

Unsung Songs

William A. Davidson

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preface.

This is a collection written during the past few years, assembled into a sort of book for the enjoyment of a few friends and relatives. There is no real organizational structure; it's just a jumble of thoughts tenuously held together by the fact that the contents were written by one person. Several others have, however, been involved, most notably two gifted composers: Ukie Hart and Irwin Webb, who have written music to many of these songs (or to whose music they have been written), Bill Caswell, another gifted composer and performer, and Todd Van Every, who was the originating and driving force behind Johnny Appleseed.

However it might seem, everything I've ever done has not been included. The book contains only those items that lay within relatively easy reach. Neither have I attempted to be very critical, because my taste is my own.

If nothing else, the collection is at least eclectic, so don't give up after a few pages. Skip around and look for a grain of humor, truth, or beauty that strikes a responsive chord. If you find nothing that pleases you, or sends you into a state of temporary profundity, one of us is seriously at fault. I prefer to believe it's you.

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america

I have lain in your grassy, rolling hills
Watching the everchanging clay of your clouds.
I have heard the ceaseless clatter of your mills
Stood inside your everflowing crowds.

I have climbed your swooping, breathless mountains
Walked your desert's painted, rhythmic sands
Slaked my thirst among your tumbling fountains
Touched your shining face with my two hands.

I have swum your mighty, restless oceans
Strolled along your quiet country lanes
Trembled in your thunderstorm's explosions
Lingered in your gentle summer rains.

I have watched the eagle, wild and high
Heard the muted whispers of the dove
And seen, wherever I have turned my eye
An undiscovered beauty lying by

A velvet land dressed in a golden glove
America, this country that I love.

i remember new orleans

I remember the sun comin' up on the bayou
And steamin' plates of rice and beans
I recall being born to the sound of a horn
Down in New Orleans.

Church bells ringing in Jackson Square
Pigeons goin' everywhere
Good lookin' ladies in their worn-out jeans
I remember New Orleans.

Secret places, sweaty faces
Dark shadows in the firelight
Voodoo drums and all that mumbo jumbo
Moanin' and groanin' in the Southern night
Bourbon Street and Mardi Gras
Sausage hot and oysters raw
It was a world just made for a boy in his teens
Hey, I remember New Orleans.

Dark-eyed lady, chic but shady
Mirrors swirlin' around the room
Sweet as honey, she took my money
Left me with a nose full of French perfume

Dixieland and all that jazz
Say, I've done things you never has
I've seen things you never seen in magazines
Oh, I remember New Orleans.

Written for Ukie Hart, who was born in New Orleans. He added some great music

stranger here myself

Ask me why the sun comes up each day
Or why the stars all seem so far away
Ask me why the thunder is so loud
Or to explain the mystery of a cloud
Ask what happens when we pray
Why the caterpillar spins a tomb and dies
To grow
I don't know
Ask why truth is truth
And lies are lies
Why I am me and you are you
How could I know
When I'm just passing through.

Ask me why the sky above is blue
What happens when a seed becomes a tree
Ask why I am old and you are new
Why unending waves roll on the sea
Ask why one and two are three
What lips have caused the wind to blow
I don't know
Ask me to explain why I love you
How could I know
When I'm just passing through.

Ask me why there's beauty in a bird in flight
Ask me where you're going as you go
Ask me why the darkness runs before the light
I don't know... I don't know...

Ask what makes us happy and what makes us sad
Ask if some of us are good and some are bad
Ask how many grains of sand are on the beach
And why the answer always seems just out of reach
Ask if this is all the life we've ever had
Why some of us must stay and some
Must go
I don't know
Ask who gave to me the gift of you
How could I know
When I'm just passing through.

can we talk

I don't miss the kisses
Yes I do
We don't do that anymore,
It's true.
But that is just the smallest part
Of what I'm going through.
I don't miss the passion
It's still there, after a fashion
But you've become a ghost
And what I miss the most
Is you.

You sit there with that cold look
In your eyes
The smile you're smiling
Only a disguise
Can't you see I love you still
In spite of all the lies
Tell me what you're feeling
And I'll try to sympathize
But if it means that we are through
I want to hear it straight from you
Today.

Can we talk?
Have you a moment you can spare?
Can we talk?
This quiet's more than I can bear.
Can we talk?
Do you recognize a prayer?
Can we talk?
Have we nothing left to share?
Can we talk?

I don't want to let this feeling
Slip away.
Help me find the words I need
To say.
To reach out and touch your heart
Help me find a way.
But I can't bear another minute
If your heart just isn't
In it.
And I can't stand to see you cry
We're better off to say goodbye
Today.

Can we talk?
I have to know if you still care.
Can we talk?
This quiet's more than I can bear.

Can we talk?
Do you recognize a prayer?
Can we talk?
Have we nothing left to share?
Can we talk?

Can we talk?
Oh, please don't turn away.
Can we talk?
Tell me everything will be okay.
Can we talk?
Have we nothing left to say?
Can we talk?
And maybe love will find a way.

new york revisited

Even at this late hour
cars are rushing by
lights glaring.

The traffic policeman in the street
Does his arm waving dance
accompanied by his whistle
and the sounds of the city.

I stand, still and quiet
feeling the huge city surround me
like a warm blanket.

In front of me the lights of a boat
weave slowly up the Hudson.

This is my city
the love of my life
with whom I sleep every night
and wake to in the morning.

She is aged and ageless
Tired and eager
Beauty and ugliness
The gift and the giver
And I am numbed as always
by how much I love her.

Her flophouses
Her savoy—plazas
Her museums
Her whorehouses.

How can I love a city?

But there she is
And here I am
And I can no more leave
Than can she.

when we were very young

When we were very young, and warm winds blew
And scattered leaves around our heads
We laughing played the game and never knew
A chilly wind would blow us to our beds.

Then slow time gave the lie to life's strange speed
While in our hearts wheeled love, and spun
The green leaves turned to gold, and words to deed
And we began to hurry to be done.

Then most of us surrendered love for life
Went tiptoe past the rose, and crept
With Ignorance to bed, and Fear to wife
We scurried into holes and, trembling, slept.

Outside the spring appeared, and waned, and went
Inside in dust we danced it out
Contriving formless music to prevent
The sudden hush that offers time to doubt.

I believe in Oklahoma

I believe in the weatherbeaten faces that have surrounded me all my life.

I believe in muscle and blood, determination and dedication.

I believe in the human spirit, for I have seen it – unconquerable, indomitable.

I believe in a people who carved beauty, and life, and liberty, from dust and rock.

I believe in a bedrock set of values, and a tenacity that would not let the land slip away –
a determination that made lakes grow from rivers of dust.

I believe in the strength that comes from those who have gone before us,

who with infinite patience,

and with faith as simple and enduring as the earth beneath their feet,

worked the land and did their chores, and tended their shops, and concentrated on today,
letting tomorrow take care of itself.

I believe in the toughness, and resilience, and pride

that will not let us quit, or look away, or lay down our share of the load.

I believe in you, and in me, and in our children.

I believe our greatness is only beginning.

I believe in Oklahoma.

child of god

The sun woke me this morning
Slipping bright and golden
Over one of God's green hills
Beneath me and around me
A thousand creatures stirred
To greet the coming day

I could not move
I lay bewildered
Grateful for the green below
The blue above
Knowing God had made this world
A miracle of love.

I am a child of God
He loves me as His own.
Flesh am I, of His flesh
And bone of His bone.
Jesus is within me
Beneath me and above
Everywhere I turn I see a God of love
Everywhere I turn I see a God of love.

Then I thought about a father
So loving and forgiving
He'd given up His only son
Given up His only son
To free the creatures he had made
Given up His son for me.
That holy mystery
Fills all my prayers with thanks
I lay and praise the God above
Knowing He has made this world
A miracle of love.

I am a child of God
He loves me as His own.
Flesh am I, of His flesh
And bone of His bone.
Jesus is within me
Beneath me and above
Everywhere I turn I see a God of love
Everywhere I turn I see a God of love

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Angus.

He came
A fat flower
Bringing joy.

He lived
For a moment
Bearing light

He died
In our arms
Leaving love.

the artist.

She does not see me.
She is lost in the brush's quick strokes,
The transparent colors slipping across the paper.
She is dreaming a dream.

Deep inside her, lightning flashes
Her eyes widen at the fantasy unfolding before them
Darting left, right, seeing everything.
But she does not see me.
She does not hear me.

She is dancing to the sound of a distant piping.
Sweet sirens call to her
Satanic screams sound in her ears
Fragile as buttercups against her cheeks.
Thunder crashes and rolls in her depths
She cocks her head, listening.
A cacophony of melodies
Croon, roar, whisper to her.
She hears all, chooses a single delicate tune
And sings it onto her paper.

But she does not hear me.
She does not feel me.
She shivers to a thousand sensations
A long-forgotten kiss
A sudden sunrise
The look of love in a child's eye
Tears, wet with warm release.

A soft rain begins in her depths
Born by the quiet breeze of life.
She trembles at the touch of the world,
Feeling its immense soul.

But she does not feel me.

Oh, sweet, half-wakened child
How enormously pleased I am at your happiness.
How impatiently I stamp my feet and wait
For your wings to dry.
Though I know the power of flight will take you from me
Still I yearn to see your bright soul soaring
An exquisite dot in the aching sky
My eye pressed against the tattered walls of my cocoon.

Show me flight, that I may hold it in my memory
Like a sparkling jewel, and know that some day
I might, too, be free.

a mother's prayer

Angels --

Watch over my little boy.
Give him the world for a trinket
And time for a toy.
Time has a way
Of slipping away
Help him to find the meaning
In every day.

Angels --

Wrap my little boy in your feathery arms
Bless him, and give him the grace
Of your heavenly charms.
Each move he makes
Each breath he takes
Fill every dawn with wonder
When he awakes.

Angels --

Put love in the heart of my little boy
Teach him that love is the one thing
Time can never destroy.
Fashion the bowl
Of my little boy's soul
Fill it to brimming
With beauty
And wonder
And love.

you give me more

They tell me you're too ugly
Tell me you're too fat
Say your nose ain't straight
Hell, I can see that.

They tell me you don't walk right
And your hair looks like a hat
Say you talk like someone driving nails
Hell, I can hear that.

I can see your teeth are crooked
And your eyes are spaced too wide
But I see someone they don't see
Hiding deep inside.
And I don't mind what people say
I love you anyway.

'Cause you give me
More, more, more
Than I ever had before
You give me so much more
Of what I need a woman for

They tell me you're not clever
Dumber than a cat.
They say that I'm too good for you
And I can't argue with that.
They say I'm wasting time with you
But they don't know what it's all about
'Cause they're looking at you from the outside in
And I see you from the inside out.

And you give me so much more
Than I ever had before
You give me more, more, more
Of what I need a woman for.

incoming mail

The ground shook.
The wind washed us
as we lay, grinning at death.
A thousand plastic people
trembled, cried,
laughed, and died.
Those who stayed knew more
by far than we who went away.
A curious lightning lit our fear
that night the ground shook.

The world is too much with me

The world is too much with me
I can't withstand the sights I see
All around me: the sick and dying
The families trying
to rescue a daughter, a son
A child with strange disease
Sorrowed looks from everyone
Can you not help him, please?
Take this pill, go to this place
And yet death comes at his solemn pace.
I have been there
And there I yet remain
Though decades have passed
That anguish I still bear
Nothing takes away the pain
Today is just a word
Comfort spoken, but unheard
Blending time into the past.
I have no choice
Even though his voice
Still rings in my ears
I must do what must be done
End what I've begun.

I have seen love

I have seen love walking
I have heard her talking
Whispering a thousand things my heart has wished to hear
I have heard love singing
I have seen her winging
Winging on a midnight bright and clear

She has said to me
That what I long to be
Is embodied in the prism of a single crystal tear
I have heard her laughter
Followed ever after
Knowing, always knowing by the sound that she was near

In a firefly
In the moon's eye
In the night sky
I have seen her

In the sky-stream
On the sunbeam
In a daydream
I have held her.

