Sonny Terry – Talkin' 'Bout The Blues (1953)

A1 In The Evening A2 Kansas City A3 John Henry A4 The Fox Chase A5 Louise Blues A6 Red River A7 Goodbye Leadbelly B1 Custard Pie B2 I Woke Up This Mornin' B3 Old Woman Blues B4 Talkin' About The Blues B5 Chain The Lock On My Door B6 Moanin' And Mournin' B7 Baby, Baby Guitar – Alec Stewart Vocals, Harmonica – Sonny Terry

This rare December 1953 session (reissued on CD in 1999) was unusual for Terry in that his guitar accompanist was not Brownie McGhee, but Alec Seward, who had previously recorded as Guitar Slim in a duo with "Fat Boy" Hayes" (aka Jelly Belly). It's unusual only in the personnel, however. It sounds like typical Sonny Terry, as he works his way through original material, including standards like "John Henry" and other blues tunes like "In the Evening" (the song that would provide much of the basis for Robert Johnson's "Love in Vain"). You'd have to say that it's usually more interesting to hear Terry with his longtime partner McGhee than it is to hear him with Seward, but it's not terribly different. The trademark vocal and harmonica whoops, and hollers are in gear and running throughout the album, sometimes to exhilarating effect, as on the rapid "The Fox Chase (aka "Hound Dog Holler")." His lyrics get uncommonly specific on "Goodbye Leadbelly," a tribute to the then-recently deceased folk-blues legend, composed by "writer unknown." The recording engineer on the session, incidentally, was a young Jac Holzman, who had just started Elektra Records. ---Richie Unterberger, allmusic.com

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