

## Skip James

### "Little Cow And Calf Is Gonna Die Blues1"

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Hey hey-hey-hey-hey, hey hey hey hey hey  
Hey hey-hey-hey-hey, hey hey hey hey...  
And every cow and calf, I believe was born to die

I'm a-milk my heifer<sup>2</sup>, milk her in a churn  
I'll milk my heifer, I'll milk her in a churn  
If you see my rider, tell her it ain't a darn thing doin'<sup>3</sup>

I wringed my hands, baby, and I wanted to scream  
I wringed my hands, honey, and I wanted to scream  
And when I woke up I thought it was all a dream

Hey hey-hey-hey-hey, hey hey hey hey  
Hey hey-hey-hey-hey, hey hey hey hey...  
And every cow and calf, I believe was born to die

Hey hey-hey, I ain't gonna be here long  
Hey hey-hey, pretty mama, I ain't gonna be here long  
That's the reason why you hear me singin' my old  
lonesome song

Hey, hey-hey-hey-hey-hey, hey hey hey hey  
Hey hey-hey-hey-hey, hey hey hey hey hey  
And every cow's calf, honey, got to be dyin'

I walked the levee from end to end  
I walked the levee, honey, from end to end  
I was just tryin' to find, my calf, again

I'm feelin' back to my used-to...  
I feel a notion, back to my used-to-be  
I have a pretty mama, she don't care for me

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Note 1: although women are clearly represented by the expressions "heifer" and "calf" in the second and seventh verses, James described this song as a product of boyhood experiences tending his grandmother's cattle, whose waywardness drove him to distraction;

Note 2: heifer, a young cow; one that has not had a

calf. To all us city-slickers this poses an interesting question: how does one milk a cow that never has had a calf?. Mail me if you know the answer... (indecent and or obscene language will be punishable by law);  
Note 3: here James asks the listener to conceal his infidelity to his "rider".

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