

YOU COULD READ A MAGAZINE RIGHT THROUGH IT

For a very long time, I thought Woody Guthrie had invented the Talking Blues, but Wikipedia tells me that Christopher Allen Bouchillon deserves that credit, for his Columbia recording "Talking Blues", in 1926. "Talking Dust Bowl Blues", Woody's first talking blues, came out in 1940. This form has been used by many other artists – especially by Bob Dylan – since then. Woody's rendition of it includes a few bluesy licks between verses. You can listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIxPf6KT5GI> or on the HFMS Audio Archive page at <https://www.houstonfolkmusic.org/AudioArchives>

G **C**
Back in Nineteen Twenty-Seven,
D
I had a little farm and I called that heaven.
G **C**
Well, the prices up and the rain come down,
D
And I hauled my crops all into town --
G **C**
I got the money, bought clothes and groceries,
D **G**
Fed the kids, and raised a family.

Rain quit and the wind got high,
And the black ol' dust storm filled the sky.
And I swapped my farm for a Ford machine,
And I poured it full of this gas-i-line --
And I started, rockin' an' a-rollin',
Over the mountains, out towards the old Peach Bowl.

Way up yonder on a mountain road,
I had a hot motor and a heavy load,
I's a-goin' pretty fast, there wasn't even stoppin',
A-bouncin' up and down, like popcorn poppin' --
Had a breakdown, sort of a nervous bustdown of some kind,
There was a feller there, a mechanic feller,
Said it was en-gine trouble.

Way up yonder on a mountain curve,
It's way up yonder in the piney wood,
An' I give that rollin' Ford a shove,
An' I's a-gonna coast as far as I could --
Commence coastin', pickin' up speed,
Was a hairpin turn, I didn't make it.

Man alive, I'm a-tellin' you,
The fiddles and the guitars really flew.
That Ford took off like a flying squirrel
An' it flew halfway around the world --
Scattered wives and childrens
All over the side of that mountain.

We got out to the West Coast broke,
So dad-gum hungry I thought I'd croak,
An' I bummed up a spud or two,
An' my wife fixed up a tater stew --
We poured the kids full of it,
Mighty thin stew, though,
You could read a magazine right through it.
Always have figured
That if it'd been just a little bit thinner,
Some of these here politicians
Coulda seen through it.