



The Folksinger's Guide To The 12-String Guitar As Played by Leadbelly

By Julius Lester, Pete Seeger

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From Introduction: "Huddie Ledbetter, nicknamed Leadbelly, died in December, 1949 at the age of 64. He had come out of the deep South, settled down in a little apartment on New York's lower East Side, determined to build a successful career as a musician. Unfortunately, there was not much interest in folk music then. He got occasional jobs singing for schools and colleges, or at little parties where they were raising money for some cause like helping Loyalist Spain. Until the last three years of his life, he had barely recorded more than a few dozen songs. Today, through his recordings, he is world famous as one of the greatest singers of folksongs of this century. Songs he composed, or helped put together out of the fragments of older tunes, or adapted into the form in which we all know them now, have sold in the tens of millions: Good Night Irene, Bring Me A Little Water, Silvy, Midnight Special, Rock Island Line, Kisses Sweeter Than Wine (the tune), Old Cotton Fields At Home, and many others. The driving rhythms he developed on his unusual guitar, with its double strings, are unforgettable to anyone who ever heard them. Today, many young people wishing to learn his songs as he sang them, are trying to learn his style of guitar playing. This book is designed to help them, but it cannot be considered a substitute for listening to the recordings of Leadbelly....It must be remembered that more is involved than playing the correct notes and rhythm. When you listen to Leadbelly on record, you are listening to a man with many years of experience play an instrument. To achieve what he achieved is something which cannot be communicated in a book." - Julius Lester

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