So we all may find her
So we all may bind her
Losing her by holding her too tight

Love is the music
Love is the dancer
Love is the question
Love is the answer
Love is obsession
Love is confusion
Love is impression
Love is illusion
Love is the answer to a thousand different prayers

Love is a heartbeat
Love is a mind-scream
Love is a nightmare
Love is a daydream
Love is the loneliness everyone shares.

Dreams die, and we all awaken
Finding love has taken
Flight — in the misty shadows of the night.

So love grows
So love goes
So we all may lose her in the shadows of the night.

This was my Kublai Khan moment, sort of. I was listening to Pachelbel's Canon late one night and these lyrics came to me, as fast as I could put them on paper. Some are still out in the ether somewhere because I couldn't write fast enough, but I think there's some value in some of what remained. Listen to the Canon sometime when you read the lyrics. No, I'm not comparing myself to Coleridge. Just noting how each occurred, except mine wasn't opium inspired.

appleseed

Where does the apple come from?
From the apple blossom.
Where does the blossom come from?
From the tree.
Where does the apple tree come
Spreading over you and me from?
Where does the apple come from?
From the apple seed.

Like an apple seed
Like an apple seed
Love grows once it's planted
With a little sunshine
And a little rain
Just like an apple tree
Love will blossom all around you
Spread around to others
And come back to you again.

Where does happiness come from?
Happiness comes from giving.
Where does giving come from?
From your heart.
How do you start it growing?
Stop your reaping, start in sowing
Plow a mighty furrow
And plant the seed of love.

For like an apple seed
Like an apple seed
Happiness must be planted
Needs a little sunshine
And a little rain
Then like an apple tree
Happiness spreads around you
Spreads around to others
And comes back to you again.

Where does the apple come from?
From the apple blossom.
Where does the blossom come from?
From the tree.
Oh, where does the apple tree come
Spreading over you and me from?
Where does the apple come from?
From the apple seed.

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we are america

Where are you, America?

Where is the dream that brought the endless, teeming masses to your shore?
Where is the lamp you lit and held beside the golden door?
Where is the tough, free spirit that cut across a country to the world?
Where is the pride that filled each one of us each time the flag unfurled?
Where is our past — the kindling brought together in an incandescent spark?
Where is our future — now that our great flame is dwindling into dark?

Oh America

Enormous, sweet, improbable country
So drunk with the wine of freedom
You splash it from your glass and pour it on the ground.
Proud, mighty country, bound in chains of our own making.
Only we could shackle you so;
Only we could mute your song
To such a timid, lonely sound.
And where is God? The God we trusted in so long?
And how has right become so hard to tell from wrong?
Are the dream, and the light, forever dead?

Wait.

Wait now.

See the way that roughneck holds his head.
There's something there — something felt, but never said.
A tight smile on his lips, steel in his eye
Nothing between me and God but a thousand miles of sky.

And he is America.

In the howling wind on a western slope
A farmer sweats, planting seed and hope.
And he is America.

And in some God-forgotten sad cafe
For too much work, too little pay
The one who gladly pulls her weary body up
To bring a smile, and pour another cup,
She is America.

And you...

And I...

We are America.

For the dream and the light
That was born in the souls
Of a handful of Scots, and Frenchmen, and Poles
Of Irish and English and Chinese and Dutch
Outcasts, and slaves, and rebels and such
Has quietly passed through history
To three hundred million of you and me.

Rise.

Lift up your heart.

Stand.

Make a new start.

Move.

Reach out for a star.

Now.

Start right where you are.

Dream.

There's a world for the winning.

Act.

Make a brand new beginning.

We can still make that dream come true

We can still do it — me and you.

For this country's whatever we make her to be.

And we can do anything -- you and me.

We can lift that lamp back to the sky

For we are America --

You and I.

today is the first day of the rest of your life

How long will those old worries
Run around inside your brain?
Why do you let what's done and gone
Come back to cause you pain?
My brothers and my sisters
I remind you once again
Yesterday is yesterday
And so it will remain.

A thousand broken promises
Are burning in your mind.
You spend a lifetime longing
For the life you've left behind.
In a world of miracles
How can you be so blind?
Life is full of wonder
Only seek and you will find.

Today was once tomorrow
Till the rising of the sun.
The world is full of blessings
You may gather, one by one.
Think of where you're going
And not what you might have done.
Time is time unending
But for you it's just begun.
Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

In the 1960's I found these words -- "Today is the first day of the rest of your Life" in an old book of quotations and decided to write a song around them. It was used as the basis for an advertising campaign for an Oklahoma City Savings and Loan. Within a few weeks the quotation was on everything from bumper stickers to coffee cups to underwear – all around the world. Today we'd say it went viral. Copyright 1970 William A. Davidson.

over and over.

Dining alone, I was suddenly thrown
Between the soup and the escargots.
A hint of perfume, like a knife in a wound
Took me back to long ago.
Back to a two-room apartment
To what I had thought was the end.
I thought it was over, but it all started over,
It all started over again.

Sitting alone in my shiny new home
Getting sick of my stupid life
Ten little rooms, just like ten tiny tombs
Being built by my shiny new wife.
She tells me it's just the beginning
Why does it feel like the end?
It keeps starting over, and keeps starting over,
And keeps starting over again.

Cho.
Over and over and over again
It keeps starting over again.

Sitting alone like a king on a throne
In the park where we used to go
The green is all gone from the grass we lay on
Turned to white by the falling snow.
We had such a lovely beginning
Why did it have to end?
Why can't it start over, and over and over
Why can't it start over again?

Sitting alone I remember a moan
That seemed to come from your very soul
The tears in your eyes mirrored back all my lies
But my heart was so young and cold
Why do I take my beginnings
And turn them all into an end?
So I can start over, and keep starting over,
And keep starting over again?

Cho.
Over and over and over again
Keep starting over again.

Sitting alone reaping what I have sown
In the dark desert of my life
I remember a light like a flame in the night
Cutting through me like a knife
Just rubbing two bodies together
Won't bring the spark back again
But still I keep trying and trying and trying
And trying to find it again.

Sitting alone getting quietly stoned
As the snow covers up my feet

Blanket of white from the loom of the night
But it don't seem to give much heat
Is this another beginning
Or is it really the end?
Or will it start over, and keep starting over,
And keep starting over again?

Cho.

Over and over and over again...

Over and over and over and over and over and over and over again.

the path.

I searched for you in the tattered pages of my grandfather's bible, worn by his fingers and smelling of his pipe. I searched for you in the words of the prophets, in the psalmist's soaring hymns, and in Moses' great faith. I sought you in the lion's den, and in the fiery furnace.

I knelt with David and begged for the faith of my youth.

I looked for you on the waters and in the belly of the whale. I journeyed with the great kings and sought you in the manger. In the temples I looked for you, among the Pharisees and scribes. I sought you on Golgotha, entered the tomb with Mary to search you out, but you were not there.

You called, and I could not answer.
You beckoned, and I could not follow.

Like a crazed animal I searched for you, trampling down the walls and corners of my life.

And I glimpsed you in the eyes of a stranger on a passing bus. And I heard you in the words of a passing priest. And I felt you in the warmth of the wind.

And like a beast tormented beyond endurance I put away the search, and the cares of the world, let go my fearful grip on life, and lay down to die.

And I felt you stir in my heart.

Then I rose, and searching not, found you in the eyes of a child. Seeking not, discovered you in a flower. Looking not, found you in the deepest corner of my being. And still each time I grip you tightly in my fist, you are gone. But when I open my hand, you are in it.

Before me stretch a hundred superhighways, filled with people rushing to their destinations. And almost lost among them is a simple, rough path, overgrown with brush and vines. It is on this path I have set my foot, for I know where the highways lead; I have traveled them.

Where this path leads I do not know.
It is enough for me simply to be on it.

A new year.

A new year
A change of pace
Gonna get out of here
Find a brand new face

A new year
An old tear
Wishin' you were here
Wishin' you were here

January one
The old year dies
We're all havin' fun
How time flies.

A new year
An old tear
Wishin' you were here
Wishin' you were here

Let there be gladness and love

Let there be joy
Let there be gladness
For each girl and boy
And no more sadness
Let there be sunshine
and blue skies up above
Let there the gladness and love

Let there be peace
Let there be harmony
Let the wars cease
Let there be love between you and me
Let there be sunshine
and blue skies up above
Let there be gladness and love.

What good is love
If we never give it
What good if we stand alone
What good is our life
if we never live it
What good are seeds unsewn.

Let there be joy
Let there be gladness
For each girl and boy
And no more sadness
Let there be sunshine
and blue skies up above
Let there the gladness and love

metamorphosis

Long ago
When I was but a boy
And the world was just the things that I could see
I walked out to the sea one day
and ran along the shore collecting shells
and sand, and all the tiny creatures
hiding in the clear, bright pools
the ocean leaves behind
in its headlong rush
to the other side of the world.

I came upon a conch
and as I had so many times before
put it to my ear.
I was dizzied by the sound
erupting from the gnarled and twisted shell.
It was a concert of creation
a symphony to the universe
a sweet, gentle voice
tugging at my heart
tempting me away.

And in that fragile moment
I understood a thousand mysteries.
The secrets of the universe
unfolded before me
as I stood barefoot in the sand --
swept me away.
And for an instant
I knew who I was
and why.

The moment left as quick as it had come
But its memory taunts and tempts me still.

Just outside the window of my room
back home in Massachusetts
a caterpillar one fall
began to wrap himself in silk.
And as I watched
he slowly disappeared
in his cocoon.
Every day, through that longest of winters,
I watched it from my bed
wondering that such a tiny creature
could know so much of the world.

Then, one bright May day
when the scent of the sun had touched our farm
the tiny ball of silk began to move.
I watched, enraptured,
as a tiny head appeared
and soon a splendid creature stood
where once the lowly worm had been.

For a moment it hung, glistening,
on its predecessor's tomb
then it left the branch and flew.
Jerkily, erratically,
it fluttered, almost fell
until the warming breeze caught and whipped it west
a tiny bright yellow gleam
vanishing over the topmost branch of our old apple tree
taking my little boy's heart and soul with it.

How my heart
and head
pounded and raced.
I feel them to this day.
And the question that erupted in my brain
was "Did that caterpillar know?
Was he just taking his place in the scheme of things
or did some quiet, immortal Voice
speak to him
and describe the wonder he was to be?
And if it did, when will that gentle Voice
whisper to me?"

I think
a moment ago
it did.

As I dug my spade into the earth
for the hundred thousandth time
I seemed to feel a blossoming inside me.
Seemed to hear the hymn
I heard so long ago
again, but differently.
Not pressed against the keyhole of the world
but standing on the other side
lifting my voice in praise and thanks
joining all the beings in the universe
who know exactly what and who they are.
And as I sit and look into my life
my head hums with that hymn of exultation
and I know the creature I was
a bare moment past
is as far removed from the creature I am now
as that butterfly from its former self
so many years ago.

For now I know.

Cut a tree and I will bleed.
Crush a leaf and I will feel the pain.
I am a part of all
that is the world
and as you do to it, so do you to me.
My past has disappeared
My life has just begun

For this day I join the grass,
the air,
the sun.
This day the universe and I
are one.

hyperventilation blues (a true story)

He was driving up May in his Mercedes-Benz
He'd been working pretty hard and he was feeling tense.
He had a pain in his head that was beating like a drum
When suddenly he felt himself going numb.
He couldn't move his arms and he couldn't move his legs
His feet felt like two whiskey kegs.
Suddenly he knew it was his time to die
And he sang this song to the Lord in the sky:

Cho.

"Oh God, please don't let me die right out here on the highway.
Oh God, let me make it on in to some little byway.
Or if you can spare me just one more minute in heaven
Oh God, please let me make it to a Seven-Eleven."

Well, he saw a little field that might have been all right
But he didn't want to be dead in his car all night.
He thought how it would give his friends an awful jerk
To be found by some redneck on his way to work.

So he drove a little farther, pounding on his heart
Trying to get the son-of-a-bitch to start
And he finally made the all night convenience store
And he lifted up his eyes to the Lord and he swore:

Cho.

