

## Mance Lipscomb

### "Shake Shake Mama"

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Oh, ain't gonna give you no more cherry ball<sup>1</sup>  
Oh, ain't gonna give you no more cherry ball  
You gone drunk and showed your Santa Claus<sup>2</sup>

Oh, a little bitty woman, hips just like a snake<sup>3</sup>  
Oh, a little bitty woman, her hip just like a snake  
...baby, it really take

Oh, late last night my love come fallin' down  
Me and my baby on our last go-'round

Oh, shake, shake mama, I'll buy you a diamond ring  
Oh, shake, shake mama, I'll buy you a diamond ring  
You don't shake, ain't gonna buy you a doggone thing

Oh, my clutch start to slippin', carb's won't even sing  
Oh, my clutch start to slippin', my carb's won't even  
sing  
Blues in the compression, fire my piston ring

Oh, rider, you ain't foolin' me  
Look-y here, rider, you ain't foolin' me  
You been slippin' to your old-time used-to-be

Oh, I like my babe but I don't like her teddy bear<sup>4</sup>  
Oh, I like my woman but I don't like her teddy bear  
I'm gonna buy her a box-back, maybe it'll work

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Note 1: cherry ball is probably blues slang, fostered by the 1930 Memphis Minnie composition "Cherry Ball Blues" which begins "I ain't gonna give you none o' my cherry ball". James uses it to personify sex or (according to one's point of view) "dehumanize" women;

Note 2: one of the country blues' least known sexual euphemisms, "Santa Claus" may have an idiomatic basis in the Southern speech. Tossing a quarter dollar to an elderly Negro, a character of writer Faulkner remarks, "Buy yourself some Santa Claus";

Note 3: hips just like a snake, said of people who can

twirl their bodies impressively;  
Note 4: teddy bear, a woman's one-piece  
undergarment, worn in the twenties.

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