

The words are just lies, snares, hooks, traps. The singer is asked 'Hey hey man, can't you wait a while?' and he answers 'No, no, babe . . .' and even this is a lie. The long guitar-break comes in at this point, as if he can wait, and will wait, because waiting is part of the pleasure of the kill. He's like the treacherous judge in 'Seven Curses', whose 'old eyes deepened in his head'. And at the end, what is the last noise on the track? A cough! He coughs, like an old man. Like an old lion who has choked on his food. It is a vividly imagined, powerful performance, and as a reading of the Sheiks' song, indisputably up at the creative end of song-interpretation.

Dylan has never performed 'World Gone Wrong' live, but he has twice performed 'Blood in My Eyes': at the New York Supper Club early shows on November 16 & 17, 1993. He also made a terrific promo video of the track, filmed by DAVE STEWART, wandering round the streets of Camden, London, in July 1993. It's one of the few Dylan videos that's any good. Aptly for the era of the song, it's shot in black and white, and Dylan walks around like a New Orleans undertaker, complete with black top hat.

NB: It's fairly certain that Dylan knew all three of these Mississippi Sheiks recordings in the 1960s, but it's striking too that all three used on these two Bob Dylan albums were reissued on one Yazoo CD in 1992.

[Mississippi Sheiks: 'Sittin' on Top of the World', Shreveport, LA, 17 Feb 1930; 'The World Is Going Wrong', Atlanta, GA, 24 Oct 1931; 'I've Got Blood in My Eyes for You', Atlanta, 25 Oct 1931, all on *Stop and Listen Blues: The Mississippi Sheiks*, Mamlisch S-3804, NY, 1974; CD-reissued on *Stop And Listen*, Yazoo 2006, NY 1992. Bob Dylan, 'Blood in My Eyes' promo video, London, 21 Jul 1993.

Beale Street Rounders: 'I'm Sittin' on Top of the World', Chicago, c.13 Oct 1930, CD-reissued *Memphis Harp & Jug Blowers (1927-1939)*, RST Blues Documents BDCD-6028, Vienna, 1992. Sam Collins: 'I'm Still Sitting on Top of the World', NY, 8 Oct 1931. Joe Evans & Arthur McClain as the Two Poor Boys: 'Sittin' on Top of the World', NY, 21 May 1931, *Early Country Music*, Historical HLP-8002, Jersey City, NJ, *nia*, CD-reissued *The Two Poor Boys*, Document DOCD-5044, Vienna, 1991. Johnny Shines: *Sittin' on Top of the World*, Biograph, *nia*, 1960s, reissued Biograph BLP 12044, Caanan, NY, 1973. Bill Monroe & His Blue Grass Boys: 'Sittin' on Top of the World', *nia*, *Knee Deep in Bluegrass*, Stetson, US, 1958, reissued Stetson HATC 3002, *nia*. Doc Watson: 'Sitting on Top of the World', NY, 25/26 Jan 1963, *Doc Watson*, Vanguard VRS-9152 (mono) & VSD-79152, NY, 1964. Harmonica Frank: 'Sittin on Top of the World', *Blues That Made the Rooster Dance*, Barrelhouse BH 05, US, 1974.

Bumble Bee Slim: 'Climbing on Top of the Hill', Chicago, 10 Sep 1934. Blind Boy Fuller: 'I'm Climbing on Top of the Hill', NY, 23 Jul 1935, CD-issued *Blind Boy Fuller: East Coast Piedmont Style*, Columbia Roots N' Blues Series 467923 2, NY, 1991.

Big Bill Broonzy: 'Worrying You Off My Mind', NY, 29 Mar 1932, CD-reissued *Big Bill Broonzy: Good Time Tonight*, Columbia Roots N' Blues 467247-10, NY, 1990. Black Ace: 'You Gonna Need My Help Someday', Dallas, TX, 15 Feb 1937, *New Deal Blues (1933-1939)*, Mamlisch S-3801, NY (& on the EP *Black Ace*, XX Min701, UK), 1971, CD-reissued *Black Ace: I'm the Boss Card in Your Hand*, Arhoolie CD 374, El Cerrito, CA, c.1990. Sonny Terry: 'One Monkey Don't Stop the Show', Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 26 Oct 1960, *Sonny's Story*, Bluesville BV-1025, *nia*.