"Oh God, don't let me die at the Seven-Eleven.
Oh God, spare me just a few more minutes of heaven.
I don't mind dying, oh no, I really do not.
But not in the Seven-Eleven parking lot."

So he drove a little further and a little further still
Looking for Mercy, just over the hill
Beating on his chest and rubbing on his head
And doing all he could to keep from being dead.

And when he reached the end of the awful ride
He stopped his car and wobbled inside
And the nurse took a look and let out a wail
"My God! What's wrong? You're so awful pale!"

So they hooked him up and they laid him down
And the world started turning around and around
And his mouth started tasting the taste of death
And he begged his God with his very last breath:

Cho.

"Oh God, don't let me die here in this hospital.
Oh God, please maybe don't let me die at all.
But God, don't let me die in this strange green place
Staring up at this cute but dumb blonde face."

She took a pressure reading to see if he would last
And she screamed "My God, your heart's beating so fast!
You're going away, and you're never coming back!"
And the doctor said "Breathe in this little paper sack.

We believe you're halfway to eternity
But just in case we'll give an EKG.
So try to relax, you're a little bit tight."
And he closed his eyes and sang with all his might:

Cho.

"Oh God, don't let me die here on this little bed
No matter what I have done, no matter what I have said.
These are tears of repentance rolling down my face
Oh God, please don't let me die here in this awful place!"

Ooompah, ooompah, breathing in the bag...

Ooompah, ooompah, starting to sag.

"Where's the doctor, where's the nurse?

Oh, my God, I'm getting worse!"

Ooompah, ooompah, sighing in the sack...

"Oh, God, I'm in the hands of a terrible quack.

I'm lying here dying and he's inside

Giving the nurse a midnight ride!"

Cho.

"Oh God, please don't let me die here in this little bed
No matter what I have done, no matter what I have said.
These are tears of repentance rolling down my face.
Oh God, please don't let me die here in this awful place."

Well, the doctor came back, looking awful glum

And our man knew his time had certainly come.

Then the doctor said "There's nothing more we can do

Hey, baby, there ain't nothing wrong with you!

You're just a victim of the crosstown hurry

Spend your life in a worry, worry, worry.

Better change your ways or your occupation

'Cause you got the hyperventilation!"

Cho.

"Don't worry, you're not going to die here on this little bed.
No matter what you have done, no matter what you have said.
I see tears of repentance rolling down your face
And God will not let you die here in this awful place."

"You're fit as a fiddle, and sound as a dollar

Get out of bed, hit your feet and holler.

Grab your clothes and put on your shoes

All you got is the Hyperventilation Blues!"

So the little man got in his car

Drove straight home, 'cause it wasn't very far.

Took off his clothes, lay down on his bed

Talked again to God, and this is what he said:

Cho.

"Oh God, what a night you have put me through.

Never in my life have I felt so blue.

So if you can stand me a little bit early in heaven

Next time just let me die in the Seven-Eleven.

Oh God, please let me die in the Seven-Eleven.

Oh God just yank me right straight up into heaven.

The pain of hell I would not even refuse

To escape the awful Hyperventilation Blues."

(repeat last verse to fade)

A true story, only dramatized a little. Copyright 1980 William A. Davidson.

missing you

You are a pearl that I suddenly found, milky and luminescent, in the oyster of my life. I remember everything, thank heaven. I remember the first time our lips touched, and the world swirling around me like gypsy bandanas. I remember pensively decanting our late lives together, like wines that never lived up to their promise. Touching you was like touching a naked flame, like watching an infinitely delicate and beautiful flower blossom.

Fascinated by the flame of you
I darted forward, then back,
testing the heat and the intensity of the light
circled you slowly
touched you for an instant
then spread my dark wings
and flew back into the blackness.

And even though I locked my arms around myself
buried my chin in the crook of my elbow
drew my knees up tight
became an impenetrable ball
turning to the wall
still you ripped my heart from my chest.

I ran to an abandoned closet
curled up in a forgotten corner
and drew the darkness on top of me.
Like God, you found me even there
and touching me
brought light back into my life.

I climbed an ancient mountain
to reach a plateau a hundred miles around
where no man had walked
where no breeze stirred
no bird sang, where mine
were the only footprints in the snow
and in my solitude
you suddenly were there.

You are exquisite. I will miss you for the rest of my life

blessed hills of home.

Memories I love
Cowbells in the morning air
Picket fences everywhere
Memories of home.

Green and distant hills
Orchards set in careful rows
cheery smiles and bright hellos
On faces that I love.

Shining in my memory
Green, green hills of home.
Soft and sweet they call to me
Blessed hills of home.

Memories I love
Summer night and autumn days
Daffodil in sweet bouquets
On blessed hills of home.

the griffin.

The only one
It sat, wishing.
Why, it asked.
No one, nothing, answered.
Why me?
I am a thing.
A thing. Something, nothing.
Two things, nothing. Two half things.
I am the first, the last, the now
And most desolate of all,
The always.

It scabbled in the warm sand with its claws.
A gentle breeze arose, lightly ruffling
The feathery tips of its wings.
It sighed a huge, ponderous,
Weary – ohgodsoforlorn sigh
and slowly traced
four alien characters in the sand.

L O V E

you're a hard man, dan.

You're a hard man, Dan
And you're breaking me in two.
One half's laughing on the wild side again
And the other half's crying with you.

How come we never touch anymore?
How come you never laugh?
You're hard as stone, it's like living alone
And it's breaking me in half.

Do you remember the night we met?
You were some son-of-a-gun.
I was only a child, and you were so wild
But God, didn't we have fun.

You're a hard man, Dan
And you're breaking me in two.
One half's laughing on the wild side again
And the other half's crying with you.

You don't see the heartache, nobody does
You don't feel the ache and the pain
But there's a wild, wild woman where the wild girl was
And it's driving me insane.

You're a hard man, Dan
And you're breaking me in two.
One half's laughing on the wild side again
And the other half's crying with you.

the invader

A young man in uniform walked to my door this morning, holding his side, his face a quiet twist of pain. I was carrying the water in when I saw him, and his hair — the color of bamboo -- took me by surprise. His eyes, too. They were the first blue eyes I had ever seen.

He spoke in a language I didn't understand, but his eyes made the message plain, pleading with me for comfort. I dipped the hem of my robe into the water I had carried from the stream and motioned for him to lie down, so that I could bathe his face.

But I could not wipe away the pain.

There was a great hole in his side that I could do nothing for.

I thought, *my brother might be lying somewhere like this, waiting for death*, and wondered why this strange young man had come so far to die.

I sat with his head on my legs while the shadows slowly grew, touching his face with my damp robe, neither of us trying to speak after those first strange words. At times his eyes would close and a sound would come from him the way a mud bubble swims to the top of a pool and bursts.

When the sun was about to disappear, he closed his eyes again, grasped my hand in both of his with a terrible pressure, made one last small sound, and died.

My father found us so, and couldn't understand the tears on my cheeks. Nor could I.

He dragged the boy by his heels to a spot far enough away from the house to be safe, and beat me for giving comfort to the invader.

cajun woman

Hair like black satin
Skin like cream
Sounds like George Patton
When she gets mean.

She's a Cajun woman
Mean
Nasty as the hungry end
Of a threshin' machine
Tough
Sometimes I don't think she's human
She's so rough
And I can't get enough
Of that Cajun woman.

Eyes like black jewels
Lips so red
Turn us all into fools
Make me lose my head

She's a Cajun woman
Mean
Nasty as the hungry end
Of a threshin' machine
Tough
Sometimes I don't think she's human
She's so rough
And I can't get enough
Of that Cajun woman.

oklahoma

I have lain among your grassy hills
Sculpting the clay of your clouds
I have heard the clatter of your mills
Stood inside the bustle of your crowds.

I have climbed your ancient, broken mountains
Walked your prairie's golden waves of grain
Drunk my fill among your crystal fountains
Lingered in your quiet country lanes.

I have seen your oil wells gushing
Pumping your black blood into the sky
Trailed your endless herds of cattle, rushing
Dusty rivers pouring by.

I have watched the eagle, wild and high,
Heard the muted whispers of the dove
And seen, wherever I have turned my eye,
An undiscovered beauty lying by
A velvet land dressed in a golden glove
This land, this Oklahoma that I love.

southbound

The taste of salt is in my mouth
As the miles roll on behind me
The miles and the years
Falling steady as my heartbeat.

And the bus sways and whines
Headed South
And I think of the miles and the years
And the taste of salt is in my mouth
And the salt is the taste of tears.

I fold my arms, leaning back
As the road stretches out between us
Steady as the wall we built between our hearts
With brick made of broken promises
Thoughtless words
Long forgotten reasons.

Ahead of me a little boy
Reminds me of all the children we never had
Watching cautiously
Not knowing whether to laugh or cry
At the tears rolling down my face
And I realize that's how I felt
All the time I was with you.

If there was just one thing
Something you did
Something I did
To crack us apart.
We drifted together
And away
Like two haunted ships
Coming from nowhere
Going nowhere.

The strange thing is
It was love we started with
A paradise of love
We never tended
That became a jungle
Of broken dreams.

The little boy ahead of me
Decides to laugh, finally,
As the blood-red rays of the morning sun
Set the hills afire.
And because he laughs
I do.

And so we sit,
Our laughter ringing above the bus's shrill whine
Rocking, swaying, plummeting
To God knows where.

And the bus sways and whines
Heading South
Away from the miles and the years
And the taste of salt is in my mouth
And the salt is the taste of tears.
The salt is the taste of tears.

To be a Scout

I have seen the painted, firelit faces
Glistening over flashing, beaded feet.
My mind has roved the sea's unending spaces
Dreaming, as I watched young hands complete
An ancient sailor's knot -- with knowing fingers.
Here our precious heritage still lingers.

So many things I've seen, and understood --
Created fire with two small bits of wood
Made the silent forest ring
Shivered in a snow-fed spring.
I have climbed the distant hills
To see beyond
And learned a wealth of skills.

I've plumbed the depths and circled in the sun
Matched wits with the wily trout — and won!
I've caught the magic of a passing art
I hold it in my hands, and in my heart.
In future years I'll pull that magic out
Remembering what it means to be a Scout.

Written as the basis of a public service campaign for the Boy Scouts. I understand it was almost made part of all scout meeting ceremonies. Copyright William A. Davidson.

waiting for my wings to dry

I am a tree
I am a river
All of life flows through me

I am the gift
I am the giver
I am what I was meant to be.

I am the light
I am the darkness
I am the sea
I am the land
I am a star
I am a moonbeam
I am a single grain of sand

Like the butterfly that crawls from its cocoon
Must warm its misty wings so it can fly
I will be ready soon
I have just been waiting for my wings to dry

And now the wind is lifting me
And carrying me home
And now I'm up and drifting free
And soon I will be home.

I can almost touch the sky
I am ready now
I have just been waiting for my wings to dry.

a little hymn

I thank thee for each day I wake
I thank thee for each breath I take
I thank thee for each drop of rain
Thank thee for joy
Thank thee for pain.

I thank thee for thy only son
In whom our sins have been undone
Thank thee for Him who made us whole
Thank thee for my immortal soul.

I Thank thee for that moment when
My life upon this earth will end
And in your blessed arms again
I will be

For all that you have given me
I thank thee Lord,

Amen.

need you

I never needed anything more
Than I needed you.
I was never so ready for anything before
As I was ready for you.

Like a baby needs a bottle
Like the desert longs for rain
Like the flowers need the sunshine
A Like a hobo needs a train
Like a singer needs a song to sing
The way the grass needs dew
I never needed anything
The way I needed you.
And I still do.

Like a lover needs a lover
Like a drowning man needs a rope
The way a blind man needs to see
Or a sinner needs some hope
The way an old maid needs a fling
Or an actor needs a cue
I was never so ready for anything
As I was ready for you
And that's still true.

I never needed anything more
Than I needed you
I was never so ready for anything before
As I was ready for you.
The way a finger holds a ring
Like a pool shark holds his cue
I never held onto anything
Like I'm gonna hold on to you.
Ooh, ooh.
Gonna stick to you
like glue.
Woo, woo, woo
Never gonna let go of you.

running away

Yesterday I left home.
Just picked up a sack and left.
Didn't tell anyone why or where I was going
Because I didn't know.
Just had to get away
From the clocks and rules
The hypocrites and fools.

