

# The Old Bluesmen

**Background:** I love the blues. Old blues in particular. Delta blues. Its effect on modern music and rock and roll is incalculable. Rock and roll wouldn't exist without it. And by extension, other forms of modern popular music. It paved the way. It continues to be a common musical format and influential. I've seen many blues musicians, but many are dying off or are long gone. And there doesn't seem to be enough young blues guitar players coming up to take the baton. This song tries to cover many of them, with special attention to Robert Johnson. The original version of this song was too long, so some of the verse and choruses were moved to the end as optional, but they cover some of the players, past and present.

**Written:** 2023

Arr.	Key	Time	Tuning	Tempo	Style	Capo
1	E	4/4	Standard	130	Slow Blues	None

Arrangement	1
Intro	Hendrix Little Wing-like riff starting at 12e
Verse	E A E A E A E A B A B A E A B B
Chorus	E A E B E A E B A

## Chords Used in this Song

E	A	B

# The Old Bluesmen

## Verse 1

All the old bluesmen have died  
Even their disciples are fallin' away  
I can't pick up my guitar  
Without thinking about Stevie Ray  
He was my generation's Hendrix  
Only he could play like Jimi could  
Stevie's gone over 30 years now  
No one stands now like he stood

## Verse 2

All the old blues Kings are gone  
Freddie, Albert and the great BB  
All the Great James are gone too  
Elmore, Etta, Skip, yeah all three  
The great blues ladies have left us  
Yeah they've all gone far away  
Big Mama and Ma Rainey  
Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday

## Chorus 1

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
While the rest of us survive  
Keep the music down there alive  
We'll all be there to join you someday

## Verse 3

All the great nicknames have fallen  
Howlin', Lightnin' and T Bone  
Muddy Waters and Gatemouth  
Son House, Sonny Boy and Big Joe  
We lost Otis Rush and Willie Dixon  
Chicago blues just ain't the same  
Paul Butterfield and Elvin Bishop  
So many other lost names

### **Chorus 2**

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
Where the sky always cries  
And the bottleneck always slides  
Where old bluesman go to die  
But not fade away

### **Solo / Interlude**

### **Chorus 3**

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
Heaven may not want our souls  
But that's ok, it's not how I roll  
The music in Hell is better anyway

### **Verse 7**

It all goes back to Robert Johnson  
Who no one ever really knew  
Except Muddy and Son House  
The Poison Man and the Devil too  
Many more came before him  
History forgot their names  
Now we call on the last disciples  
To carry on the blues flame

### **Chorus 4**

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
Till the day my heart fails  
I got the hellhound on my trail  
He's got possession over my judgement day

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
When I've got rambling on my mind  
I travel down by the riverside  
I hope there's no stones in my passway

### **Optional Verses and Choruses**

#### **Verse 4**

You know we've been lucky  
Some played till they could play no more  
Jeff Beck just left at 78  
Peter Green not long before  
John Mayall is still kicking  
New Bluesbreakers in his band  
John Lee Hooker lived till 83  
Johnny Winter played when he could no longer stand

#### **Verse 5**

Eric Clapton is still around  
But he's long past his peak  
Yeah Slowhand ain't the Cream  
Of the crop no more, so to speak  
Buddy Guy's still playing in his 80s  
Defying all the odds  
I hope he's influencing a new crop  
Attracting 'em like a Lightnin' rod

#### **Verse 6**

But some disciples left too early  
Duane didn't see 25  
Mike Bloomfield didn't see 40  
Motorcycles and pills took their lives  
Janis joined Robert, Jim and Jimi  
In the dubious "27 Club"  
Amy would join them much later  
A long way from the Camden pubs

**Chorus**

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
I hope Heaven ain't gonna mind  
Me and The Devil stole their wine  
The saints don't need it anyway

**Chorus**

Well If you go down below  
Where the old bluesmen go  
Tell The Devil I said hello  
Enjoy your stay  
I'll see you on the porch  
Grab your guitar, we gonna scorch  
It's way too cold up in Heaven anyway

# The Old Bluesmen

<p><b>Verse:</b> E A E A E A E A B A B A E A B B</p>	<p><b>Chorus:</b> E A E B E A E B A</p>
<p><b>Verse</b> All the old bluesmen have died Even their disciples are fallin' away I can't pick up my guitar Without thinking about Stevie Ray He was my generation's Hendrix Only he could play like Jimi could Stevie's gone over 30 years now No one stands now like he stood</p>	<p><b>Chorus 2</b> Well If you go down below Where the old bluesmen go Tell The Devil I said hello Enjoy your stay Where the sky always cries And the bottleneck always slides Where old bluesman go to die But not fade away</p>
<p><b>Verse</b> All the old blues Kings are gone Freddie, Albert and the great BB All the Great James are gone too Elmore, Etta, Skip, yeah all three The great blues ladies have left us Yeah they've all gone far away Big Mama and Ma Rainey Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday</p>	<p><b>Chorus 3</b> Well If you go down below Where the old bluesmen go Tell The Devil I said hello Enjoy your stay Heaven may not want our souls But that's ok, it's not how I roll The music in Hell is better anyway</p>
<p><b>Chorus 1</b> Well If you go down below Where the old bluesmen go Tell The Devil I said hello Enjoy your stay While the rest of us survive Keep the music down there alive We'll all be there to join you someday</p>	<p><b>Verse</b> It all goes back to Robert Johnson Who no one ever really knew Except Muddy and Son House The Poison Man and the Devil too Many more came before him History forgot their names Now we call on the last disciples To carry on the blues flame</p>
<p><b>Verse</b> All the great nicknames have fallen Howlin', Lightnin' and T Bone Muddy Waters and Gatemouth Son House, Sonny Boy and Big Joe We lost Otis Rush and Willie Dixon Chicago blues just ain't the same Paul Butterfield and Elvin Bishop So many other lost names</p>	<p><b>Chorus 4</b> Well If you go down below Where the old bluesmen go Tell The Devil I said hello Enjoy your stay Till the day my heart fails I got the hellhound on my trail He's got possession over my judgement day Well If you go down below Where the old bluesmen go Tell The Devil I said hello Enjoy your stay When I've got rambling on my mind I travel down by the riverside I hope there's no stones in my passway</p>