



ands a  
olutely  
title  
and  
g in  
ship,  
each  
for the

## Watermelon Slim

*Escape from the Chicken Coop* •

(NORTHERN BLUES MUSIC)

**W**atermelon Slim has spent the last few years winning fans and critical acclaim with his weathered voice, soulful slide guitar and evocative song-

Photo: Jim Marshall

November/December 2009 • Elmore 31

## ON THE RECORD

writing. *Escape from the Chicken Coop* finds the acclaimed bluesman exploring new musical territory. Recorded in Nashville with a top notch crew of backing musicians, Slim's latest release is deeply rooted in the "outlaw" country sound of Bakersfield and Austin.

A beautiful acoustic arrangement of Roy Acuff's "Wreck On The Highway" is anchored by Slim's dobro and Darrell Scott's delicate mandolin lines. Slim's rich voice suits the stark, mournful lyrics perfectly. In "Should Have Done More," he tells a tale about meeting a homeless panhandler. The poignant lyrics are a great example of his talent as a storyteller, and the electric guitar fueled arrangement sounds right out of early-'70s Austin. The lyrics to "America's Wives" show more compassion for the struggles of everyday Americans than most political stump speeches. While Slim sings his heart out on this track, Paul Franklin's pedal steel guitar playing tugs at the listeners' heartstrings.

The autobiographical "300 Miles" is one of the disc's most powerful performances. Inspired by Slim's former career as a long haul trucker, the heartfelt lyrics on this track will have even the most pampered white collar workers feeling the weariness and loneliness of life behind the dashboard of an 18-wheeler. *Escape from the Chicken Coop* is a creative, soulful recording that should be essential listening for all fans of American roots music. —JON KLEINMAN