The second my foot hit the road
I felt free.
For the first time in my life --
Free.

And as I walked
I followed the flight of a dove
With an awe I'd never felt before.
Heard a thousand things
I'd never heard before.
I swear to you I heard the grass,
Growing.

Then, as I topped a rise, a breeze sprang up
And I turned to take one last look at home.
There, spread out like a soft, giant quilt
Was our orchard.

How the apple trees blazed in the setting summer sun
Pinks, and whites, and greens
The ground an angel's bed of fallen blossoms.
Even now I can smell them
As fresh as if I still stood there.

Like falling rain
Night came.
I lay on the grass
A log for my pillow
And slept
Until the first golden rays of the sun
Warmed my eyes
Waking me.

Where I'm going I still don't know
It is enough to be on the way.

the great escape

Looking through the bars
At the moon and stars
Wishing I were free
I get pictures in my brain
Of the jungle plain
Where I want to be.

Mother Nature calls
Screaming through the walls
From a million miles away
Echoes in my cage
Fill my soul with rage
And dreams of yesterday.

Chorus:

Don't you know that I'm dying?
Can't you see these tears I'm crying?
You who put me in this place
Come and see me, face to face
You who come to stand and gape
Know I am the Great Ape!
Help me to escape...

Forever in a room
Locked inside a tomb
Wishing I were free
I beat on my breast
This hollow in my chest
Where my heart used to be.

Chorus:

Don't you know that I'm dying?
Can't you see these tears I'm crying?
You who put me in this place
Come and see me, face to face
You who come to stand and gape
Know I am the Great Ape!
Help me to escape...

To a little piece of land
Just some sun some sand
Where you can come see
The Great Ape and his mate
In our natural state
Happy wild and free.
So won't you do your part
Open up your heart
So tired of feeling blue
And if we have a baby
Maybe -- yeah, just maybe --
We'll name it after you.

Chorus:

Don't you know that we're dying?

Can't you see these tears we're crying?
Won't you put us in our place
Where you can see us, face to face
Where you can come to stand and gape
And know...
I am the Great Ape.
Help me to escape....

Copyright William A. Davidson and Euclid A Hart. Lyrics for song written as the basis of a fund-raising campaign to provide an outside habitat for the Oklahoma City Zoo's great apes. Politics in the zoo bureaucracy killed it, so it never aired.

runaway

I love you
Come home
I miss you
Come home
I don't understand why you went away

I don't care what you've done
I won't make you pay for it

I don't care who you've been
I don't care what sins you have committed

I just want to see you
I just want to hear you
I just want to hold you

I just want to know you're alive.

I love you
Call me
I miss you
Write me
Wherever you are I will come to you

Whatever you need
I will give it to you.

Whoever I have been
I will change for you.

Oh let me see you
Oh let me hear you
Oh let me hold you
Oh let me know you are alive.

I love you
Come home
I miss you
Come home
I need you
Come home.

Every day I wait for you
Every day I pray for you to call.

Oh let me see you
Oh let me hear you
Oh let me hold you
Oh let me know you are alive.

Written for the mothers who have heard no word from their missing daughters.

vanishing point.

The sun was a dazzling, cool disk
Hanging like a brilliant wafer over the campus.
Now and then a chill breeze
Would give the lie to Indian Summer's waning warmth
Warning us of our puny grip on time.

We shook it from our minds
And thought about the now.

Homecoming.
A Stutz blasting from a fraternity parking lot.
Quick sips from half—hidden flasks.
A stadium packed with pennants and raccoon coats.
We locked our bright diamond days in the cocoon of time,
Not daring to step on the long and distant highway
That was tomorrow.

We walk a shorter highway now.
It has led us through an eternity of wonder.
We have gasped as cities were exterminated
By a single bomb
Gaped as we watched man step on the moon
Clucked in wonder at our children
So anxious to surrender their childhood.

Today slips through our hands in bright, confusing bits
And fills us with a poignant fear --
That we will spend the sum of our tomorrows
Polishing the brilliance of our yesterdays.

if i had your tomorrows

If I had all your tomorrows
And you had my yesterdays
We could cure a thousand sorrows
Wash a world of pain away.
If we two could only borrow
From each other in some way
I would ask for your tomorrows
You would share my yesterday.

I have spent a lifetime making
Promises I couldn't keep
Spent a greedy lifetime taking
Never sowed, but only reaped.
If I could be a boy again
And know what I know now...
But as the twig is bent
So grows the bough.

If I had all your tomorrows
And you had my yesterdays
We could cure a thousand sorrows
Wash a world of pain away
If we two could only borrow
From each other in some way
I would ask for your tomorrows
You would share my yesterday.

Oh, the pain that I could save you
With the truth that I have found
You could walk the path life gave you
With your feet on solid ground.
One prescription I would make
To keep your heart free from pain:
Take the gift of life
And give it back again.

If I had all your tomorrows
And you had my yesterdays
We could cure a thousand sorrows
Wash a world of pain away
If we two could only borrow
From each other in some way
I would ask for your tomorrows
You would share my yesterday.

inside the wind

I walked to the meadow one bright, windy day.

The grass was so green, the sky so blue, that tears came to my eyes for the beauty of it. I climbed a small hill and the wind blew so hard it almost knocked me down. So I went to the tip of the knoll, turned my back to the wind, spread my arms, and leaned against it. It was the loveliest, softest cushion anyone had ever felt. It buoyed me, like warm salt water.

I lay against it, supremely happy, and watched a lark try to make its way toward me. But it could not move because of the wind. It flapped its wings and slowly rose and fell, up and down, up and down. "Turn around," I shouted, and it did, and the wind whipped it away like a small black balloon.

I closed my eyes and prayed to God that the wind would never stop. And even as I prayed, it calmed, and I fell backwards into the long, soft grass. I lay there for a while, remembering the delicious feeling, while the grass blew about my face. the sky was achingly blue, with one small gnat of a cloud.

Then I rose and walked home, never looking back, for I knew the wind was gone.

When I reached home my mother said "Where have you been?" And I answered, "Inside the wind."

She looked at me strangely for a moment. Then, even as the tears started from my eyes, she had her arms around me and was crooning, like the wind, into my ears.

how could I

How could I hold so tight
To the things I thought could light up my life
A shoe, a hat, a silver knife
Two hungry bodies locked in flight
How could I hold so tight to life
And lose you?

How could I keep preserved in glass
What someone of my class deserved
The car, the brandy soda served
On golden trays
Strain at life and let the living pass?

How could I paint myself into the picture I had always drawn
And paint you out?
Make the dreams I'd always dreamed come true
And lose you?
How?
How could I lose you?

so it's over

So now it's over.
The laughs have stopped.
Even the tears
That dropped from my eyes for so long
Have ceased to fall.
Yet deep inside
The part of me
That used to be
My heart
Remembers
And will not start
To beat again.

In that silent place
Your smile still turns
Slowly 'round.
My memory keeps the pace
Of gentle feet
That barely touched the ground.
The rustling sound of your sighs
The way I was caught
In the wonder of your eyes.
This, too, will pass,
They say.
Things fade away.

And when the sea turns glass
When the sun grows cold
When old is young
And young is old
Maybe then
This hollow space
That was my heart
Will race
And beat again.

awakening.

A moment ago
You looked right through me
Thinking of the miles you had to go
Looked straight in my eyes
And never knew me
Your crowded mind a world away
Remembering tomorrow
And mine, intent on yesterday,
Filled my heart with sorrow.

What's done is done.
The past is past
And love will never come to us again
The love we knew would last a thousand years
Is gone
And I can see it only faintly
Through my tears.

Susan...

I been thinkin' 'bout tomorrow
Susan...
It's a life of joy and sorrow
So don't expect the good times
To come without the bad
But look inside and you'll find joy
Even when you're sad.

Susan...
I don't really even know you
Susan...
There are things I'd like to show you
The sun comin' up in a china sky
The look of love in a little boy's eye

And I want to whisper
Locked is the door.
And to tell you
Love is the key.
So that you'll know
Love is the power
That sets us free.

Susan...
I don't know how else to say it
Life's a
Kind of game and you must play it.
A great and holy mystery
Unfolding day by day
And whether you win or lose
Depends on how you play.

And I want to whisper
Locked is the door.
And to tell you
Love is the key.
So that you'll know
Love is the power
That sets us free.
Susan...

what is copy?

It is the soft, spongy feel of your first Keds,
and wanting to run forever.
It is believing you can fly.
It is snap, crackle, and pop -- slip, slither, and glide.
It is the smoldering innocence of a first kiss,
the shuddering sorrow of goodbye.
It is the soft buzz of a sleepy afternoon,
and thunder rolling across a flat Kansas prairie.
It is the breath of life being sucked into a newborn baby's lungs.
It is warm, soft leather against your legs
the crisp smell of new paint and freshly minted metal
the wind in your face
and 140 miles an hour.
It is the promise of things half seen.
It is the word of God
and the soft whispers of the Devil.
It is your stomach
dropping away with the whoosh of a roller coaster,
melting at the touch of a tiny hand.

It is the glimpse of an almost forgotten face,
the scent of an unremembered perfume.
It is love, envy, joy, sorrow,
pride, lust, shame, guilt, contentment,
in words that wrench the heart
attack the brain
and consume the soul --
words that dance on the tongue
leaving the bittersweet aftertaste
of half-satisfied desire.
It is life itself
or it isn't copy.

Written in desperation in an attempt to answer my children's relentless questioning. "What do you do, daddy?" "I write copy." "Well, what is *copy*?"

samaritan.

Out in Arizona, back in 1954
I was walkin' down the dusty road, weary to the core.
My throat was dry and achin', my poor old feet were sore
I was thinking of the dusty road ahead.

Then a shack came swimmin' to me
through the summer's shimmerin' heat
And a sign outside the door told me to rest my weary feet
and a voice said "I've cool water and a little bit to eat
And a place where you can rest your achin' head."

Then an old, old man came toward me with a cool and brimmin' cup
And he smiled a smile of beauty as I turned the bottom up
And I asked him if he lived there just to give the traveler sup
I'll remember ever what the old man said.

There's a peace that flows in the man who knows
He's doin' the best he can.
And life's gone by like the blink of an eye
Ever since time began.
You'd know my name, I had wealth and fame
Till I turned my back and ran
To live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man.

only when i laugh.

Blues gets me up and down
He follows me
All around town
I can't lose him
He's callin' out my name.

Last evening
Blues in my empty bed
This morning
Blues in my achin' head
Tomorrow
It'll be just the same

Cho.
Cause old Blues
Is always with me
But that's all right
At least it's company
My baby left in the night
I cried a day and a half
But that's all right
It only hurts when I laugh.

Life's full of aches and pains
My head's full
Of achin' brains
I'm a loser
The doctor told me so-
Laid me down on his bed
Tried to empty
My achin' head
He couldn't fix it
Made me get up and go

Cho.
And old Blues
followed me out the door
Old Blues
I felt his feet
On the floor
My baby came back today
She stole my shoes and shirts
But that's okay
I only laugh when it hurts.

i believe in you.

When the day is through
And the shadows fall
And my heart is filled with pain
I can think of you
And through it all
My heart can smile again.

When I'm filled with doubt
And it's plain to see
That the years have passed me by
I can pull you out
Of my memory
And immediately get high.

'Cause I find just thinking of you
Thinking of you
Gets me through the day
And I believe that you
Know I still love you
In the same old quiet way.

I believe in you
I believe in you
And even though you're gone
The thought of me someday
Again with you some way
Helps me carry on.

I believe in you
I believe in you
And I don't know where or when
But I know someday
That come what may
We'll be together again.

the brook.

Here bubbles a small brook.
Clean, pure spring water
Ekes out of the ground as in escape.
At dusk a small animal approaches,
Nuzzles the spring softly
And fades into the woods.

