Louisiana Red – Sweet Blood Call (2011)

1.Louisiana Red – The Whole World (3:34) 2.Louisiana Red – Had A Date With Barbara Last Night (3:23) 3.Louisiana Red – First Degree (2:56) 4.Louisiana Red – Sweetblood Call (2:59) 5.Louisiana Red – I Was Out Walking (3:42) 6.Louisiana Red – Thirty Dirty Women (2:18) 7.Louisiana Red – King Bee (3:52) 8.Louisiana Red – Death Of Ealase (4:38) 9.Louisiana Red – Who Been Fooling You (2:41) 10.Louisiana Red – Going Home (3:18) 11.Louisiana Red – Too Poor To Die (2:51) Louisiana Red (vocals, guitar).

I was fine with this until the sort-of title track—“Sweetblood Call,” two words, versus the album title above—and then I couldn’t carry it anymore. That’s the song about sticking a gun in a woman’s mouth and threatening to pull the trigger. I thought about it, but I just can’t carry that. Damn shame too since elsewhere on this 1975 set (reissued early this year), Louisiana Red is everything I’d want in a down-home blues guitarist: riffs lie languid, single or doubled notes shoot out spring-loaded to punch through any listener resistance. Red’s red-meat howling compliments his aw-shucks crooning and his bitter, bitten-off asides. But I just can’t carry “Sweetblood Call.”

An old friend of mine said Robert Johnson sucked because he sang, “I’m going to beat my woman / Until I get satisfied” and I thought about saying, well, the Velvet Underground sings, “There she goes again. / You better hit her,” and besides, a man like Robert Johnson walking “side by side” with the devil might do horrible things from madness, and damnation. Red shows an overflow of abjection, but neither madness nor damnation. Indeed, he elsewhere on this set hangs out the widespread bluesman conceit about how he’s got a whole lotta fish in his sea, and yes indeed he’s going to catch every single one of them. This doesn’t sit well next to a harrowing account of watching your wife die. Let alone sticking a gun in a woman’s mouth. --- Andrew Hamlin, offbeat.com

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