

Pastures of Plenty

Woody Guthrie



1. It's a mighty hard row that my poor hands have hoed.
My poor feet have traveled a hot dusty road.
Out of your Dust Bowl and Westward we rolled;
Your deserts were hot and your mountains were cold
2. I worked in your orchards of peaches and prunes.
I slept on the ground in the light of the moon.
On the edge of the city you'll see us and then
We come with the dust and we go with the wind.
3. California, Arizona, I harvest your crops.
Well, its North up to Oregon to gather your hops,
Dig the beets from your ground, cut the grapes from your vine
To set on your table your light sparkling wine.
4. Green pastures of plenty from dry desert ground
From the Grand Coulee Dam where the waters run down.
Every state in the Union us migrants have been.
We'll work in this fight and we'll fight till we win.
5. It's always we rambled, that river and I.
All along your green valley, I will work till I die.
My land I'll defend with my life if need be
'Cause my pastures of plenty must always be free.

"Pastures of Plenty" was composed by Woody Guthrie in 1941. It describes the life of agricultural migrant workers. It was possibly inspired by John Steinbeck's **The Grapes of Wrath** which was published in 1939. Guthrie was inspired to write a two-part song – "Tom Joad – Parts 1 & 2" which were recorded on his album **Dust Bowl Ballads** (1940). The tune is based on the ballad "Pretty Polly" which is included in the Songs section.

It has been recorded by Harry Belafonte, Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, Jesse Colin Young, Peter, Paul and Mary, Dave Van Ronk, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, Flatt and Scruggs, Will Geer, The Kingston Trio, Country Joe MacDonald, Odetta, Alison Krauss & Union Station, Cisco Houston, Pete Seeger and others.

I can't recall from whose recording I first learned it.

The phrase "pastures of plenty" is used in a different context in the song "Talking Vietnam Pot-Luck Blues" by Tom Paxton.

It is printed in Pete Seeger's **The Bells of Rhymney** book.

Other songs by Woody Guthrie in this section are:

"Do Re Mi"

"Gypsy Davy"

"Hard Travelin"

"Hard, Ain't It Hard"

"The Philadelphia Lawyer"

"The Reuben James"

"So Long It's Been Good to Know You"

"This Land is Your Land"

"Union Maid"

"Woody's Rag"