Alan Lomax quoted from *The Land Where the Blues Began*, New York: Pantheon, 1993.]

Mitchell, Joni [1943 -] Roberta Joan Anderson was born on November 7, 1943 in the tiny town of Macleod (now Fort Macleod), Alberta, Canada. She grew up teaching herself guitar and piano, both of which she plays like no-one else, so that these unique styles have themselves been the shaping forces behind many of her highly personal songs, along with lyrics of great intelligence and emotional directness mediated by acute self-observation and lightness of touch, all of which qualities were clear even on her debut album, *Joni Mitchell*, produced by DAVID CROSBY in 1968, on which, despite its occasional immature gush, she was already evidently an original writer, capable of complexity of form and content. She also has a highly distinctive voice of great range (if with a tendency, unchecked early on, to shriek off at the top end).

The result is that she has been absolutely the most important female singer-songwriter of Bob Dylan's generation, and the greatest such figure alive today. It is a reflection of our culture's continued disinclination to take women as seriously as men that her work is not more commonly mentioned in the same breath as, if not Dylan's then at least VAN MORRISON's and NEIL YOUNG's. Like Dylan she has never been content to stay in one place artistically, and has created a large body of variegated, honourable work achieved over several decades. She has become too a figure of dignity and gravitas, a rôle model for women through her skilled, unpreachy delineation of the predicaments and inconsistencies of *being* a contemporary woman in the modern world as well as through her insistence on high standards for her artistry.

She began her career in the folk clubs of Toronto before belatedly joining the New York City folk scene in the mid-1960s and finding her first success as the writer of 'Urge for Going', recorded by Tom Rush and George Hamilton IV, and 'Michael from Mountains', recorded by JUDY COLLINS, who enjoyed a hit with Mitchell's 'Both Sides Now', one of the songs on her second album, *Clouds*, in 1969, along with the widely covered 'Chelsea Morning'. All these songs were picked up by other artists before Joni Mitchell landed her record deal. (Judy Collins' version of 'Both Sides

Now', for example, started out as a track on her 1967 album *Wildflowers*.)

In 1970 Mitchell had her own first hit single with 'Big Yellow Taxi', from her third album, *Ladies of the Canyon*, which also included the song 'Woodstock', covered by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and 'The Circle Game'. Next came the lovely albums *Blue* and, even better, 1972's *For the Roses*, an album not far short of, and preceding, Dylan's *Blood on the Tracks* as a superb, contemporary yet timeless work of mature intelligence, fully achieved. 'Woman of Heart and Mind' is sublime, and is followed by the closing track of this masterwork, the dark and glorious 'Judgement of the Moon and Stars (Ludwig's Tune)'. The album also contained the hit single 'You Turn Me on, I'm a Radio'.

Sometimes, following this, Joni Mitchell would veer off into unwelcome jazz explorations, but she always came back, sometimes bringing something useful with her. There isn't the space here to do justice to her long, subsequent career, though any list of her other finest albums would have to include *Hejira* (1976), *Night Ride Home* (1991) and *Turbulent Indigo* (1994).

Bob Dylan first came to her attention back in 1965, when she was a struggling and unknown folkie with songwriting ambitions—and heard 'Positively 4th Street' on the radio: 'When I heard Bob Dylan sing, "You got a lotta nerve", I thought "Hallelujah! man, the American pop song has grown up. It's wide open. Now you can write about anything that literature can write about." Up until that time rock & roll songs were pretty much limited to, "I'm a fool for ya, baby".'

Oddly, in the light of that, when it came to the Starbucks album *Artist's Choice: Joni Mitchell—Music That Matters to Her*, 2005, the Dylan track she includes is 'Sweetheart Like You', from the *Infidels* album of 1983. (She also chooses a track of her own, 'Harlem in Havana'.)

Dylan recorded a delightfully casual but convincing version of her 'Big Yellow Taxi' in the studios in New York on June 4, 1970, at one of the sessions for the *New Morning* album; it was issued not on that LP but on the subsequent compilation *Dylan* issued in late 1973. Mitchell and Dylan first worked together two years after that, when she dropped in on the Rolling Thunder Revue tour of 1975—by which time she was a major star in her own right. SAM SHEPARD reports DAVID BLUE as eagerly awaiting the psychic catfight in prospect when SARA DYLAN was due to arrive: 'Just wait,' said Blue, 'till her and Joni get around each other. You'll get some shit on camera then. . . . Sara's a very regal, powerful chick, and Joni's gettin' into her empress bag now. I mean Joni's a real queen now. She's really getting' up there.'

