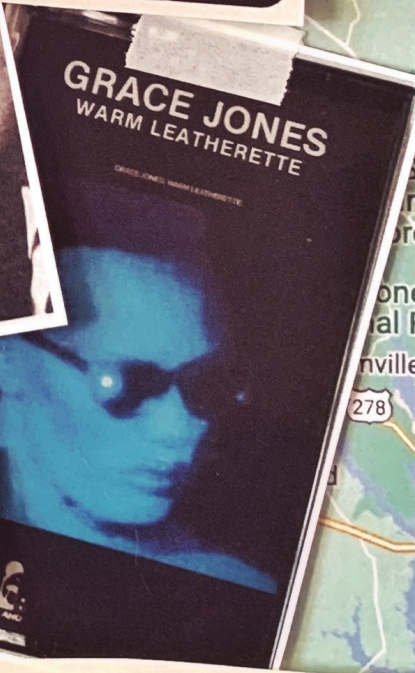
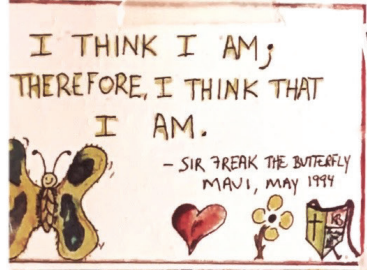
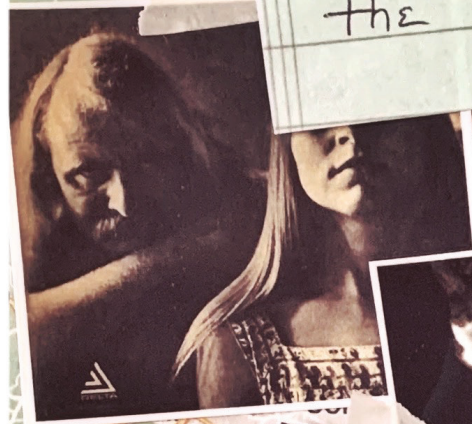


the marble tea



DEMOLICIOUS MAN

**A Lucky, Lovely Lover:
Celebrating the Whimsical Wisdom of Knight
Berman, Jr., aka The Marble Tea**

*On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday and the release
of **Demolicious Man**.*

It was in 2002, after a somewhat reluctant and certainly not triumphant return to New Jersey after a five-year absence, that my Aunt Annette introduced me to the Book Bin. Nestled on the main drag in the charming and aptly named Point Pleasant—where I had graduated from high school fifteen years earlier—the Book Bin boasted two of the most spiritual smells in the world: Nag Champa incense and old books.

Behind the counter were two bespectacled Old Souls named Knight and Kate. My aunt had known them for a while and when she said, “There’s someone you have to meet,” I always listened. After all, that’s how she introduced me to Jonathan Livingston Seagull when I was a timid and struggling ten-year-old.

There are some days you always remember, because they are days that change your life.

That day in 2002... that was one of those days.

As I scanned the glass display cases at the front of the store, my eyes going wide at the visual feast, I listened to the lyrical voices coming from behind the counter. Part windy whisper, part soothing sage, Knight and Kate were not just *in* that charming old Jersey Shore book store... they were *of* it.

For the next decade, I spent hour upon pleasant, Einstein-time hour buying stacks of books—my home office still smells of that wonderful Book Bin smell—and items from the cases in

the front, where the conversations were always enlightening, energizing, and exceptional.

Just like Knight and Kate.

During that decade, Knight and I began to talk more and more about our mutual love of music, until it was clear that we were meant to work together. Twenty years later, we have collaborated on half a dozen musicals, film soundtracks, spoken word and staged theatre pieces, audio drama recordings, and more.

Through it all, there has been the Marble Tea, which is really why we’re here.

When Allen Ginsberg was a struggling young poet in Newark, New Jersey, he sought assessment and direction from the old-school physician and avant-garde poet William Carlos Williams who, after reading Ginsberg’s poetry, advised him to find his own voice, discard the traditional rhyming and meter schemes, and to always remember to practice the mantra, “No ideas but in things.”

