



# Jook Right On: Blues Stories and Blues Storytellers

*Barry Lee Pearson*

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## **Jook Right On: Blues Stories and Blues Storytellers** Barry Lee Pearson

Jook Right On: Blues Stories and Blues Storytellers is what author and compiler Barry Lee Pearson calls a “blues quilt.” These blues stories, collected by Pearson for thirty years, are told in the blues musicians’ own words. The author interviewed over one hundred musicians, recording and transcribing their stories. These are stories from well-known musicians such as John Lee Hooker, Koko Taylor, David “Honeyboy” Edwards, and Little Milton, and from more obscure artists such as Big Luck Carter, Henry Dorsey, Joseph Savage, and J. T. Adams. Pearson provides an introduction to the world of the blues and the genre of blues stories as well as brief biographies of the musicians. Divided into five sections—Blues Talk, Living the Blues, Learning the Blues, Working the Blues, and The Last Word—the book provides an overview of the inner workings of the blues tradition from the artist’s point of view. Wordsmiths by trade, the storytellers bring to their tales qualities also found in blues song performance and philosophical perspectives characteristic of the blues tradition such as improvisation, ironic humor, ambivalence, and a life-affirming sense of hope in the face of adversity. Pitched somewhere between story and song, this remarkable chorus of voices provides concrete illustrations of what it means to live the blues, to feel the blues, and to play the blues. Taken together, these artists provide a collective history of one of America’s most influential art forms. Blues fans and those interested in African American music, folklore, American music history, popular culture, and southern history will want to read Jook Right On: Blues Stories and Blues Storytellers.

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