The sun disappears
Night creatures fill the woods.
A great feathery hardness envelopes a small furry softness
with no sound save one tiny shriek and a beating of dark wings.

Another small one, a living puff, quivers terrified
under a bush, shakingly awaiting friendly dawn.
The brook pours out its life,
Indiscriminate.

light one small candle.

Don't curse the dark
You can light a candle
Though that one small spark
May be all that you can handle.

It may seem a tiny beam
But in the blackness
Oh, how bright
One tiny light can gleam.

Why curse the dark
When you can light a candle
And by that glow
Each of us might see
If we all lit just one small candle
What a bright world this would be.

commandments.

Speak ill of no one.

Reach out to others.

Do not concern yourself with things over which you have no control. As soon as you realize you have wronged someone, or made a mistake, do everything in your power to rectify it. If you can do nothing about it, forget it.

If you are worried about something:

- meditate until you have uncovered the source of that worry.
- when you have discovered what it is you are worried about, decide what positive action you can take.
- once you have decided on a positive course of action, begin it immediately. If immediate action is not possible, write down what action you intend to take, and take it at your earliest opportunity.

Organize your duties. Write them down and check them off as you do them. Whatever you can do today, do it. If you put it off, something may prevent you from doing it, or the doing of it may prevent you from taking advantage of an unexpected opportunity.

Turn the other cheek.

Do and say what you know is right, not what is expected of you. Let others think what they will.

Nothing external can defile or conquer you. You can be your own worst enemy or your staunchest comrade.

Put yourself in the other's place.

Think of yourself as a child of the universe – a beautiful and necessary part of creation, with as specific a purpose as the bee or the atom.

Live as if you were going to be held accountable for all your actions.

Be no man's slave, and master to none.

Keep the common touch — beware of self-aggrandizement.

Avoid careless conversation; repress unworthy thoughts.

Do the things you don't want to do but know must be done. This is the most important key to success -- in school, in business, in sports, in religion, in life

do you remember?

Do you remember the captain's name
That crucified our Lord?
Do you know who the soldier was
That stabbed him with his sword?
I wonder how they must have felt
When Jesus' blood had dried
And they found out it was
The Son of God they'd crucified.

Does history recall who made
The crown of thorns he wore?
Who nailed the nails, who pierced the side,
Who built the cross he bore?
Can you imagine how they felt
When that day's work was done
And suddenly they knew
They'd crucified God's only son?

Cho.
For the sun disappeared
And the earth stood still
And the lightning split the black that was the sky
And the people who had jeered
Raised their hands against the chill
As they watched their Lord and Savior die.

Why do I kneel and wonder
Who they were that killed our Lord?
Why pity those who nailed him up
And reveled in His gore
Why hope with all my heart
Almighty God removes their shame?
Lord help me, in that awful time
I might have done the same.

Cho.
For the sun disappeared
And the earth stood still
And the lightning split the black that was the sky
And the people who had jeered
Raised their hands against the chill
As they watched their Lord and Savior die.

look at me.

Do not with downcast eye
Belie the yearning in your heart.
Rather, look at me full
And let desire show brightly in your face.

false dawn.

Don't go.
That light is false dawn.
It will grow dark again
Enough to cover our secret act
Before the sun strikes us
And we absorb its cruelty
We will taste again
The serpent's fruit
And steal, and steal away.

life isn't living

Life isn't living
Unless you're giving
Giving your heart
And a part of your soul.
Pain and pleasure
Measure for measure
Get out your heart
And pay the toll.

Life's a vale of tears
Shouts and cheers
One last dance
One more chance
So make something of it
Don't try to rise above it
Take time to love it
And come out whole.

Don't live a little
Live a lot
Give it everything you've got
Because
Life isn't living
Unless you're giving
Giving your heart
And a part of your soul.
Pain and pleasure
Measure for measure
Open your heart
And make the whole world
Whole!

come. grasp eternity with me.

It was the beginning of time.

A superdense nuclear cloud roiled in space, shapeless and unformed. It was everything — and nothing.

At a temperature of one trillion degrees the cloud exploded, giving birth to a vast, constantly expanding universe.

Time passed, and in this rock's particular part of the still gaseous world single molecules began tugging gently at each other, each with its own tiny gravitational pull. In infinite layers they clung together — building, building.

And they became a molten mass eight thousand miles thick — a mass loosely formed in the shape of an egg — circling around another huger mass that had grown into being a billion years before... the sun.

Slowly, in the chill of deep space, the earth's crust cooled. And as the crust cooled, the core boiled -- erupting in explosions that ripped the liquid rock through labyrinthine miles of crack, crevice and blowhole, finally blasting into the earth's young atmosphere — solidifying almost instantly.

A few billion years passed. Light green fuzz slowly covered the rock -- earth's first plant life. And the rock became indivisible with the landscape as great reptiles soared through the hot, humid air over gigantic beasts that ravaged the earth.

One day, not so very long ago in the book of time, man pried the rock from where it had rested almost four billion years. Pried it, raised it, and with a jealous curse crushed his brother's skull with it.

Darkened by that blood, it has been ballast for a primitive canoe, been loaded into catapults and flung into war. It has lain quiet, while wind and water smoothed its once craggy skin. Men have heated it in fires and cooked over it as wild eyes sought them from the darkness. Women have pounded skins, maize, wheat, rice, and clothes with it. Held in place with mortar of mud and clay it was once part of an altar on which madmen danced, whirled, shrieked, and murdered; once part of a quiet mill where early settlers ground the ingredients for their staff of life.

Less than two hundred years ago it was seized by frenzied hands, scanned feverishly for signs of gold, and tossed scornfully aside.

In 1889 a homesteader used the rock to hammer a boundary stake into one corner of his new home.

On October twenty-first of this year a road grader rolled over the rock with forty thousand pounds of pressure, pulverizing it.

The fragment you see here is part of that rock. Pick it up. Hold it in your hand. Run your thumb along its side.

It is ten billion years old.

It has born silent witness to all that has ever happened, from that unspeakable chaos when time began to this very instant.

Cup it in the palm of your hand and close your fist tightly around it. Then treasure it, or tuck it in a desk drawer, or throw it away.

But know that for an instant you have held eternity in your hand.

fresh from heaven.

Remember the story of Nebuchadnezzar
And the burnin' fiery furnace?
That's one of my favorites.

How he built this graven idol
Built it of solid gold
And then commanded the people
At the sound of the horn and pipe
To fall on their knees and worship this false god.
Well, not Shadrach, and not Meshach, and not Abednego
They'd face the burnin' fires 'fore they'd bend that low.

So the Lord sent down the word from heaven
And delivered 'em safe from harm
They stepped from the fiery furnace barely warm.

And the word was love, love, love
That cooled the fires
Love from on high
The kind that never tires
Falling like rain from God above
Love, love, love, love
Fresh from heaven — heavenly love.

You know another thing about love?
It's catching.
Let it into your heart and before you know it
Love starts spreading out to other folks
Just like Joseph, sold as a slave by his brothers
When he was a child
Yet later, when he was king of Egypt
And they came for help, he smiled.

'Cause the Lord sent down the word from heaven
To turn the other cheek
And give the aid and comfort that they seek.

And the word was love, love, love
Makes you wanta shout.
Love from within your heart
Spreadin' out.
Fallin' like rain from God above
Love, love, love, love
Fresh from heaven -- heavenly love.

And it was love, love, love
Filled the lion's den
Love that came to save old Daniel's skin
Falling like rain from God above
Love, love, love, love
Fresh from heaven -- heavenly love.

God's heart is so full of love
He sent his only son to walk among us.
One day Jesus came upon a widowed mother

Preparing to bury her only son.
His heart so filled with love and compassion
That he commanded:
"Young man, I say to you Arise!"
And the young man sat straight up before their eyes

'Cause the Lord sent down the word from heaven
To give her back her boy
Turnin' all that sadness into joy.

And the word was love, love, love
Brought him back to living
Love all powerful, all forgiving
Falling like rain from God above.
Love, love, love, love
Fresh from heaven -- heavenly love.

Then there was the time when the disciples of Jesus
Was bein' tossed 'round by a storm at sea
They was scared.
At their wit's end
When they saw someone walkin' toward 'em
Right on top of the water!
Smoothin' the waves and holdin' back the wind.

The Lord sent down the word from heaven
Jesus walked up to that boat
Stilled the storm and kept them all afloat.

And the word was love, love, love
Held up His feet
Love all powerful
Pure and sweet
Falling like rain from God above
Love, love, love, love
Fresh from heaven
Heavenly love

And it was love, love, love
Made the water wine
Love all merciful
All divine
Fallin' like rain
From God above
Love, love, love, love
Fresh from heaven
Heavenly love.

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changeling.

In the garden he sits
Nursing flowers.
The birds peck near him
Fearing him not.
They know it is not in him
To do them harm.
His strong, supple hands
Carry earth
Dig — plant — seed.
A seed becomes a shoot
Buds become flowers
And his life becomes
A wonder.

reprieve.

The sea is silent save for a murmur on distant shores.
The tide is in, her work for the time being completed.
Deep within her something stirs sleepily.

No, whispers the sea, it is not time.

The thing lifts its shaggy head in question.

The time is come and past, it purrs.

No, the sea wails, heaving her great body,

It is not time, it is not time.

Time enough for me. The thing rises, shaking off the wet.

The sea, tormented, twists and curls, great waves leaping.

Please, more time, more time, it will not be long.

The thing, undecided, stands huge in her depths.

Please, please, the time has been so short.

A little more time then, but not as much as has been.

The sea is quiet, while in her depths the thing rolls, twists,
in tortured sleep.

go spend your days

You are young
But deep inside you
Someone's hung
A lamp to guide you.
Follow its light
For the rest of your years
Follow in spite
Of laughter and tears.

Go spend your days
As your heart tells you to do
Life is short
Time goes by
What are we
You and I?

Go live your life.
Spend it well
While you are young.
Happiness
Comes and goes
Why this is
No one knows.

Fill all your days
To the brim, live them one by one
Until the final day is done.

Go spend your days
As your heart tells you to do
Life is short
Time goes by
What are we
You and I?

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letter from a hostage.

I don't know how to start this letter.

There are so many things I want to say. We're keeping our chins up pretty well. But after this long there's a feeling creeping in that we're never going to get back. Just in case, there's something I wanted you to know. At first, when they jumped us and herded us all in here, we were scared to death. We figured they were going to shoot us or something. But we were mad, too. We yelled at them, and told them how America was going to come and get us. And what *our* country was going to do to *their* country. But of course America didn't. And we were slapped around, and tied to chairs, and prodded with guns. And looking into those cold eyes, we began to doubt. It took a long time for us to lose hope. But one by one, we did. And now I don't think any of us really believes we'll ever get out of here alive.

So here's what I wanted to say. If we've learned one thing from this, it's what freedom really means. I guess you can't know that until it's taken away from you. But once you lose it, you know it's the most precious thing in life. It happened to us: strangers in a foreign land. Don't let it happen there. Don't get so used to freedom that you forget how precious it truly is. Or how hard our forefathers fought so we could have it. Maybe we will be back some day. I surely hope so. Maybe we won't. But don't let them use us, or anything else, to put America in chains.

I miss you. I miss your cities teeming with people. Your prairies, golden with grain. I miss football on Saturday and church on Sunday. I miss the smiles and hugs of the people I love. I am held hostage. For what cause I do not know. But if I am a tool – a weapon dark forces are using to take freedom, and hope, and happiness from my beloved country -- then the ransom is far too high.

Written in 1980 while 52 Americans were held hostage in Iran.

you have brought me love

You have brought me love
Filled my eager heart with dreaming
Dreams of two hearts beating as one
My life begins with you
You have brought me love.

You opened the door
That I stood before with longing
Longing for a glimpse of the sun
How bright my life becomes
You have brought me love.

And now I feel I'm just being born
A rose blooming on a thorn
My past has disappeared
This moment's all I've ever known.

You have made my world
Beautiful and new -- heaven
Blessed my dreams and made them come true
You have brought me love
Love has brought me you.

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the wall.

