

I'll Be Gone

Lightnin' Hopkins

Once in the country there was a little boy; every morning that he would go to the table with his little two sisters and brothers, you know, he would go there, he couldn't talk but his mother didn't know what was wrong with him so... she would go to the table in the morning, she would fix for breakfast, she'd fix toast and coffee, enough, coffee for the tin, toast for the eggs for the church, then she would ask and say, what you want this morning? Oh mama, toast and milk, you know things like that you know. But the little old boy he couldn't talk good, so she asked him say what you want son? Said sa-sa-a I want-t t-t-t- She said Hush. Say I tell you what to do. You just hush, I just go bring you what I bring the rest of 'em, cause one of these days I'm gonna learn you how to talk.

She goin' back and she fixes, the next morning same thing. So what would you children want this morning? Butter 'n toast mama. Get around to the little old boy, say What you want? He say, bu-bu-bu-bu-bu-bu... she say Lord, have mercy, that's what mama said and she walked away, say wonder what's wrong with my child?

He heard her. But you know the little boy couldn't do no better. So after he'd find out that mama couldn't understand him, and he couldn't understand the way his mama was doin' him, he packed up his little flower sack, and he decide that he would leave.

So when he left, on his way, he run up on a old rollin' mill, what they call Mister Charlie's. So he walked up to mister Charlie, mister Charlie was workin' round in his rose bushes 'n things... so he taps him: mi-mi-mi... say Mister! But he didn't know his name that time. The man straightened up and said my name is mister Charlie. He say mi-mi-ch-ch-ch- He said but boy I ain't got to fool with you, you can't work. He said, me-me can work!

So the man went on workin' and he'd tap him again. He said me-me-me wanna home. He said look, boy, I've got a old bunk house out in the back, said and if you promise me that you will stay in this bunk house, and watch my mill, and keep the fire from burning my mill down, say I live two blocks up the road, say and if you see the mill's on fire, say you run up and tell me the mill's on fire, you got a home and meal as long as I've got it. Ta-ta-ta-ta-thank you mister Charlie. So the little old boy went to bunkin' that night.

Sho' enough, late one Sunday morning, mister Charlie's mill caught on fire. Which he'd forgot about what he had told the little boy. The little boy run up to him, he was cleaning out his front yard, makin' it beautiful with them rose bushes, you know with them red rose bushes you know how to keep 'em red those rose bushes, and the little boy run up there, tapped him on his back, and he raised up and said Hey son, why here's you again.

Ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye-ye and he was pointing back toward the mill, tryin' to tell him his rollin' mill was on fire. So mister Charlie said, I ain't got

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time to fool with you. So the little boy stuttered too bad for him to understand. So mister Charlie stooped over him again, he pat him on the back, said ye-ye-ye-ye-your ro-ro- he said Wait a minute. He said, if you can't talk you must sing, and he hollered:

(sings)

Whooooooooa mister Charlie

Do you know your rolling mill is burnin' down?

Mister Charlie

Do you know your rolling mill is burnin' down?

Mister Charlie said if you ain't got no water boy

Just let that old mill burn on down

Little boy was lonesome, he walked off and cried, he said--
(guitar solo)
He walked back and he said it one more time
Whooooooooo mister Charlie
I won't have no place to stay
Mister Charlie
I won't have no place to stay
Mister Charlie said Boy, you'll have a home with me
Just as long as there is a day
Little boy sighed and he tell it one more time
He hollered at him:
Whooooooooo mister Charlie
Do you know your rolling mill is burnin' down?
Mister Charlie
Do you know your rolling mill is burnin' down?
Mister Charlie said if you ain't got no water boy
Just let that old mill burn on down