

# Backwater Blues

Bessie Smith

Musical score for the first system of "Backwater Blues". The score is in G major and common time (C). It features a piano accompaniment and a vocal line. The piano part starts with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand. The vocal line begins with a triplet of eighth notes, marked *simile*, and then continues with a melodic line. The lyrics for this system are: "When it rains five days, and the skies turn dark as night, when it rains five days, and the skies turn dark as night,". The word *ad lib.* is written above the vocal line in the fourth measure.

Musical score for the second system of "Backwater Blues". The score continues from the first system. The piano accompaniment remains consistent. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "there's trouble tak-ing place in the lowlands that night." The word *ad lib.* is written above the vocal line in the second measure. The system concludes with a first ending marked "1. *ad lib.*" and a second ending marked "2.", both leading to a double bar line.

I woke up this mornin', can't even get out of my door,  
There's been enough trouble to make a poor girl wonder where she wants to go.

Then they rowed a little boat about five miles 'cross the pond,  
I packed all my clothes threwed them in and they rowed me along.

When it thunders and lightnin' and when the wind begins to blow,  
There's thousands of people ain't got no place to go.

Then I went and stood upon some high old lonesome hill,  
Then looked down on the house where I used to live.

Backwater blues done call me to pack my things and go  
'Cause my house fell down and I can't live there no more.

I can't move no more, I can't move no more,  
There ain't no place for a poor old girl to go.