

Mystery Train

(Elvis Presley)

[Verse 1]

Train I ride, sixteen coaches long
Train I ride, sixteen coaches long
Well that long black train got my baby and gone

[Chorus]

Train train, coming around, around the bend
Train train, coming around, around the bend
Well it took my baby, but it never will again
No, not again

[Verse 2]

Train train, coming down, down the line
Train train, coming down, down the line
Well it's bringing my baby, because she's mine all, all mine
She's mine, all, all mine

[Chorus]

Train train, coming around, around the bend
Train train, coming around, around the bend
Well it took my baby, but it never will again
No, not again
(Ooh, woah)

"Mystery Train" is a song written and recorded by American blues musician Junior Parker in 1953. Originally performed in the style of a Memphis blues or rhythm and blues tune, it was inspired by earlier songs and later became a popular rockabilly song, with recordings by Elvis Presley and others.

Music historian Colin Escott noted "One of the mysteries about 'Mystery Train' was where the title came from; it was mentioned nowhere in the song". The song uses lyrics similar to those found in the traditional American folk music group Carter Family's "Worried Man Blues", itself based on an old Celtic ballad, and their biggest selling record of 1930:

The train arrived sixteen coaches long
The train arrived sixteen coaches long
The girl I love is on that train and gone

Parker's lyrics include:

Train I ride sixteen coaches long
Train I ride sixteen coaches long
Well, that long black train carries my baby home

Junior Parker, billed as "Little Junior's Blue Flames", recorded "Mystery Train" for producer/Sun Records owner Sam Phillips. The sessions took place at Phillips' Memphis Recording Service, in Memphis, Tennessee, during September and October 1953. Accompanying Parker on vocal is his backup band the "Blue Flames", whose members at the time are believed to have included: Floyd Murphy on guitar, William Johnson on piano, Kenneth Banks on bass, John Bowers on drums, and Raymond Hill on tenor sax.

Elvis Presley's version of "Mystery Train" was first released on August 20, 1955, as the B-side of "I Forgot to Remember to Forget". In 2003, Rolling Stone magazine ranked it at number 77 on its list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. Sam Phillips at Sun Studios again produced the recording, and featured Presley on vocals and rhythm guitar, Scotty Moore on lead guitar, and Bill Black on bass. Moore used a country lead break, and toward the end of the record is an echo of the 1946 "Sixteen Tons" by Merle Travis. For Presley's version of "Mystery Train", Scotty Moore also borrowed the guitar riff from Junior Parker's "Love My Baby" (1953), played by Pat Hare.