

## I OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES: Side 4 – Herb

Herb. I thought you might want to know why it was I left your mother. The truth is, I didn't like her very much. . . Oh, she was a good woman. Worked hard, never complained when we didn't have any money. . . The trouble was, she wasn't any fun. She had no humor at all. I could never make her laugh. That's what hurt me more than anything. We'd go to a party, I'd have a couple of drinks, in an hour, I swear, I'd have them all rolling on the floor. And I'd look over at her and she'd just be staring at me. A blank look on her face. Not angry, not upset, just not understanding. As if she walked into a foreign movie that didn't have any subtitles. She just didn't know how to enjoy herself. Oh, I know where it all came from. You're poor, you grow up in the Depression, life means struggle, hard work, responsibilities. I came from the same background, but we always laughed in my house. Didn't have meat too often, but we had fun. Her father never went to a movie, never went to a play. He only danced *once* ^n his entire life, at his wedding—and he did *that* because it was custom, tradition, not joy, not happiness. I give him a book to read and if he found in the middle he was enjoying it, he would put it down. Education, yes. Entertainment, no. . . Anyway, we were married about four years, and one day I was just sitting there eating her mushroom and barley soup, which happened to be delicious, and I decided I didn't want any more. Not the soup—my life. So I went inside, packed my bags and said, “Blanche, I think *I got* to get out of here. And I don't think I'm ever coming back”... And I swear to you, Libby, if she had laughed I would have stayed. If she saw the craziness of what I was doing, the absurdity of it, I would have unpacked my bags and finished my soup. But she looked at me, cold as ice, and said, “If that's how you feel, who wants you?” So I put on my hat, left her whatever cash I had in my pocket, walked down the stairs and I never came back. . . And that's it. As simple as that.