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Blues and the Heart of Zen

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Blues and the Heart of Zen

-Steve Smith-

Thrown across the years gone past
Gone by and bye
I can
Feel a bridge of sound...
And souls sacrificed
Words lost in time
That speak of joy, unhearable-

Unbearable burdens melted
Into the emptiness
Of heartfelt happiness
At seeing the sun peek-a-boo
Above a line of pine trees
On the horizon

As the words of an old-time ditty
Creep up into
A pair of
Shoeless feet
And strong legs

On up through my loins
Into rock-gut stomach muscles
Into and beyond the heart of a warrior

Words sighing something like:

If all the clocks was stopped
What time would it be?

Lawd! Lawd! Lawd!

If all the clocks was stopped
Jess what time would it be?

If you can tell me the sound of
One million hearts a breakin'

Then maybe you'll see...

And E minor is quite a major key
For one to believe in

If all you got is a wire on a board
With a nail holdin' it all together

If you know what I'm tryin' to mean?

But it's really not about anything other than what is

And what it is is what it's about...

Songs of hope...draped in the sadness of a sly story
Told over the wail of a harmonica and an out-of-tune guitar...
Out of tune to who?

Well, an old guy told me once that it's spooz to sound
That-a-way so you all will listen at what's being played
A little harder...

Or maybe just to see if you can take it-
The way his great-granddaddy took the whip...

Or maybe it's out of tune

To remind you - or someone like -you that blues
Is about grateful misery in the face of hopeless infinity and endless
Opportunity and the blood spilled in the course of inhumane events...

Or...could it be that something is transmitted, outside the confines of
Standard tuning that is above and beyond the actual notational reality
Encompassed by a song, a tune or a riff?

Something in between the mind, body and spirit...something not this
That or the other but a kind of essential nothingness that is so full it's almost
Joyfully expressed in the most down-and-out mess and told in the saddest

Song sung by Blind Willie so and so...or Muddy What's his name...or
Howlin' who and who...black Bodhisattvas one and all...

And the real deal is that ZEN is the name of my guitar and blues is the fuel
That will light the fire of enlightenment enabling me to SLAP MYSELF
AWAKE and realize that THAT is the sound of one hand clapping!