

Elizabeth Cotten – Shake Sugaree (1967)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Shake Sugaree* 2. *Take Me Back to Baltimore* 3. *Washington Blues* 4. *I'm Going Away*
5. *Fox Chase* 6. *Ontario Blues* 7. *Fare You Well, My Darling* 8. *Medley* 9. *Mama, Nobody's Here But the Baby* 10. *Mama, Nobody's Here But the Baby* 11. *Look and Live, My Brother* 12. *Jesus Lifted Me* 13. *Jesus Is Tenderly Calling* [play](#) 14. *Buck Dance* 15. *Ruben* 16. *Oh, Miss Lulie Gal* 17. *Can't Get a Letter From Down the Road* 18. *Shoot That Buffalo* 19. *Boatman Dance* [play](#) 20. *Hallelujah, It Is Done* 21. *Holy Ghost, Unchain My Name* 22. *Little Brown Jug* 23. *Della* 24. *Ball the Jack* 25. *Till We Meet Again* 26. *When the Train Comes Along*
Elizabeth Cotten (vocals, acoustic guitar); Brenda Evans (vocals).

“Age ain’t nothing but a number,” so sang the late Aaliyah. Less overtly, so did North Carolinian Elizabeth Cotten. Born in 1895, she learned to play guitar by sneaking into her brother’s room to practice while he was away. With her ear, she could play a song after hearing it once, and learned all the songs of the Carolina hills. At age 11, she wrote a little tune called “Freight Train.” At 12, she started working as a housecleaner for folks, and with marital and church duties calling, put away the guitar for some 25 years.

She wound up recording her tune “Freight Train” in 1958, where it instantly ascended into the upper echelons of American folk (it even became a hit in the UK!), as if it had been around since the turn of the century. Having never been heard outside of her family parlor before, Cotten was now at the forefront of the blues revival, performing alongside other forgotten recording artists like “Mississippi” John Hurt, Skip James and Sleepy John Estes. Other songs she recollected from her early days in North Carolina and recorded became the foundation of folk for a whole new generation of players. Everyone from Taj Mahal to Delaney and Bonnie, from Bob Dylan to the Grateful Dead, covered her songs, and they are now part of the American songbook.

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Cotten was declared a National Heritage Fellow by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1984, and was recognized by the Smithsonian Institution as a "living treasure." She received a Grammy Award in 1985 when she was 90. These essential 1965-66 recordings include ten previously unreleased tracks. 26 tracks. 60 minutes. Reissued from Folkways 31003.

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