

A Worried Man

One of many versions of
“Worried Man Blues”

Version by The Kingston Trio (1959)

Roud Folk Song Index No. 4753

A Worried Man (A)

One of many version of the "[Worried Man Blues](#)" (Traditional Folk) – [Roud # 4753](#)
[A Worried Man](#) by The Kingston Trio (#20 in 1959)

Chorus 1

A
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
D **A**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
A **C#** **D**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
E7 **A | A**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

A
Got myself a Cadillac thirty dollars down
D **A**
Got myself a brand new house five miles out of town
A
Got myself a gal named Sue treats me really fine
E7 **A**
Yes she's my baby and I love her all the time
A
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
D
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
A **C#** **D**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
E7 **A | A**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

A
I've been away on a business trip travelin' all around
D **A**
I've got a gal and her name is Sue, prettiest gal in town.
A
She sets my mind to worryin' every time I'm gone
E7 **A | A**
I'll be home to-night so I won't be worried long. **Chorus 1**

A
Well Bobby's in the livin' room holding hands with Sue
D **A**
Nickie's at that big front door about to come on through
A **A**↓ **C#**↓ **D**↓
Well I'm here in the closet – Oh Lord what shall I do
E7 **A**
We're worried now but we won't be worried long

A
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
D
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
A **C#** **D**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
E7 **A** | **E -A**
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried *long*.

A Worried Man (C)

One of many version of the "[Worried Man Blues](#)" (Traditional Folk)
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Chorus 1

C
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
F **C**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
C **E** **F**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
G7 **C | C**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

C
Got myself a Cadillac thirty dollars down
F **C**
Got myself a brand new house five miles out of town
C
Got myself a gal named Sue treats me really fine
G7 **C**
Yes she's my baby and I love her all the time
C
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
F
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
C **E** **F**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
G7 **C | C**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

C
I've been away on a business trip travelin' all around
F **C**
I've got a gal and her name is Sue, prettiest gal in town.
C
She sets my mind to worryin' every time I'm gone
G7 **C | C**
I'll be home to-night so I won't be worried long. **Chorus 1**

C

Well Bobby's in the livin' room holding hands with Sue

F

C

Nickie's at that big front door about to come on through

C

C↓

E↓

F↓

Well I'm here in the closet – Oh Lord what shall I do

G7

C

We're worried now but we won't be worried long

C

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,

F

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

C

E

F

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

G7

C | **G - C**

I'm worried now, but I won't be worried *long*.

A Worried Man (D)

One of many version of the "[Worried Man Blues](#)" (Traditional Folk)
[A Worried Man](#) by The Kingston Trio (#20 in 1959)

Chorus 1

D
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
G **D**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
D **F#** **G**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
A7 **D | D**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

D
Got myself a Cadillac thirty dollars down
G **D**
Got myself a brand new house five miles out of town
D
Got myself a gal named Sue treats me really fine
A7 **D**
Yes she's my baby and I love her all the time

D
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
G
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
D **F#** **G**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
A7 **D | D**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

D
I've been away on a business trip travelin' all around
G **D**
I've got a gal and her name is Sue, prettiest gal in town.
D
She sets my mind to worryin' every time I'm gone
A7 **D | D**
I'll be home to-night so I won't be worried long.

Chorus 1

D

Well Bobby's in the livin' room holding hands with Sue

G

D

Nickie's at that big front door about to come on through

D

D↓

F#↓

G↓

Well I'm here in the closet – Oh Lord what shall I do

A7

D

We're worried now but we won't be worried long

D

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,

G

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

D

F#

G

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

A7

D | A -D

I'm worried now, but I won't be worried *long*.

