REVIEW · BLUES

Lost & Lonesome | Buffalo Nichols

He moves from one city to the next. Running away, or looking for a place to stop?

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The protagonist moves from one city to the next. Is he running away, or looking for a place to stop? The song does not answer right away: it leaves the question on the road, like a suitcase never fully unpacked and a map full of nameless streets.

Born in Houston and raised in Milwaukee, Buffalo Nichols went through punk, metal, Americana and West African music before launching his solo project. Travels and experiences outside the United States widened his view. Choosing acoustic blues also gave him greater independence as a musician. Nichols has reflected publicly on how white the blues audience and scene are, and on the need to bring more Black stories back into it.

On *Lost & Lonesome* the guitar moves in circles and the resonator gives the recording an antique surface. The notes go round and round, like footsteps looking for a door. But the character is not frozen in an imaginary past. Nichols has linked

the song to the periods he spent travelling alone and to the search, in every city, for a place he could call home, even if only for a while.

"Lost" does not necessarily mean defeated. "Lonesome" does not mean still. Loneliness travels with the movement: the protagonist keeps searching, even if he does not yet know where he will end up. Home is not a ready-made answer; it is a light glimpsed in the distance, a temporary stop along a road that promises no destination, like a far-off fire that stays visible through the night.

Nichols thus brings a wider question into folk blues: which Black stories can find room in it, and which have been left on the margins? His music does not try to save the blues from the past; it frees it from the idea that it belongs only to the past, as if tradition were a locked room. His path is **uneven, wandering, tenacious, solitary and resilient**, like a road that carries on even when the signposts run out.

> ***Is the loneliness of the song a sentence, or the price paid for continuing to look for a place that can finally be called home?***

LISTEN

Lost & Lonesome — Buffalo Nichols — is in our playlist Acoustic Blues, Roots & Dust.

Buffalo Nichols. Updated every Friday. Selected by ear.

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