

## Watermelon Slim and the Workers - No Paid Holidays (2008)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Blues For Howard* 2. *Archetypal Blues No. 2* 3. *Call My Job* 4. *Dad In The Distance* 5. *You're The One I Need* 6. *Bubba's Blues* 7. *And When I Die* 8. *Into The Sunset* 9. *Gearzy's Boogie* 10. *This Travelling Life* 11. *Max The Baseball Clown* 12. *The Bloody Burmese Blues* 13. *I've Got a Toothache* 14. *Everybody's Down On Me*

Musicians: Watermelon Slim - Vocals, harmonica, electric and acoustic dobro slide guitar, percussion, co producer. Michael Newberry - Drums, percussion, vocals, song arrangements. Cliff Belcher - Electric Bass, vocals Ronnie "Mack" McMullen - Electric and acoustic guitars, vocals. + Lee Roy Parnell - Electric slide guitar on "Bubba's Blues" David Maxwell - Acoustic piano, Tracks 1 & 6.

Watermelon Slim has a fresh contemporary vision of country blues, a personal one that still allows listeners to feel right at home, and while he hasn't varied his approach too much over the course of his past couple of albums (*No Paid Holidays* is his third release for Northern Blues), what he does fits and works so well that that's undoubtedly a good thing. Here he hits his usual touchstones, pounding out a couple of full-tilt blues-rockers, shining on slide guitar, stripping things down on occasion for one of his unique "hollers." There aren't really any surprises, but again, that's fine. Well, actually, hearing Slim's stripped-down harmonica version of Laura Nyro's "And When I Die" is a bit of a surprise, and a delight at that. Also a delight is the slide guitar bonanza of "Bubba's Blues," which features guest slide guitarist Lee Roy Parnell and

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Slim tearing the rafters down. Slim's sharp narrative sense emerges on "Max the Baseball Clown," which conjures long-ago boyhood summers while the opener, "Blues for Howard," contains the remarkable line "You can't stay neutral on a moving train." The blues is such a conservative genre in so many ways, depending on familiar progressions and purposely clichéd sentiment to convey universal emotions. Watermelon Slim manages to work within that framework and still somehow make it all seem hushed and personal, even intimate. It's not an easy line to walk, but he does it as well as anyone currently on the contemporary blues scene. No Paid Holidays may not cut into any new territory, but it doesn't really have to because what this guy does is wonderfully solid right where it is. ---Steve Leggett, Rovi

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