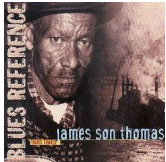


James 'Son' Thomas - Hard Times (2003)

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James 'Son' Thomas - Hard Times (2003)



1. *Good Morning Little School Girl* - 3:12 2. *Sugar Mama Blues* - 3:24 3. *Rollin' And Tumblin'* - 3:56 4. *Nelson Street Blues* - 2:51 5. *Standing At The Crossroads* - 3:59 6. *Bumble Bee* - 2:21 7. *Hard Times* - 3:34 8. *Big Fat Mama* - 4:26 9. *Two Trains Running* - 2:59 10. *Whiskey Headed Woman* - 3:35 11. *Bottle It Up And Go* - 2:33 12. *Ethel Mae* - 4:38 13. *Forty Four Miles* - 2:55 14. *Crawlin' King Snake* - 4:25 15. *Beefsteak Blues* - 2:55 16. *Mama Talk To Your Daughter* - 2:23 17. *It Hurts Me Too* - 4:17 18. *Cairo Blues* - 3:36 19. *Steel Guitar Rag* - 3:28
James 'Son' Thomas - vocals, guitar Recorded in Paris, France March 19th, 1986

No one could ever say that James "Son" Thomas didn't have the right to sing the blues. A Mississippi share cropper and grave digger (and later, a furniture store laborer), Thomas lived a hard life that included being shot by his ex-wife, being severely burned by a space heater, surgery for a brain tumor, long battles with emphysema and epilepsy, and the final series of strokes and heart attacks that finally took his life. Along the way he developed into a skilled folk sculptor and a captivating guitarist and singer. He was officially "discovered" in 1967 by folk researcher William Ferris, who featured Thomas as the centerpiece of his book *Blues From the Delta* as well as several short films, opening the way for Thomas' entry on to the international folk and blues circuit, which led to this album, which was recorded in May 1981 in the Netherlands by Leo Bruin. It features Thomas alone with an acoustic guitar holding forth on fairly traditional Delta blues material in a generally high, near falsetto voice (he drops down in tone for a couple of songs, like "Hard Time Blues"). The hushed intimacy of the setting gives several of these tracks tremendous power, and although Thomas isn't particularly unique or innovative on anything here, his calm sincerity and easy style are immensely affecting.

As an intimate glimpse at one of the last true folk-blues musicians from the Delta, this is a valuable historical recording, but also an enjoyable one. ---Steve Leggett, allmusic.com

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