

Contents

List of illustrations xi

Introduction: what is blues? 1

Part I A short history of blues

1 Roots of the blues 11

2 Prewar blues 21

3 Modern blues 47

Part II Blues in American culture

4 Blues and jazz 81

5 Blues and country music 95

6 The language and poetry of the blues 111

References 125

Further reading 128

Index 131