And he left me here with a Rolling Stone

And the steamboat whistle blues
I'll tear off down the river some day before I'm through
Then come back here and see it out
With the steamboat whistle blues

Song Discussions is protected by U.S. Patent 9401941. Other patents pending.

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