

## The Life of Bessie Smith

**VIOLA:** Get up! Stop that bawling Bessie! Wipe your face and don't let me never seen you caterwauling like that again. You a grown woman now.

The race and the whites – they all looking for a chance to look down on somebody not like them. People always gonna look down on whatever's beneath 'em. It makes 'em feel good. 'Somebody can be lower than me.' Makes 'em feel high and mighty and proud. Proud they never went hungry. Proud they never wore no clothes that been worn so many times barely any of the threads left. Proud they wasn't raised by a sister only five years older than 'em.

I hate you doing this Bessie. Ain't no future in singing! You wanting to go off all over the country. You can't take care of yourself -- first sign a trouble, you quit! What kinda job is that for you? You ain't got the backbone for this kinda work. That's why you still sitting here crying cause Mr. Miller fired you Some man take your job away cause you too black? You can change lots of things Bessie, but you can't never change the color of your skin. You gotta be proud of yourself, then everybody else'll be proud of you.