Using this criterion alone, Williams would see a lot of merit in the works of the Marble Tea. Knight has a beautiful way of expressing the ideas behind things—average, ordinary, everyday things—and he often leaves those ideas beautifully (purposely) unfinished.

Instead of pat answers and pop proclamations, he unassumingly invites the listener into his lo-fi, whimsical world like the Persian poet Rumi would an exhausted, world-weary traveler. The music of the Marble Tea is the food, the drink, and the comfortable bed for the night.

As you walk the rooms of the gracious guesthouse that is this sixty-song collection, I

hope the following verbal scribbles and cerebral sketches—organized by theme—offer a little touch of insight into one of my closest friends, and favorite singer-songwriters, and what makes his music shine so bright in a world of darkened hallways and thick, foreboding forests.

If you are a longtime fan of the Tea, then you are familiar with Knight's sentimental "goodbye" songs. Two of my favorites are "Say Goodbye" and "Goodbye Old Maple" (the latter about a tree under which I spent many pleasant hours). This collection gives us "Goodbye to Summer." If you've spent any amount of time at the beach in the summer, this little gem is full of all the sandy, sunny tropes that will fit into a flamingo-print beach bag, driven along by Knight's signature psychedelic arrangements.

Another prevalent subject area for Knight is his pets. From "Hoga-rama" to "Banana Cat" and "Ou est le Drake," he has an insightful way of humanizing those furry, friendly creatures who make a pet-lover's life more full. Here we get "Your Whiskers Keep Me Up at Night"—a 46-second piano-based blues number—and "My Little Animals." As Knight says "Hello kitty!" at the start of this jazz-based tune, you'll feel yourself smile, and it will last beyond the button and into the rest of your day.

Some of the music that Knight writes is born out of specific assignments for clients, challenges assigned by the music production and composition groups with which he is actively involved—his love of learning is one of my favorite things about him—and his impressive musical knowledge spurring him on to constant experimentation. Three tunes in this collection showcase his range: "Don't Freak the Butterfly" (funk, techno, and disco, with a neat bongo beat, inspired by Al Franken's Stuart Smalley); "A

Great Moving Wave of Bliss" (inspired by Brian Eno's ambient experimentations); and "Good Gracious Baby" (a blood-pumping honkytonk howler).

As mild-mannered and hippie-proclivited as Knight might be, he will—if the mood or an event strikes him hard in his sizable social justice soul—produce a political tune that has all of his quirky Knight-ness while also speaking mega-truth to power. "Temporarily Not the K-Man," about a guy he knows getting fired from his job for sneaking off to the bathroom, is sonically like Dylan's "Bear Mountain Picnic" and lyrically like his political protest songs. "Temporarily" verbally skewers big government, bigger corporations, and injustice, and features perhaps the best vocal lead-in to a harmonica solo *ever*. Another Dylan-esque room in this guesthouse is "You Really Piss Me Off," because even indie hippie guys get angry now and then... Recalling "Positively Fourth Street" and Ra's "Waste of Space," it features a repeated Lou Reed-like "whoo!," which adds a little lightness to the uncharacteristic lack of love.

On the other end of the spectrum are comedic songs like "Wild Turkey" and "Tryptophan" (the connection between the two in this collection kind of comedic in and of itself). "Wild Turkey" is all of fifteen seconds. Knight's voice is blues-gritty and boisterous, and, although I thought it was about bourbon... maybe it's not. "Tryptophan" is a song about the science of why everyone gets "sleepy after Thanksgiving dinner." It's the perfect song for a Saturday morning kids show... and we nearly had that happen. But that's another story...