How many yesterdays ago
were we young together
our fearless, crashing hearts
pumping proud blood
through our tireless bodies.
We stopped — watched a baby
a blade of grass, a stream
the sky, a tree, a pebble.
Have I changed so much?
Is the world so little to me now?

I love you.
Now, more than ever.
But 'round my heart has grown
an impenetrable shell.
You are, thank god, inside it
and so am I
imprisoned by the years.

You and I are there, yes.
Prometheus and Epimetheus
In the unspeakable chaos of my heart
Enough time, enough patience
and beauty may come even here
inside the wall.

don't talk about war.

I don't want to join the air force
I don't want to join the corps
Just thinking about the infantry
Makes my poor old feet so sore
Don't talk about war.

I can feel my blood beginning to thicken
Feel my stomach beginning to sicken
Feel me turning a little bit chicken
Don't talk some more...
Talk a little less about war.

Sure, I love Ella May and I want to protect her
And I'm not exactly a defector
Just call me a conscientious objector
And don't talk about war.

I don't want to leave school
I don't want to shave my face
I want to talk some more about the golden rule
And the good old human race.
Don't talk about war.

I want to stay where I can study real hard
Where my peace and quiet is never jarred
Warming my hands on a burning draft card
Throwing bottles at the National Guard
Don't talk some more...
Let's talk some less about war.

veneers

Let me tell you something, you pantywaist pill-pushers. Don't look for me in your groins, or in some recently enlightened corner of your mind. If you want to know who I am... if you want to know where it all comes from... I'll tell you.

I am man.

A million years ago I stood on this earth, a bloody club in one hand, a bloody beast before me, dead, and in that moment I was The Supreme Being. The smartest, strongest, fastest, meanest motherfucker on this entire planet.

If only you had appeared to me then, to explain me in terms of potty training. Poor fools — you don't understand me and never will. Ancient fire runs in my veins. My mind is four and a half billion years old.

I am Primal.

And though I know you like the palm of my hand... like the chilled tundra underneath my leathered foot... like the smooth shaft of the club in my hand... to you I am as foreign as a cold and distant star.

everything but you

I got fancy cars
And fancy shoes
Big cigars
Expensive booze
If I want a wife
All I have to do is choose
Play the game of life
And I never lose
Never lose
Never lose.

Got a million-dollar jet
And thousand-dollar ties
What I want, I get
You'd be surprised what money buys
If I want I can have you shot
By a man with a funny nose
Everything I want I got
Everything I want I got
Heaven knows
Heaven knows
Heaven knows

Cho.
And I certainly don't need you
'Cause I can do
Anyone I choose to.
I certainly don't need you
I certainly don't need you
Not like I used to
God knows I don't.

Would you like some fancy furs
Or a great big diamond ring
Some towels marked his and hers
I can buy you anything
What can I do that will bring you
Back to me?
What can I do that will make it
Like it used to be?

Hey, what am I sayin'
Standin' here prayin'
Don't listen to me because
Seein' you
Rememberin' you
For a second I forgot just who I was.

Cho.
And I certainly don't need you
I certainly don't need you
God knows I don't need anything
And you know I don't need anything

Anything
Anything
But you.

God knows I've got everything
And you know I've got everything
And I know I've got everything
Anything
Everything
But you.

kathy's clown

I'm not blamin' you for puttin' me down
All over town
I'm not shamin' you for runnin' around
I'm just a clown
In love, in love with you.

Everybody said it wouldn't work
I thought we'd prove them wrong
Everyone said I was just a jerk
I guess they were right
I see the light
Time I was movin' along

Away from you
Sad and lonely, too
In love, in love with you
Just a lonely clown
In love, in love with you.

If I had any friends,
I guess they'd say
This is the best thing anyway
Now I can see
We never should have started
I'd never have ended up broken-hearted
You're too good for the likes of me
And you're through

Through with the clown
The clown in love, in love with you.

transparency

There went the man, there --
Smiling as he walked.
His joy belatedly was yours,
And yours, finally mine.
Does your heart sing in its chains
When he passes by?
The smile that quirks your mouth
The quick tongue that wets your lips
Your sudden vivaciousness
Are like signs on a familiar road
Pointing toward journey's end.
Don't stare -- it isn't polite.
Don't look away — it's too obvious.
Watch him calmly, coolly,
Till he disappears around the corner;
Then — follow him!

possessive tense

Come home with me, little kitten.
I will give you bread and milk.
Don't kittens like milk?
I do.

And pretty soon you'll be so fat
all you'll be able to do is sit there
and let me pet you.

And if I'm mean to you sometimes
It's because I love you, and you're so soft.
And I'll depend on you, kitten,
to be there and in good humor at all times.

So come on, kitten.
Oh my! Where'd you go?

lincoln memorial

My love lives in the Lincoln Memorial
Nobody knows it but me.
She likes it 'cause it's so historical
And because it's free.
How I ache when I behold her

Sittin' on Mr. Lincoln's shoulder
How my heart is palpitatin'
To do a little great
Emancipatin'

My love lives in the Lincoln Memorial
She doesn't know how I care
She says I'm too sophomorical
It's more than I can bear

Oh, oh
How I ache when I behold her
Stretched out on Mr. Lincoln's shoulder
How my heart is palpitatin'
To do a little great
Emancipatin'

But on the first cold winter night
She'll wake up and see the light
When I ask her to move upstairs with me
And be my flame in the statue of liberty
We'll form a more perfect union...
And be my flame in the statue of liberty.

the moon

How often do they take the moon away?

Only once a month, and then only for a short time.

And must we watch it disappear, little by little, every month, until it is completely gone?

Is there nothing we can do?

No. But there are all the stars, and the sun in the daytime.

The sun hurts my eyes; there are too many stars to see clearly.

Do they know I'm dying?

They know everything.

And still they take away the moon? What if I die before it comes back? If they know everything, they know the moon is the only thing I love.

It is the way of the world. The moon disappears, the waves roll unendingly, the earth turns. No one can stop it.

Perhaps, then, it is better that I not stay.

listen to the voice

Listen to the voice
Down deep inside you
Listen to what it's trying to say
It's your conscience and your good sense
Tryin' to guide you
To help you find your way.

Think of Columbus, approaching land
Beaching his ships, just like he planned
He proved the world was round, not flat...
(But where he thought he was was not where he was at.)

Well, that's all right
And that's okay
'Cause he discovered the USA.

Cho.

'Cause he listened to the voice
Down deep inside him
Listened to what it was trying to say
Let his conscience and his good sense
And lead him on his way.

Look at the patriots of seventy—three
Turned Boston harbor into a pot of tea
Doing what they knew was right
(And starting one hell of a fight.)

Well...that's all right
And that's okay
They made this country what it is today.

'Cause they listened to the voice
Down deep inside them
Listened to what it was trying to say
Let their conscience and their good sense guide 'em
To help them find their way.

Lady Godiva, the story goes
To fight taxation, took off her clothes
Rode through town at a quiet trot
(But can you imagine what her husband must have thought?)

Well that's all right
And that's okay
She made her point in a very vivid way.

Cho.

'Cause she listened to the voice
Down deep inside her
Listened to what it was trying to say
Let her conscience and her good sense guide her
To help her find her way.

Adam and Eve, in Paradise
Thought that apple looked mighty nice

Thought they'd try a little taste
(And almost ruined the human race.)

And that was dumb.
It wasn't smart.
They almost finished us before we'd got a start.

Cho.
'Cause they didn't hear the voice
Down deep inside them
Didn't listen to what it was trying to say
Didn't let their conscience and their good sense guide 'em
And so they lost their way.

Think of the Christians of long ago
They didn't give up God, oh no.
They knew they'd found the holy way
(But Nero fed 'em to the lions, anyway.)

Well... that's all right.
And that's okay.
They'll be in heaven on judgment day.

Cho.
'Cause they listened to the voice
Down deep inside them
Listened to what it was trying to say
Let their conscience and their good sense guide 'em
To help them find their way.

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seeing you again

Seeing you again
Has made my whole world just like new again
And life's turning 'round like a silvery ball
A sparkledy toy
Pourin' out joy
And love has started it all.

Holdin' you again
Like I always knew I wanted to again
Got a soft, warm feeling down deep inside
My old life is gone
I'm hanging on
And love's taking me for a ride.

The world was locked
Till you brought the key
Just look at me
I'm free now
Higher and higher
Hour by hour
I see now
Love is the power.

Loving you again
Feelin' like the whole thing's just begun again
And every time I look in your eyes
I get a brand new surprise
Whenever I see
The mystery of you
Loving me.

Written for Carolyn Merritt at the request of her husband John -- originally
"Lovin' Carolyn" -- changed to achieve a bit more universality. Copyright
William A. Davidson.

master plan

Look at that worm down in the ground
Never makes a sound, down out of view
Think of the worm wiggle and squirming
Working below, helpin' things grow
Happy in the work God gave him to do
He's found his place in the master plan
And he knows he's doin' the best he can.

Look at the bee, hour after hour,
Making his way -- flower to flower, day after day.
Think of the bee, season to season
Buzzing to and fro, helping things grow
Happy in the work God gave him to do
He's found his place in the master plan
And he knows he's doin' the best he can.

Look at the gull
Up in the sky
Never wonders why
He's up so high
Never wonders why.
Think of the gull, glidin' and scullin'
Working above for a God of love
Happy in the work God gave him to do
He's found his place in the master plan
And he knows he's doin' the best he can.

Think of this seed, here in my hand
Future all planned, it will be a tree.
Think of you and me, no rhyme or reason
We stumble along, knowing somethin' is wrong
Will we find the work God gave us to do
And take our place in the master plan
And know we're doing the best we can?

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love what is love?

love comes in like falling rain

Creeping

Weeping

And smiling again.

Love is a furnace

Consuming your brain

Love is a shimmering

Glistening

Pain.

Love is a singer

Love is a dancer

Love is the question

Love is the answer

Love is a maddening

Frightening

Blast

Love is the future

Becoming the past.

Love is the end of a maiden's prayers

Love is the dark at the top of the stairs

A handful of stardust

A mouthful of prayers.

Love is the knowing

That somebody cares.

take a chance

Love is a gamble
Love is a bet
Romance is a sometime thing.
A flick of a card
A turn of a handle
A hope that those bells will ring

If you don't take chances
You'll never win
And love you can't do without
Pick up the dice
Come on, take a gamble
Learn what it's all about.

Go on hayrides to where
The moon's shining brightly
And if
Your heart sleighrides, take care
You might find it
Slightly terrific.

I'm gambling forever
Betting my heart
That this was just meant to be
Won't you cover my bet
Come on, take a gamble
Please take a chance on me.

love, love, go away

Love, love, go away.
Come again some other day.

Love, love, go away.
I haven't got the time to play.
Love, love, go away
Come again some other day.

Love, love, let me be.
Can't you see that I'm not free
Love, go away from me
See you in eternity.

Why did you come into my life
When things were settling down?
We were about to work it out
When you came into town.

Love, love, go away
We've got nothing left to say.
Love, love, go away.
Come again some other day.

the first christmas

How lovely He must have been
When He lay in the manger on that first Christmas
How lovely Mary and Joseph
To give birth to such a child.

How lovely He must have been
When He stood in the temple astonishing the wise men
How graceful his movements
He was so sure of himself.

How lovely He must have been
When Mary Magdalene wiped his face with her scarf
The pain was on Him then
He knew the end was quite near.

How lovely He must have been
When they pierced his side with their spears
His hands, his feet, his head
Bloody, and mortally stricken.

How lovely He must have been
when He absolved the thief hanging next to Him
Saying "This day rejoice,
For thou shalt meet my Father."

How lovely He must have been
When the lovely soul left the young untouched body
Desecrated only
By the spears of other men.

How lovely He must have been
When his mother Mary laid Him to rest in his tomb
So pale and still
With no pain in Him.

How lovely He must have been
On that day He was resurrected
By God, his Father,
With his glory almost painful to the soul and eyes.

And yet how lovely He was at first
In the little manger, wrapped in shepherd's clothing
A concentrate of wonder,
Christ— savior of the world.

mirage

The sea, restless and strange,
dances a weary waltz
timed to the pulse of some unseen god.