And she was. However, though no clash between her and Sara Dylan occurred, she did find the whole business of supporting RUBIN HURRICANE CARTER rather difficult. She never believed he was innocent (and she was probably right); nor

did she enjoy the concert held in his presence at the Correctional Institute for Women in Clinton, New Jersey on December 7, 1975—on the eve of the 'Night of the Hurricane' concert at Madison Square Garden. *Rolling Stone* reported that the 'mostly black audience of prisoners . . . loved Dylan, Roberta Flack and ALLEN GINSBERG, but Joni Mitchell's supercilious songs were booed and she shrilly lectured Carter and the rest of the inmates: "We came here to give you love; if you can't handle it that's your problem."'

In Austin, Texas, on January 28, 1976, three days after the second and final fund-raising Rolling Thunder gig for Carter (staged in Houston), Dylan made a surprise guest appearance at a Mitchell concert, coming on stage to duet with her on 'Both Sides Now' and then to sing 'Girl of the North Country' by himself.

They next appeared on stage together at the Farewell Concert by THE BAND later that year (and consequently in the film *The Last Waltz*), but after that there seems to have been no conjunction till both performed, separately and together, in Japan in May 1994, at the so-called Great Music Experience at the Todaiji Temple, Nara, when for the finale of the third and final night's concert, on May 22, Joni shared vocals with Dylan on 'I Shall Be Released', backed by the Tokyo New Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Michael Kamen. This was televised around the world and caught Joni Mitchell looking askance at Dylan throughout this duet. Afterwards she complained that he never cleaned his teeth.

Undaunted, she reappeared on a triple bill with him and Van Morrison at a series of six West Coast concerts in May 1998, beginning in Vancouver on May 14. On the opening night she stood at the side of the stage for Dylan's set after completing her own. In the town of George, in Washington State, on May 16, she shared vocals with Bob and Van on the tenth song of Dylan's set, 'I Shall Be Released'. It was alleged that on the second of two dates at UCLA in Los Angeles, on May 22, Dylan came on during Joni's set to share vocals with her on 'Big Yellow Taxi'—but this didn't happen: Joni just imitated his voice on one verse. The last night of the six was at Anaheim on May 23.

Like Dylan, she has slowed down her output in middle age. She released only three albums of new material in the 1980s and a further three in the 1990s. But her career proceeds, recurrently beset by fights with the music-biz, which she has often roundly condemned, in tandem with her life-long interest in painting. She has painted not only a number of her own album covers but also for example the cartoonish front of the 1974 Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young album *So Far*.

Nor has she lost her sense of humour. The cover of *Turbulent Indigo* is a self-portrait of Joni as Van Gogh, complete with bandaged ear. And in 1996 she released two compilation albums. One was called *Hits*: the other, *Misses*.

NB: the 2005 *Joni Mitchell—Collector's Edition* 2-DVD set, combining the unmissable 2003 documentary *A Woman of Heart and Mind* with a 1998 live show previously released as *Painting With Words and Music*, is advertised as having a duet with Joni and Dylan on 'Positively 4th Street': but this is actually a clip of Joni singing along to the Dylan record. A bit of a swizz as a duet but belated proof of that special fondness for 'Positively 4th Street'.

[Joni Mitchell: *Joni Mitchell* (later re-titled *Song of a Seagull*), Reprise, US, 1968; *Clouds*, Reprise, 1969; *Ladies of the Canyon*, Reprise, 1970; *Blue*, Reprise, 1971; *For the Roses*, Asylum, US, 1972; *Hejira*, Asylum, 1976; *Night Ride Home*, Geffen 24302, US, 1991; *Turbulent Indigo*, Reprise / WEA 45786, US, 1994. *Artist's Choice: Joni Mitchell—Music That Matters to Her*, Starbucks / Hear Music / Rhino Special Products OPCD-7699 LMM-286, US, 2005. *Joni Mitchell—Collector's Edition* 2-DVD set, Eagle Eye Media EE 39072-9, US, 2005 (the 1st DVD includes brief footage of Dylan at Newport Folk Festival and from *Don't Look Back*). Quote re 'Positively 4th Street' from Bill Flanagan, *Written in My Soul*, Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1986; *Rolling Stone* quoted from online review of movie *Hurricane*, posted 2000, *nia*.]