Songs like "Tryptophan" are important to understanding the scope of the overall catalog

that KBJ/the Marble Tea has produced, because the subject matter from which he draws his inspiration is breathtaking in its diversity. One of his many wells of inspiration is Famous People. Listen closely to some of the songs and you'll hear lots of names in passing, merely players in the poem, but not exactly the stars: actors like Amy Poehler, Natalie Wood, Tom Hanks, and Buddy Hackett; writers like TS Eliot and Italo Calvino. Then there are the songs that focus on the famous. One, "Truman's Hat," about Capote, is a previous release. But *Demolicious Man* does feature two of these kinds of tunes. The first is "Nine Stories," about a collection of short stories by JD Salinger. Warning: plot spoilers abound! The other is "Listening to Richard Brautigan," which (similar to "Truman's Hat") is part biography and part synergy, as Brautigan's well-known phrases and images find themselves intertwined with Knight's naturally playful lyrics. There's another song I'd like to lump in here, called "Hey! You in the Tuxedo!" With an opening riff reminiscent of Pete Townshend's "Let My Love Open the Door" and a guitar solo using phasing and delay, this tune never names the famous person, although Knight, upon reading this piece, informed me it is about his father.

Speaking of inspiration, I know many musicians and songwriters, but Knight is one of the most knowledgeable when it comes to other indie bands, and the history of modern music. Although my iTunes player is full of bands and songwriters to which other musicians have introduced me, there is no one that has broadened my musical experience like Knight. He often sings about the bands that he loves, and some of his best songs are homages to the musicians who've inspired him the most through the decades. Some of the more obvious to me when listening to the tracks on *Demolicious Man* are the Smiths,

Syd Barrett, the Velvet Underground, Robin Hitchcock, and David Bowie. "Checks in the Mail" not only sounds like an old LP (I still play mine from the eighties, scratched, warped, and weathered though they are) but an old LP of David Bowie's *Hunky Dory* (specifically "Kooks"). Another inspiration is The Monkees, echoing most especially in "Painting a Cat" and "Petri Dish." Some of the others in which you might hear some or all of these inspirations are "Everywhere I Go I See You," "Old Letter Opener," "Mine all Mine," and "Suburban Girls on Tranquilizers" (the title is both the hook and the central, repeated phrase).

As much as I love Knight's arrangements (and for our musicals, he'll tell you I always request more of his lyrical flutes and atmospheric cellos), many of my favorite songs are ones where the primary instrument is the acoustic or unprocessed electric guitar. I categorize these songs as "gorgeous." There are five in this collection that I have to mention here. "Pumpkin Postcard" is another fine example of WC Williams's "no ideas but in things." "Time Is Like a Dream at Dawn" (which abruptly ends... like a dream!) features Phillip Seymour Hoffman in the central role, which makes it twice as haunting as the arrangement does alone. "Kimono Flesh" features an acoustic opening that recalls to me "Taurus," written by the late Randy Wolfe of Spirit (unfortunately known by many only because of its connection to Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven"). "Janie Said" is an homage to similarly titled/themed songs by Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground. Then there is the electric version of "I Wish It Would Snow," which I have listened to 462 times since February 10, 2008. Since he never released it, he must have shared it with me while we were celebrating his birthday that year.

By now, I am sure you are seeing the interconnectedness of the styles, themes, and inspirations that go into the always-boiling pot that makes the Marble Tea. Nowhere are they more intertwined than in Knight's story songs—especially the ones with specific locations. “Raining California,” “To the Lake,” “Inlet,” and “Vanishing into the Sea” are all water-based. “Inlet” features the line “I’ll tell you a story,” while “Vanishing...” is a waltz with an Eastern European feel and a beautiful accordion accompaniment. “Why Can’t I Say What I Mean?” is sung by a man walking by the seashore; the chorus has an epic/anthemic energy, like the 1970s country/rock crossovers performed so memorably by Elvis.

Another song in this theme that is meta in its storytelling is “Falling,” with the line, “It’s like I told you.” Since Knight is an even better listener than he is a talker, he also gives us “316 (Moonglow Edition),” where, although the bridge is spoken word, the song references another singer as the star: “We were listening to David J.”

