

Two and Twenty Blues

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Lightnin' Hopkins used to declare that woman's blues should be different from a man's: "A woman's supposed to bring it from the moon on down.... [She's not] supposed to get up there and sing those old barrelhouse songs like me." I wonder what he'd say about this text? One thing's for sure, though—he'd have appreciated Linda Morrison's strong, flexible, and well-controlled voice; as Lightnin' did, she gets inside the music.

We've offered our versions of how Morrison sings the 1st 2 verses, but once a singer has made the song her own, these will change from occasion to occasion.

In the tradition of many blues, these verses do not tell a coherent story, but offer snapshots of different situations from life. The images are not necessarily happy, but the overall effect

of the song suggests that it is possible to accept life, even given its vicissitudes. As many observers have noted, this catharsis is what the blues is all about. You may say that I'm wrong, but you know I feel all right!

Morrison herself writes, I grew up near the Two and Twenty Highway in the suburbs of Montreal. Hitching rides was the quickest way to get anywhere—downtown or into trouble. The music is old-style blues piano, cathartic and fun to perform.

*"Two and Twenty Blues" has been recorded by Morrison herself on *The Best of Touch the Earth* CBC LM473 (1981). This may not be currently available, but Penny Lang has it on her CD, *Yes* (She-Wolf Records SWPL-9701-2; see the listing in *A Peak in Darien*, page 20) [GWL]*

There's e-vil men in this dog-gone town; Some-day it's gon-na burn right down to the ground

I've got trou-ble, and no-thing's go-ing right. The way that they bark, I'd

hate to see them bite.

verse 2.

I'm walk-ing on the high-way, if you're go-ing my way, Well, I could use a ride, but to

where I can't say.

There's evil men in this doggone town;
Someday it's gonna burn right down to the ground.
I've got trouble, and nothing's going right.
The way that they bark, I'd hate to see them bite.

I'm walking on the highway, if you're going my way,
Well, I could use a ride, but to where I can't say.
I see no end, I see no end in sight.
I'm restless in the morning, and I get no sleep at night.

I've heard that love is just a one-way street;
You better behave yourself 'cause your lover will cheat.
I don't care, I don't care about that.
When you live in the alley, you learn to be an alley cat.

No, I don't care what the people may say,
Long as I keep on going my way,
And I'll keep rollin' till I roll right out of sight.
You may say that I'm wrong, but you know I feel all right!