Overhead the shadowy moon
races, its pace marked
by the silvery tip of black clouds.

I sit in the sand, hearing the sea breathe,
dark thoughts in my only, lonely mind.

And suddenly you come to me across the water
walking like Jesus, your body gleaming

The wind fingers your hair into a ragged halo
and your beauty floods my eyes.

Closer you come, ever closer,
and I begin to shake with desire.

The wind brings the scent of you to me
charged with the scent of the sea.

Now our fingers touch, now our lips;
my arms go around you, bringing you to the sand beside me.

And now my life begins.

All that has been before

Disappears.

For there is no life without love
and you are love.

mirrors

Have you seen how pale he looks?
How incredibly wan and weary?
He must be drying like a prune.
See his wrinkles, his worn old eyes.
He emanates despair, exudes it like sweat.

A little while ago he was as young as I.

Can't we bind his veins, stop this fearful bleeding?

No. I know, I know.

mr. and ms.

I cry for the day, slipping past the ends of
your fingers – cold and elusive as moonshine

I cry for the incomplete, undefined shape of
your past – filled with might and should have been

I cry for the coming of tomorrow – crisp and cruel –
distant as maybe – as near as now was just a
second ago.

I cry for the lonely moment on the edge of your bed
when the spiders creep from the cobwebs of your
mind

And you shake your head, thinking tomorrow, and
tomorrow, and tomorrow.

now you tell me

Now you tell me.
Just when I was getting used to you.
Now you tell me.
And I don't know what the hell I'm going to do.

I thought that you were feeling
That old fever in your blood
And every time you spoke to me
The words came in a flood

All the loving words from you to me
The loving things you'd do to me
And now you say my house of clay
Has vanished in the mud.

Now you tell me --
Just when I was getting used to you.
Now you tell me --
And I don't know what the hell I'm going to do.

I guess I should have known
It was too easy from the start
I spent time with your body
But I never touched your heart

No, I never touched your heart, I know
And everybody told me so
They said we'd come together
And as quickly come apart.

And I guess it's true.
'Cause now you tell me that we're through
Now you tell me
And I don't know what the everlasting hell
I'm going to do
Without you.

the confrontation

Oh how smug you sit
Pride in your face
Lust in your heart
Hypocrite!
Creature of sloth!
Squash!
Like a bug He will smite you.
Tear out your soul like a nut from a shell
And fling you down in the darkest depths
Of an everlasting, ghastly hole
The fiery pits of hell!

Aaaaaamen.

Let me tell you about God.
Wind and thunder, a lightning bolt
An earthquake, ready to shake
This world asunder.
(Aaaaaaamennnn.)

Let me tell you about God.
Think he's a kind, white—haired old man
Sittin' up there with outstretched hands
Just waitin' to gather you into the fold?
Think he'll shut his eyes
To the lies in your heart
The spots on your soul
To your pride?

Well, a proud man's something God can't abide
He'll rise up in His terrible wrath
And smite you down
If you leave the path.

(Spoken) Let's all sing together.

We are working in the vineyards of the God almighty
Laborin' and suffering in the service of the Lord
And bitter though the grapes we pluck
And sour though the wine we suck
Still our way is filled with light
We know we will escape the fiery sword.

Now it seems we got an apple planter among us.
And as I remember, an apple hung us.
Planted the seed of evil in men
Lost us the joys of Paradise
Damned us in the Almighty's eyes
Now we may never see Heaven again.
Aaaaaamen.

What was the sin?
Envy!
Envy got us in the spot we're in.
And God rose up in His terrible wrath

Smote them down
For leaving the path.
Let's all sing together.

We are working in the vineyards of the God almighty
Laborin' and suffering in the service of the Lord
And bitter though the grapes we pluck
And sour though the wine we suck
Still our way is filled with light
We know we will escape the fiery sword.

Let me tell you about God.
Tell you why He put us here
Trial by fire! Purgatory!
This wretched world is a path to glory.
We are servants of the Lord
Twisting and turning in holy fear
Of his word and his face and his fiery sword
And I warn you:
Do not stray!
Vengeance is His; He will repay.
God will rise in His terrible wrath
And smite you down
If you leave the path.

One more time, now.
We are working in the vineyards of the God almighty
Laborin' and suffering in the service of the Lord
And bitter though the grapes we pluck
And sour though the wine we suck
Still our way is filled with light
We know we will escape the fiery sword.

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perfect apple

Oh my friend -- perfect apple
Grown where leaves dapple the clear October sun
Chosen at the end of brilliant fall
Worlds run in you, oh mystic fruit
You have known all and tell nothing
Mute, still you fill my heart with speechless wonder

I've planted you a thousand times and you have grown
A hundred thousand times and never known
What puts the miracle of life
In what I've sown.

Simple, unsophisticated apple
You make no demands, ask me no favors
Offer me no "if you don't's" to grapple with
You reach no hands to me.

Oh, holy fruit
Made by the Lord in the shape of His own two hands
How you cradle in my palms all cool and smooth
Like this, he cupped his hands and smiled into them
And for your skin, covered you over
With a summer evening sunset.

You give us food
Shade to hide us from the heavenly fire
A place to rest
You hold the land together
Reach up and grab the sky
And lock it to earth.

More than a friend
I can plant you
And watch you grow
See life with you, grow old with you
From tender stem to blessed tree
Oh child I never knew
How like a son you are to me.

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you've got the power

All my life I've fought to be free
And now look at me
You own me.
Bought me like a sack of flower
You've shown me
You've got the power.

I've spent my whole life waiting for you
What went before you
Would bore you.
I need you like a bee needs a flower
I adore you
You've got the power.

The moment that you walked through my door
You started a war
Inside me.
Now I need you every hour
Beside me
You've got the power.

Overnight my life turned around
I was lost, now I'm found
I love you.
How sweet the world that once was so sour
I love you
Love is the power
The power
The power.

The world is locked and love is the key
Just look at me
I'm free now.
This is my life's shining hour
I see now
Love is the power.

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rusty old shovel

Rusty old shovel
It rubs like the devil
At the end of a ditch-diggin' day
And the sun in the sky
Keeps askin' why
I was ever born thisaway.

I'm the prince of the blisters
The king of the callous
Lord, the kingdom I rule
It ain't got no palace...
Just a rusty old shovel
That rubs like the devil all day
Take me away.

My daddy and mama
Were from Alabama
Daughter and son of the soil
They did all they could
To bring me up good
In a world full of trouble and toil.
But once you're a ditcher
And that's all you know
It's hard to turn loose
Of the shovel and hoe

That rusty old shovel
That rubs like the devil all day
Take me away.

I remember a woman
And she was a good one
We were married a long time ago.
I can still see her face
In our ramshackle place
Lighting up the whole room with her glow
But she just couldn't take it
As hard as she tried
And early one morning
She just let go and died

And this rusty old shovel
That rubs like the devil all day
Took her away.

Rusty old shovel
It rubs like the devil
At the end of a ditch—diggin' day
And the sun in the sky
Keeps askin' why
I was ever born thisaway.
I'm the prince of the blisters
The king of the callous
Lord, the kingdom I rule

It ain't got no palace...
Just a rusty old shovel
That rubs like the devil all day
Take me away.

Written and copyrighted by Bill Caswell. I liked the song so much I thought it was too short, so I added the last verse, which gives me the right to include it among my things. (At least in my opinion. So sue me, Caswell.)

a shot of love

Told the doctor the world was sick
Said we need to cure her, mighty quick
And he said as he looked to the skies above
"What this old world needs is a shot of love."

Cho.

It's love that makes this old world turn
That's the secret we all must learn
Get our hearts together and give her a shove
'Cause the whole world turns on the power of love.

I've searched this old world sun to sun
Tryin' to find what makes it run
I'm no wise man, but this I know
It's love that makes the whole thing go.

Cho.

It's love that makes this old world turn
That's the secret we all must learn
Get our hearts together and give her a shove
'Cause the whole world turns on the power of love.

I've looked around from place to place
Looking for answers in every face
Let me tell you what I've found '
It's love that makes the world go 'round.

Cho.

I It's love that makes this old world turn
That's the secret we all must learn
Get our hearts together and give her a shove
'Cause the whole world turns on the power of love.

This old world is running down
Just like a clock that hasn't been wound.
How can we fix the spot we're in?
Get our hearts together and give her a spin.

Cho.

'Cause it's love that makes this old world turn
That's the secret we all must learn
Get our hearts together and give her a shove
'Cause the whole world turns on the power of love.

sometimes

Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone
Hanging on
By the thinnest thread
Sometimes I feel my mind is going
Brain is blowing
Up my head.
Sometimes I feel like crying
Sometimes I feel like dying
Sometimes I feel so down.

Sometimes I feel I'm so far under
Sit and wonder
Where up went.
Sometimes the world shuts down around me
Bad luck hounds me
Devil sent.
Sometimes I get so blue
I don't know what to do
And then I think of you...

Just when I feel like I can't cope
Got not hope
Of carrying on
Just when I feel the fear run through me
You come to me
Sweet and strong
And I wonder how I
Ever made it this long
Without you.

some way

Some way
We are going to make it
This time
Some way
Somehow
Reach out a hand and take it
This time.
We've never been so close before
Chasing after shadows
Running into softly closing doors
Not this time.
We are going to make it
This time.

We've always said
There was nothing to it
Something always got in our way.
Our sleeves are rolled up
We are going to do it
Today.
Some way
Somehow
Right now.

We know we have been wrong before
But at least we fought the fight.
We have never been so strong before
This time we've got it right
This time.
I know right now
Things never looked so black
But just think how
It'll be
When we
Are on the other side
Looking back.

I see it
The promised land
Resting in our hand.
some way we are going to make it
This time
Some way
Somehow
This time we make it for good.

the beast

Stay there, then.
You with your eyes shining so brightly.
Let the woods surround you,
For you would tear me to bits
If I set my foot in that jungle of yours
You can wait, I know.
I know of your terrible patience.
Dumb beast, you do not know
That the light from my fire
Is reflected in your eyes.
I can wait, too, you see.
For I know you are there.

kindergarten teacher

The room is a sea of faces
Smiling, laughing, pouting, crying.
The teacher claps and call out "Places!"
Begins to call their names out, sighing
With the start of another year.
It will be her last
The thought evokes a tear
From somewhere in her past.

"Markie...Brian...Robin...Oh!
I thought he was a her.
The names all run together so
The faces start to blur."
And now the games begin, and how
The children laugh, at play.
Is that the bell, so soon? And now
They've quickly run away.

And in the sudden stillness she
Sits quietly in thought
Wondering how to find the key
To teach what must be taught.
And as she sits there quietly
Feeling lost and old
Somewhere in eternity
Her name is penned in gold.

So much you've been to many, Ruth
So many hearts you've filled
So fine a head start to our youth
You've lovingly instilled.

So much more than their ABC's
You've given, unselfishly.
And "As you've done to the least of these,
So have you done...to Me."

Written for Ruth Driggs, kindergarten teacher at James Monroe grade school on her retirement.

sunlight on the shore

Sunlight on the shore
Moonlight through a door
Lightning in the trees
A lover on his knees.
And the image that turns in his
image that burns in his
brain fills him with pain.
A simple incision
and gone is the vision
And won't come back again.

Snowflakes on the sand
Raindrops on the land
Slowly spinning leaves
A lover on his knees.
Darkness in the day
People made of clay
Lips that make no sound
A lover in the ground.

ten-code prayer

Breaker for that Great Buddy in the Sky
I'm 10-17 on life's old bumpy I.
Are you 10-02 in heaven
Or is this a 10-77
Lord, I don't even know what 10-84 to try.

Been meaning to mention my little old 10-34
Got a 10-78, like I always have before
In a definite 10-30 fix
Can you give me a 10-46?
'Cause the 10-13 down here is mighty poor.

I been 10-06 since I went 10-23
Trying to copy your 10-14 to me.
But I've been 10-01
Since my 10-41 begun
And now I'm in a definite 10-33.