A Worried Man (F)

One of many version of the "[Worried Man Blues](#)" (Traditional Folk)
[A Worried Man](#) by The Kingston Trio (#20 in 1959)

Chorus 1

F
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
Bb **F**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
F **A** **Bb**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
C7 **F | F**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

F
Got myself a Cadillac thirty dollars down
Bb **F**
Got myself a brand new house five miles out of town
F
Got myself a gal named Sue treats me really fine
C7 **F**
Yes she's my baby and I love her all the time

F
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
Bb
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
F **A** **Bb**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
C7 **F | F**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

F
I've been away on a business trip travelin' all around
Bb **F**
I've got a gal and her name is Sue, prettiest gal in town.
F
She sets my mind to worryin' every time I'm gone
C7 **F | F**
I'll be home to-night so I won't be worried long.

Chorus 1

F

Well Bobby's in the livin' room holding hands with Sue

Bb

F

Nickie's at that big front door about to come on through

F

F↓

A↓

Bb↓

Well I'm here in the closet – Oh Lord what shall I do

C7

F

We're worried now but we won't be worried long

F

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,

Bb

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

F

A

Bb

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

C7

F

C -F

I'm worried now, but I won't be worried *long*.

A Worried Man (G)

One of many version of the "[Worried Man Blues](#)" (Traditional Folk)

[A Worried Man](#) by The Kingston Trio (#20 in 1959)

Chorus 1

G
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,
C **G**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
G **B** **C**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
D7 **G | G**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

G
Got myself a Cadillac thirty dollars down
C **G**
Got myself a brand new house five miles out of town
G
Got myself a gal named Sue treats me really fine
D7 **G**
Yes she's my baby and I love her all the time
G
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
C
It takes a worried, worried man to sing a worried worried song
G **B** **C**
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
D7 **G | G**
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

G
I've been away on a business trip travelin' all around
C **G**
I've got a gal and her name is Sue, prettiest gal in town.
G
She sets my mind to worryin' every time I'm gone
D7 **G | G**
I'll be home to-night so I won't be worried long. **Chorus 1**

G

Well Bobby's in the livin' room holding hands with Sue

C

Nickie's at that big front door about to come on through

G

G

G↓

B↓

C↓

Well I'm here in the closet – Oh Lord what shall I do

D7

G

We're worried now but we won't be worried long

G

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,

C

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

G

B

C

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song

D7

G | D -G

I'm worried now, but I won't be worried *long*.

Background

"Worried Man Blues" is a folk song in the roots music repertoire; earliest versions were in 12-bar blues form. It is catalogued as Roud Folk Song Index No. 4753. Like many folk songs passed by oral tradition, the lyrics vary from version to version, but generally all contain the chorus "It takes a worried man to sing a worried song/It takes a worried man to sing a worried song/I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long." The verses tell the story of a man imprisoned for unknown reasons "I went across the river, and I lay down to sleep/When I woke up, had shackles on my feet", who pines for his lost love, who is "on the train and gone." The melody in 4/4 timing has a strong resemblance to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" (aka "John Brown's Body"), which is in 6/8 timing.

The song was recorded by Woody Guthrie in 1940, and in the years that followed by his sometime singing partners Cisco Houston, Burl Ives, Ramblin' Jack Elliott (with Derroll Adams), and Pete Seeger. It was included by Seeger in his 1955 Folksinger's Guitar Guide instruction record and booklet (Folkways CRB1) as well as his concerts throughout the 1960s.

The song has been performed by many bluegrass, folk and country artists, including The Stanley Brothers, Osborne Brothers, George Jones, and even by Devo, Van Morrison, Elliott Murphy, and numerous others

Lyrics

Chorus:

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long

Verses:

I went across the river, I lay down to sleep
I went across the river, I lay down to sleep
When I woke up had shackles on my feet

Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg
Twenty-nine links of chain around my leg
And on each link the initials of my name

I asked the judge what might be my fine?
I asked the judge what might be my fine?
Twenty-one years on the RC Mountain Line

The train arrived, sixteen coaches long
The train arrived, sixteen coaches long
The girl I love is on that train and gone

If anyone asks you who composed this song
If anyone asks you who composed this song
Tell 'em was I, and I sing it all day long