

(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay

(Otis Redding)

[Verse 1]

Sittin' in the mornin' sun
I'll be sittin' when the evenin'
come
Watching the ships roll in
And then I watch 'em roll away
again, yeah

[Chorus]

I'm sittin' on the dock of the bay
Watching the tide roll away
Ooo, I'm just sittin' on the dock
of the bay
Wastin' time

[Verse 2]

I left my home in Georgia
Headed for the 'Frisco bay
Cause I've had nothing to live
for
And look like nothin's gonna
come my way

[Chorus]

So I'm just gonna sit on the dock
of the bay
Watching the tide roll away
Ooo, I'm sittin' on the dock of
the bay

Wastin' time

[Bridge]

Look like nothing's gonna
change
Everything still remains the
same
I can't do what ten people tell
me to do
So I guess I'll remain the same,
yes

[Verse 3]

Sittin' here resting my bones
And this loneliness won't leave
me alone
It's two thousand miles I roamed
Just to make this dock my home

[Chorus]

Now, I'm just gonna sit at the
dock of the bay
Watching the tide roll away
Oooo-wee, sittin' on the dock of
the bay
Wastin' time

[Outro]

Whistling

"(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" is a song co-written by soul singer Otis Redding and guitarist Steve Cropper. It was recorded by Redding twice in 1967, including once just days before his death in a plane crash. The song was released on Stax Records' Volt label in 1968, becoming the first posthumous single to top the charts in the US.

While on tour with the Bar-Kays in August 1967, Redding wrote the first verse of the song, under the abbreviated title "Dock of the Bay," while sitting on a rented houseboat at Waldo Point in Sausalito, California. He had completed his famed performance at the Monterey Pop Festival just weeks earlier. While touring in support of the albums *King & Queen* (a collaboration with female vocalist Carla Thomas) and *Live in Europe*, he continued to scribble lines of the song on napkins and hotel paper. In November of that year, he joined producer and guitarist Steve Cropper at the Stax recording studio in Memphis, Tennessee, to record the song.

In a September 1990 interview on NPR's *Fresh Air*, Cropper explained the origins of the song:

Otis was one of those the kind of guy who had 100 ideas. [...] He had been in San Francisco doing The Fillmore. And the story that I got he was renting boathouse or stayed at a boathouse or something and that's where he got the idea of the ships coming in the bay there. And that's about all he had: "I watch the ships come in and I watch them roll away again." I just took that... and I finished the lyrics. If you listen to the songs I collaborated with Otis, most of the lyrics are about him. [...] Otis didn't really write about himself but I did. Songs like "Mr. Pitiful," "Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)"; they were about Otis and Otis' life. "Dock of the Bay" was exactly that: "I left my home in Georgia, headed for the Frisco Bay" was all about him going out to San Francisco to perform.

"(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" was released in January 1968, shortly after Redding's death. R&B stations quickly added the song to their playlists, which had been saturated with Redding's previous hits. The song shot to number one on the R&B charts in early 1968 and, starting in March, topped the pop charts for four weeks. The album, which shared the song's title, became his largest-selling to date, peaking at number four on the pop albums chart. "Dock of the Bay" was popular in countries across the world and became Redding's most successful record, selling more than four million copies worldwide. The song went on to win two Grammy Awards: Best R&B Song and Best Male R&B Vocal Performance.

In 1999, BMI named the song as the sixth-most performed song of the twentieth century, with about six million performances. *Rolling Stone* ranked *The Dock of the Bay* number 161 on its 500 Greatest Albums of All Time, the third of five Redding albums on the list. "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" was ranked twenty-eighth on *Rolling Stone's* 500 Greatest Songs of All Time, the second-highest of four Redding songs on the list, after "Respect" (in this case the version recorded by Aretha Franklin).

Jim Morrison made reference to "Dock of the Bay" in the Doors' song "Runnin' Blue", written by Robby Krieger, from their 1969 album *The Soft Parade*. Morrison sings an a capella intro for the song, singing directly about Otis Redding. "Poor Otis dead and gone, left me here to sing his song, pretty little girl with a red dress on, poor Otis dead and gone." And during the verse, the lyrics "Got to find a dock and a bay" appear more than once; as well as several other references to Redding's song.