

Mississippi Goddam

by Nina Simone, 1964

The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam
And I mean every word of it

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi goddam

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi goddam

Can't you see it
Can't you feel it
It's all in the air
I can't stand the *pressure* much longer
Somebody say a *prayer*

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi goddam

This is a *show tune*
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet

Hound dogs on my trail
School children sitting in jail
Black cat cross my path
I think every day's gonna be my last

Lord have mercy on this land of mine
We all gonna get it in due time
I don't belong here
I don't belong there
I've even stopped believing in prayer



pressure – The feeling something bad will happen
prayer – When you ask god for help

show tune – A song for a movie

Hound dogs on my trail – Men with dogs are following her

Lord have mercy – An expression that means, “God, please forgive them.”

Don't tell me
I tell you
Me and my people just about *due*
I've been there so I know
They keep on saying go slow!

But that's just the trouble (Do it slow)
Washing the windows (Do it slow)
Picking the cotton (Do it slow)
You're just plain *rotten* (Do it slow)
You're too damn lazy (Do it slow)
The thinking's crazy (Do it slow)
Where am I going
What am I doing
I don't know
I don't know

Just try to do your very best
Stand up be counted with all the rest
For everybody knows about Mississippi goddam

I bet you thought I was kiddin' didn't you
Picket lines
School boycotts
They try to say it's a communist *plot*
All I want is *equality*
For my sister my brother my people and me

Yes, you lied to me all these years
You told me to wash and clean my ears
And talk real fine just like a lady
And you'd stop calling me sister Sadie

Oh, but this whole country is full of lies
You're all gonna die and die like flies
I don't *trust* you any more
You keep on saying go slow!
Go slow!

due – It's time for you to get something.

rotten – A bad person



A picket line

plot – Idea

equality – When you have the same rights as everyone else

trust – Believe you, think you are a good person

But that's just the trouble (Do it slow)

Desegregation (Do it slow)

Mass participation (Do it slow)

Reunification (Do it slow)

Do things *gradually* (Do it slow)

But bring more *tragedy* (Do it slow)

Why don't you see it

Why don't you feel it

I don't know

I don't know

You don't have to live next to me

Just give me my equality

Everybody knows about Mississippi

Everybody knows about Alabama

Everybody knows about Mississippi goddam

That's it!

reunification – When people come back together

gradually – Slowly, bit by bit

tragedy – Something very sad



School *desegregation*



Mass participation