Before I 10-03 I need a 10-16 to know
If my 10-82's with you or down below.
Will Saint Peter at the golden door
Wave me in with a big "10-04"
Or will my next 10-20 be 10-70?

Well...
That's my whole 14, and I'm still 10-9
Must be this derved old lop-eared rig of mine.
But I'll just 10-09 again
Till I get a big 10-10
Till then I'm 10-08 until I hear from you.

Written during the CB craze. The numbers are "ten-codes."

the fire

The fire burns low.
I chafe my hands
and creep a little closer.
The darkness begins
to seep around me
Slithering across the edges
of my little clearing.

Cold and Dark come hand in hand
writhing in impatience.
I take a tiny twig
from my tiny pile of twigs
and place it carefully
on my tiny fire.

It catches quickly
Burns for an instant
and is reduced to a glowing coal.

I feel the night on my neck.
My arm twitches.
My eyes begin to water.
"From the smoke," I say.

Lower burns the fire
and I am loath to build it up again
at the price of my last twig.

The fire flickers, it is almost
no fire at all
and I plunge my last bit of fuel
into its tiny heart.

Damn, I've waited too long.

In awful silence
Night puts his heavy foot
on my little fire
and cold stabs through my wrapper.
I shift heavily on my log.
All that is left now is to wait
For the Cold and the Dark.

opening night

Something wondrous happened yesterday.
I saw a play come alive.
Words hung and danced as stars
on a clear, dark night.
Images glistened, now dim, now bright
And meaning faded in, now out of sight.

A dear old story dressed in truer clothes
than I had ever known --
A budding rose, it bloomed and shone
and then was gone
with a rush that left me
and the crowd
Alone.

As a wave roars to the land
Then sinks, exhausted,
in the waiting sand
So emotion swept me through
and waned
And left me
With the final curtain's velvet knife
But never mind.
I saw a play come to life.

the pool

See, in the pool
See the dark shadows there
In the pool
Reflecting thoughts never thought
Reflecting dreams never dreamed.

Kneel by its side
And dip your fingers in
To the pool
And taste the current of life
And know the eddy of love.

High overhead
The trees hang their branches above
The petals they shed
Are grasped by the ripples with love

See, in the pool
See the dark shadows there
In the pool
Reflecting thoughts never thought
Reflecting dreams never dreamed.

hello, houston?

The sun moves too, you know
Within this galaxy, our world.
The earth revolves around it, slow.
The moon around the earth is hurled.

Our sun's a tiny star
Adrift inside a huger place
Than we can ever know, by far
Than any man can ever face.

every man has one bright moment

Every man has one bright moment
When he and God and love are one
And in that shining instant
He may choose the course his life will run.

Quick as a wink it comes
And just as quick is gone again
Forever, if you let it pass.

But if you're just as quick
You can seize that one bright moment
Tuck it in your heart
And carry it with you for a lifetime.

And when your tomorrows
Have all become yesterdays
When the joy and the sorrows
Have all been washed away
That bright moment will come into your mind
Threading its way through the echoes of the past
And you will know at last
You have been paid in kind.

drop the bomb

I'm alive and well in the garden of knowledge
A free, white, and twenty-one Protestant college
A gentle island of peace and quiet
Surrounded by pillage, rape, and riot.
Outside men die in endless strife
And as each man dies, I feel the knife.
And I shake my fist in futile rage
At the whites, and the blacks, and the times, and my age --
And my folks keep telling me these
Are the best years of my life.

Well, if that's the truth

Cho.

Drop the bomb.
Drop the bomb, I said.
Drop it on us some night when we're all in bed.
Come on with the crash.
Let's all go out in a blinding flash
Drop the bomb.

And my kids, when I get to be seventy-five
Will check once a month to see if I'm still alive.
Come see me in my plastic nursing home
My chromed and cushioned catacomb
Say "What a nice, clean place you're in"
And smile, and fiddle, and yawn, and grin
At this lump of silently howling rage
As my girls, and my boys, look away from my age
From my spotted face and hands
And the spit running down my chin.

Well, if that's ahead...

Cho.

Drop the bomb.
Drop the bomb, I said.
Drop it on us some night when we're all in bed.
Come on with the crash.
Let's all go out in a blinding flash
Drop the bomb.

the light in the eye of time

There is a light in the eye of time
Now I see it, just a glimmer.
Not long ago it was invisible
But, as the leaves fall each year
As the earth revolves each day
As my skin begins to crack
My bones begin to creak
It grows brighter.

Soon it will be a flame
And my world will end in fire.

they don't know

They tell me you're too young for me
Too footloose, and too fancy free
"Love is for the old," they say
"In the young it flares, then fades away."
But they don't know what love is.
We know they don't know.

They tell me I'm too old for you
But what they tell me can't be true
When you look in my eyes I see
A flame that flickers just for me
And the sky above is brightened by that glow.

All my life I will remember this second
That crooked grin
The ragged sweater you're always in
The love that beckoned
Me to you, you to me.

And when the leaves have turned
To red and gold
When you at last are old
And I am older
We'll recall the lesson they have learned
With your gray head
At peace upon my shoulder.

the last war

A white cross bears, in a foreign field
My great-grandfather's name.
The man to be... the boy that was...
Cut down in an old man's game,
A young pawn lost in an old man's game.

Cho.

Young men still fight the old men's wars
Still end what the old men began.
Why must I take up the old man's gun
To kill another young man?
To kill another young man?

Grandfather died with a gun in his hand In 1944.
They said he died to save his sons
In a war that would end all war.
A war that would end all war.

Cho.

Young men still fight the old men's wars
Still end what the old men began.
Why must I take up the old man's gun
To kill another young man?
To kill another young man?

On Pork Chop Hill, my father was killed
To keep his family free.
For a world of peace, for his wife and child
And now they're after me.
Lord, here they come after me.

Cho.

Young men still fight the old men's wars
Still end what the old men began.
Why must I take up the old man's gun
To kill another young man?
To kill another young man?

frustration

We dream, and our dreams are dust
While around us blows the once warm
Wind of our ambition
Carrying the seeds of our folly.
Yet we dream on, filling the air
With our defeats, and on our cheeks
The hot tears make a mud of our desires.

how little we knew

We sat and talked as if the day would never end
The current took us slowly 'round the river's bend
We laughed at shapes in white clouds above
How little we knew of love.

At evening nightbirds began to fill the sky
The breeze in the rushes became a gentle sigh
As Day slipped her hand in a shadowy glove
How little we knew of love.

wind

Wind springs up as I cross the square
Pastes my pants to my leg
Making me look ungainly
Tries to tear my paper from my hand
Making me mutter angry things to it

"Feel the lovely spring breeze,"
The idiots bleat.
Can't they feel my enemy, too,
As I feel him
In the wind?

the wise man and the fool

Underneath an apple tree
A wise man and a fool.
At every word the wise man said
The poor fool shook his empty head
Did disagree, did overrule
And rudely did deny.

At length they spoke of ways
Successful men might live.
"Grasp and grab life," said the fool
The wise man gave a different rule
"Go spend your days
Release and give
And life shall multiply."

The fool rose up and left in scorn
Into the world did go.
And years he spent in misery
Till he began to wish that he
Was never born.
How do I know?
My friend, that fool was I.

christmas carol

I hear the Christmas bells
I smell the joyful Christmas smells
Oh holy night
Oh blessed birth
When Heaven came to us on earth.

And as the day draws near
I pray it brings you Christmas cheer
Peace on earth
Good will to men
Joy to you and yours
Amen.

you

You are as gentle as a doe
Licking her fawn's softness
And as cautious.
Every time but one
Her fears are nothing.
The once has passed.

My love is an eagle's height
An ocean's depth
A panther's grace
A lion's strength
An unconquerable
Insurmountable
Indefatigable
Force.
You are its source.

If you can see through walls between us
I can tear them down.
I am Rhythm
I am Grace
I am Poetry
I am God
I am your love.

i can't even remember your face

It seems like forever since we met
A moment I thought I'd never forget
But now I can hardly remember your face
Oh what am I doing in this place.

The years rush by as I sit and wait
If you do come back, will it be too late
Should I find someone else just in case
I can't even remember your face.

And if you did come, would I know you
Would the desperate years just disappear
Would I love you, would you love me?
Or would I open up my heart and show you
How lonely life can be
When you're out there somewhere and I am here

A heart can only hold on for so long
Were we really in love, or was I so wrong
Now nothing remains, not even a trace
I can't even remember your face.

i'm just worn out from loving you

As I sat by the river this morning
Wishing you were here, wishing you were here
A gentle breeze swept up from the south
Touching my hair the way you used to do
And the taste of tears was in my mouth
As all at once, I knew.

(Cho.)

I've spent my whole life loving you
And I just can't do it any more
I've been carrying two hearts around too long,
And it's time to put one down.

I'm not saying I don't love you, I do.
And I know I always will
But I can't go on this way
I need to live a normal life
Find someone, be a wife
Can't spend tomorrow wishing it was yesterday.

(Cho.)

I've spent my whole life loving you
And I just can't do it any more
I've been carrying two hearts around too long
And it's time to put one down.

the Oklahoma way

It started with a pistol shot in 1889
When our entire population
Crossed the Oklahoma line.
And no one gave us nothing
And nothing came for free
We scratched and fought
For what we got
And won it, you and me.

Born grown, on our own
With the good book in our hand
We set our chin and started in
To work the promised land.
Now just look at us
And tell me what you see.
A young and great and mighty state
Making history.

And we say when people ask
How Oklahoma's come this far
It's beef and oil and the red clay soil
That's made us what we are.
Beef and oil and the red clay soil
And huts made out of sod
Neighbor helping neighbor
And a lasting faith in God.

Born grown, on our own
With the good book in our hand
We set our chin and started in
To work the promised land.
Now just look at us
And tell me what you see.
A young and great and mighty state
Making history.

And the spirit still is in us
That was in us yesterday
Neighbor helping neighbor
That's the Oklahoma Way.

Written for use by Oklahoma National Bank & Trust Company in their marketing efforts.

the Ohio

I been pushin' barges twenty years or so
And I thought I knew a thing or two about the way they go
And I thought I'd seen most everything the river had to show
But I never knowed how the water flowed
Till I rode... The Ohio.

I come out west t'be by myself
Before the population rised
Wasn't a trace of the human race
Now it's too dadburned civilized.
Now it's too dadburned civilized.

Indian war's a thing of the past
Savages sweet as apple pie
No trouble now, and none forecast
Why, we ain't had a scalpin' since last july.
We ain't had a scalpin' since last july.

They wouldn't believe the Ohio
Back home in philadelph-I-ay
They ought to see the corn I grow
Poke it down in the ground and get outta the way
Poke it down in the ground and get outta the way.

The river don't do nothin' for free
'cept break your back and fry your hide.
It's a hard life here, you'll quickly see
With no room for slackers and no free ride.
No room for slackers and no free ride.

Since I come in on the very last boat
Scratching an itch I had to roam...
Been swindled and smote, my coat's been stole
Gee, mom, I want to go home.
Awwwwwwwwww.
Pushin' barges

Tendin' store
Fightin' Indians war by war
Trappin' furs
Growin' crops
And clearin' land
Life is hard!

Marietta was wilderness not many years ago
Overstocked with savages, with bear and buffalo
We scratched and fought for what we've got
We won it blow by blow.
Now look around, it's the best damn town
Up and down
The o-hi-o.

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great day in the morning

What do we do in Massachusetts
Whenever blue skies turned to gray?
We've got a trick that sets us loose...
It's dance till the sun brings a brand new day.

One, two, stick out your shoe
Three, four, stomp on the floor
Five, six, mingle and mix
Great day in the morning.
Seven, eight, hesitate
Nine, ten, start moving again
Eleven, twelve, unwind yourselves
Great day in the morning!
Great day, great day in the morning
Coming up with tomorrow's sun
Great day, great day in the morning
Great day coming for everyone!

What do you do when life gets hectic?
What do you do when your luck runs out?
Don't let yourself get apoplectic
Just throw back your head and shout
Great day in the morning!
Great day, great day in the morning
Coming up with tomorrow's sun
Great day, great day in the morning
Great day coming for everyone!

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