

HOW TO PLAY THE GUITAR

First, go west.
Not driving, not flying, and certainly not with any money.
Hitch, hop freights, or walk. You can't know the blues
until you've walked from Ogden to Boulder.
Go west until you've hit California.
If you're already in California, go to Oklahoma and back.

Then get a job. Not a career, a job.
Wash dishes. Cook. Hew wood, carve tombstones.
Drive railroad spikes into a mountainside, or
switch mainlines in Rock Island. Get axed.

Then get arrested. If you're not doing something illegal,
you'll never get the hang of fingerpicking.
Spend at least three nights in jail, two of them drunk.
Learn the deputy's first name, and get banned
from the county for a period of at least seven years.

Then get stood up. Preferably by a beautiful woman
with brown hair.
Make certain she leaves you feeling like a broken liquor bottle,
like an alley cat in the rain. Call her "baby," beg her not
to go. When she's gone, make sure she's on the "cheating side
of town."

Buy a slide. Better yet, steal one.

If by now you don't know how to play the guitar,
you either have no hands or you've killed yourself.