'money doesn't talk' One of Dylan's best-remembered lines of the 1960s is that snarl from 'It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)', that 'Money doesn't talk, it swears.' But while this spin on the phrase 'money talks' is Dylan's, the notion of making such a spin comes down through the blues from even further back, in black-face vaudeville. A Victor catalogue of 'Darky ditties' from around 1903 contains, in the category 'Comic and Coon Songs by Arthur Collins', one called 'If Money Talks, It Ain't on Speaking Terms with Me'; years later the same idea had migrated into an early blues that begins 'I can't make a nickel, I'm flat as I can be / Some people say money is talking, but it won't say a word to me.'

[Victor catalogue reproduced in Tony Russell, *Blacks Whites and Blues*, London: Studio Vista, 1970. Early blues song source unknown.]

More Bob Dylan Greatest Hits [1971] UK title for *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits Vol. II*.

Morrison, Van [1945 -] George Ivan Morrison was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on August 31, 1945, and grew up in that harshly divided sectarian city. At 12 he joined the skiffle group Deannie Sands and the Javelins, later touring Germany's clubs in the Monarchs before returning to Belfast to become the lead singer of Them, one of the funkiest of the British beat groups reviving Chicago blues and rock'n'roll for teenage Saturday night dances in the early 1960s. All these groups attacked their material with crude simplicity—guitar, bass and drums all playing three-chord numbers in a home-made style—but Them's special funkiness was due in large part to the excep-

tional, almost venomous devotion to soul on the part of Morrison himself.

Them, a five-piece group, were signed to a UK label, Decca—the one that had rejected the BEATLES—and achieved hits first with a cover of BIG JOE WILLIAMS' 'Baby Please Don't Go', then with two songs that swiftly became pop classics, 'Here Comes the Night' and 'Gloria', which he penned 'Gloria', though their studio work was more widely than this perfect pop and soul. At Morrison's prompting, was quick to do an audacious 'cover' of Dylan's 'It's All Over Now, Baby Blue'—the first overt indication that the work had in any way impinged upon the career of a folk artist.

Tiring of the lumpen limitations of the group, and never especially skilled in personal relations, Van Morrison went to New York, signing a new deal with Bert Berns, who had been the group's manager and producer. Berns was a former School of Music pupil but also one of the most ambitious entrepreneurs, who might as well have been a frozen foods manufacturer. He had enjoyed great success with various other singles acts, and who, with the entrepreneur WEXLER, had recently formed Bang Records in New York.

Using session musicians just as capable of dragging down Morrison's already ordinary emergent talent, as both composer and producer, Berns produced the now-legendary *Them* in 1967 that included prototypes of 'Gloria' and 'Madame George', songs destined to appear in transcendent form on *Astral Weeks* only a few months later; but the Bang era was over, and Morrison's work, an album utterly unique in its time, included the lyrical and catchy 'Brown Sugar', a Morrison composition that revealed the true nature of his muse and again became a 'classic' and top 10 hit.

Bert Berns died suddenly of a heart attack on December 30, 1967 and Morrison, who had been elsewhere, made *Astral Weeks* for Warner Bros. in 1968. This was a jaw-dropping quantum leap in Morrison's work, an album utterly unique in its time, made before and achieved by an artist who was only 22 years old at the time of its recording. It is a radiant weave of sounds and feelings, of rhythm and music, of timing and phrasing, of emotion expressed in a soaring, almost emotionally truthful way, and all achieved with immense dexterity and delicacy yet with a driving ardour, in which every note played with physicality and every vocal line inspired solo. It is, in the words of the *Rolling Stone* Guide, 'not only Morrison's masterpiece but one of the greatest records ever made—yet it still seems to pay scant tribute to its creator's genius.'

It was not immediately a success in commercial terms, yet somehow everyone who knows it, it touched people's lives, and it expanded the possibilities of the medium.