



Things don't get much schmaltzier than a Dobro played Hawaiian style, which is why it's fitting that Cowboy Jack Clement offers one up on "The Blue Side of Lonesome," Leon Payne's dated but charming classic--only one such excursion into blue-haired reminiscing on an album of over-the-top sentimentality. It was the legendary Clement who paired smart-ass folkie Prine and bluegrass totem Wiseman, but the singers themselves chose the repertoire, which reads like songs people of a certain age might pick on a dry drunk. The tunes range, believe it or not, from religious hymns to covers of Patti Page's 1957 hit "Old Cape Cod," Kris Kristofferson's underrated "Just the Other Side of Nowhere," and Tom T. Hall's "Old Dogs, Children, and Watermelon Wine," with a little Elvis and Ernest Tubb thrown in for good measure. It's fitting that Prine and Wiseman revisit the Hall standard, since oddly, both singers vocally favor the Nashville storyteller from time to time. But one has to question their use of the Grand Ole Opry's Carol Lee Singers, who show up on several cuts and seem, well, just *bizarre* on a John Prine record, even as they evoke the lushly famous Nashville Sound of the 1960s. Suffice it to say, this is a quirky project, and if Prine's scratchy baritone and Wiseman's melodic tenor sometimes overlap to where you can't tell who's singing what, it doesn't much matter. You're listening to two new pals having what seems to be the time of their life. --Alanna Nash