

Memphis Minnie

"Black Cat Blues"

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I got a big black cat¹ who sits in my back door
He catches every rat run across my floor
Now everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
I wouldn't sell that cat to save your soul

If it wasn't for that cat, I wouldn't know what I would do
Rats cutting up all of my clothes and shoes²
Now everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
I wouldn't sell that cat to save your soul

I been had this old cat, now, for three, four years
Didn't nobody want him till I brought him here
Now everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
I wouldn't sell that cat to save your soul

(spoken: Catch a rat!)

Before I got that cat, rats had holes all in my walls
Since I brought her home you can't find no holes at all
Now everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
I wouldn't sell that cat to save your soul

You have seen a-lots of cats and you going to see a-
lots more
I got one I carries everywhere I go
Now everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
Everybody wants to buy my kitty
I wouldn't sell that cat to save your soul

(spoken: Aw, play it now
Catch a rat!)

Note 1: although there are no direct references to voodoo, luck or magic, for many listeners, then and now, black cats meant bad luck as surely as did walking under a ladder or breaking a mirror;

Note 2: there is a common folk belief that when rats or mice gnaw your clothes, it is a sure sign you are going to move or die. You must get someone outside the family to patch such clothes, rather than do it yourself which would bring even more bad luck.

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