

Come on my kitchen. A blues song by Robert Johnson, « Come On in My Kitchen » was recorded on November 23, 1936 at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas - his first recording session. The melody is based on the song cycle by the string band the Mississippi Sheiks, « Sitting on Top of the World » (1930) / « Things About Coming My Way » (1931) / « I'll Be Gone, Long Gone » (1932) / « Hitting The Numbers » (1934). Johnson's arrangement on slide guitar (in open tuning, commonly thought to be open G) is based on Tampa Red's recording of the same tune with the title « Things 'Bout Coming My Way ». Sur YouTube, on écouter « Come on in my Kitchen » :

par Robert Johnson : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4up4VP8zjyc>,

par Chris Thomas King : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_b9r-EA_yc

et par Crooked Still : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBnQCIQVR0g>

- avant de le rapprocher de Things 'Bout Coming My Way par Tampa Red :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZShGE1p8qw>

- de « Things About Coming My Way » des Mississippi Sheiks, qu'on écouter par The Little Brothers : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XDpCwRufO4>

- Et naturellement de « Sitting on top of the world », que l'on écouter par les Mississippi Sheiks :

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpR_iYo3CK4,

par Doc Watson : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1q4Eb34mwM>

et par les Creams : http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_JusE2urNo

- Et de « Ill be gone, long gone », toujours par les Mississippi Sheiks :

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_53BRrLiWm4

- Et encore de « It hurts me too », créé par Elmore James :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBA2REoRD98>,

que chantent aussi Eric Clapton : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j87tNXMNI5k>

et John Mayall : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMV4rDgY-BQ>

- et de « The more you lie to me », chanté par Artie White :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5nyJMW7GMA>

- Enfin de « Quand on est ensemble », par JH :

Tampa Red had recorded an instrumental version in 1936, and the song had been recorded earlier by him in 1931, and by Kokomo Arnold in 1935 (Tampa Red may in fact have been the first to use the melody with his song « You Got To Reap What You Sow » (1929) based on Leroy Carr & Scrapper Blackwell's version). Johnson's recording was released on the Vocalion label (no. 03563) as a *race record* - cheap records for the black consumer market. The song was among those compiled on the *King of the Delta Blues Singers* LP in the 1960s. There has been many cover versions of the song recorded, but unlike some of Johnson's other songs - such as « Dust My Broom » and « Sweet Home Chicago » - the song never entered the standard repertoire of black blues singers after his death. This is perhaps because the song did not fit the common 12 bar blues structure of most popular blues, and also possibly because it was not a big seller when originally released on 78. But upon its re-release in the 1960s it became a favorite cover for white (and often British) blues and rock musicians who were influenced by the Johnson LP collection – notably Johnny Winter, Eric Clapton, Peter Green, Patti Smith and Rory Block. The song features several usages of slang that have inspired scholarly analysis.

Oh-ah, she's gone

I know she won't come back

I've taken the last nickel

out of her nation sack

A *nation sack* is an occult « hoodoo » object. Robert Johnson would have likely learned of the *nation sack* during his youth, much of which was spent in the Memphis area. In his later years,

he made his home base (between his frequent road trips) in nearby Helena, Arkansas, a town that was a center for blues musicians. When Johnson has « taken the last nickel out of her nation sack », he has violated two (or even three) taboos ... he touched her *nation sack*, he stole her money... He has broken the power of the love spell. Further, the folklorist H.M. Hyatt documents that in one *nation sack* spell (nine silver dimes in a *nation sack* with lodestone for protection and trade) -- the money itself was part of the magical charm, which he thereby destroyed. So Johnson's trespass into the *nation sack*, whose magical power was believed to bind him to his woman friend, has ironically broken the spell and sent away the woman he is yearning for. In another verse Johnson also expresses appreciation for the troubles women can face -- among others, in terms of loss of reputation. He tells how a woman « in trouble » is outcast and deserted, friendless. It seems he is offering shelter and comfort from these hardships.

*- You better come on
in my kitchen
baby, it's goin' to be rainin'
outdoors
- Winter time's comin'
hit's gon' be slow
You can't make the winter, babe
that's dry long so*

« Dry long so » is slang for dullness or fate. Johnson is telling the woman to just accept winter will be too hard to get through alone, so she'd be wiser to see it through in the warmth of his kitchen. The difficulties of love are referred to throughout the story: infidelity, loss and betrayal. Overall the lyrics conjure up a vision of painful conflict in a relationship. The woman has gone off with another man; but maybe things didn't work out and Johnson is saying : don't spend the winter alone, come back with me. Or perhaps this is wishful pleading on Johnson's part. Another interpretation is that he has lost one woman, and now he is offering love and shelter to another woman who has got in trouble and is an outcast, possibly pregnant. As in many of Johnson's songs, the lyrics tend to evoke an intense emotional experience rather than simply convey precise facts. The explicit relations of the song's characters are never quite defined, nor is it explained how the situation came to be. Typical of the *Delta blues* in particular, it is the intense immediacy of feeling that is primarily expressed by the singer/narrator.

Adaptation, impressions : Jérôme Huet/Information, principaux faits : Wikipedia