



Photo courtesy of Sandy Moffett

Sandy Moffett, Emeritus Professor of Theatre at Grinnell College, joined the Theatre Faculty in 1971 and continues to teach and direct plays on campus on occasion. Currently he spends most of his time restoring prairie, writing songs and stories, entertaining his grandchildren, and playing with The Too Many String Band. His most recent short stories are scheduled for publication in The Wapsipinicon Almanac and Gray's Sporting Journal.

The Real Deep River Blues

LYRICS BY SANDY MOFFETT

PERFORMED BY THE TOO MANY STRING BAND

There's a little town on the county line,
'bout two miles past the "Road Closed" sign,
nestled in the middle of the corn and the beans and the hay.
They had a little river, no more than a creek,
The doggone thing never was very deep.
But they called that town Deep River anyway.

They used to have a real good hardware store,
had "locally owned" up over the door,
and it had anything that you'd ever want to buy.
The man at the back could fix anything
that would buzz or whirl or whistle or ring,
And the café next door had sixteen kinds of pie.

There was a big old church up on the hill.
There were three kinds of beer at the bar and grill,
and the grass on the softball field was always green.
There were flowers planted all along the road.
The houses' lawns were always mowed.
It was the prettiest little ol' town you'd ever seen.

CHORUS

Let it rain, let it sleet.
Cracks in the sidewalk, holes in the street.
That's the real Deep River blues.
Let the rain come on down.
We're gonna lose another little town.
That's the real Deep River blues.

Back in the eighties things went south.
There were two bad years of real hard drouth,
and a man from Texas bought all the little farms around.
The high school grads started movin' away,
to places they could get more pay,
like West Des Moines or some other big-ass town.

The grocery store was the first to go,
then the hardware closed its door,
and Joe at the tavern said he'd run plum out of luck.
The Wal-Mart at the county seat
set prices so low they couldn't compete.
'Deep River was blowin away like an old corn shuck.

CHORUS

Now all these little towns are dyin' away
like weeds in the pavement on a dry hot day,
no matter how they try to fight defeat.
A few old folks, a couple a dogs,
lots all around that are feeding hogs,
and "for sale" written on the buildings all along Main Street.

I had a dream that I'll relate.
I was at the Mall on the interstate,
on the biggest damn Caterpillar 'dozer this side of hell.
And I was wrecking every thing,
Target, Menards, and Burger King,
Home Depot, Hooters, Perkins, and Taco Bell.

Then I awoke and put my feet on the ground.
I saw the destruction was the other way around.
These little old towns got nothing' left to lose.
All over this country it's goin' on,
like tree limbs breaking in a bad ice storm.
All that they got is the blues.

CHORUS 



*Click the image to listen to "The
Real Deep River Blues"*