Full-on story-songs in this collection include “The Real’s So Hard to Find”—a raucous blues number about a cosmic traveler imprisoned on Earth, buoyed by a bit of slide guitar; “Homemade Sour Cream Coffee Cake”—the title is the hook as well as the chorus. I defy you not to sing along as you listen numerous times in a row, anticipating the button “And I’ll never be the same” each and every time. Deep-dive fans of the Marble Tea will recognize the thematic similarities to “TS Camelot” and “Cliff’s Stupendous Margaritas.” “Cheese,” about a trip to the photographer and then to pick up the prints at a one-hour drugstore development counter, is absolutely carnival-esque.

Two of the standout story-songs are also the most self-reflective and mournful: “Dinner at Six,” about the drudge of the workaday world (“another long day of reluctant diplomacy”) features slide guitar and some of Knight’s most evocative lyrics. Along the same lines is “Welcome to the Neighborhood,” a beautiful keyboard and acoustic guitar composition about a move, and the scariness of newness.

The subtitle of this essay, “A Lucky, Lovely Lover,” is a nod to Knight’s particular brand of quirky, perky pop when it’s time to sing about love. Although his love songs at times remind me of Jonathan Richman, the Magnetic Fields, Andrew Bird, and Lloyd Cole, with their jingly-jangly guitars, floor toms that suddenly scream The Monkees!, and need-a-careful-listen lyrics, nothing quite inspires *le cœur* like a love letter signed by the Marble Tea. Songs like “Lion Water Sign” and “Such a Beautiful Bird” (the latter of which at times sounds as though it is a duet *with an actual bird*) make me grateful to be in love; if I wasn’t, they’d make me want to be. “Don’t Look at Me that Way” has a bossa nova beat that puts it in the same realm as a previous release, “Who’s Been in Your Dreams.”

Of all the love songs in this collection, “Her Name is Pretty” is a highlight. I have been enjoying the electric, fully arranged version of this pop gem since 2012. Listen to this one with a good set of headphones because, although it is stripped down acoustic in its arrangement, some of the support instrumentation of the previously released version is whispering in the background. “Her Name is Pretty” also boasts one of my favorite Marble Tea lyric lines: “She’s loved a lot of men, and none of them were me, at least none of them were me until one of them just happened to be me... you know, not one of those guys over there.”

If you're new to the Marble Tea, that's the kind of high-end, "hey... did he just really craft that crazy, amazing line?" you can expect in just about every song.

You cannot consider the considerable body of work that Knight has produced in the past forty-some years without taking a serious look at his penchant for Mantric Wisdom. Like any worthy teacher you might meet on your spiritual journey, Knight gives us plenty of space to create our own meaning, implanting little MacGuffins—a term Alfred Hitchcock popularized for an object the hero is chasing—and weaving tapestries of character, tone, and melody that are also akin to fairy tales. In our nearly weekly Sunday morning gabfests, we talk about the importance of keeping our candles lit, our vibration high, and doing our art for the sake of the art without worrying too much about the outcomes. Or, as he sings in "The Whole Point," supported by wispy waves of cellos and horns: "And so it goes... I keep looking for a way to make my lows much higher than they are today."

Knight uses mantra-like lyric lines in many of his songs, some of which I've already mentioned. Sutras set to music, with the title text often the only lyrics, they are all about frequency and tonality. Examples include "Let's Play the Quiet Game," a mantric lullaby lasting 64 seconds, with a soothing music box arrangement and cool, cosmic keyboards. "Blueberry Blue" is the kind of song you might hear on the soundtrack to The Monkees's *Head*, with its psychedelic Far Eastern melodies and trippy *Oms* and *Ahs*. "Transit Ford in the Fourth Dimension" is an instrumental, except for the mantra: "I'm slowly coming through my skull and out my face." "Nothing but Nothing," "Nowhere Angel," and "Travel Light on Your Road" (cosmic hippie funk with signature Marble Tea sampling) also consist of

bare bones lyric-mantras. "Astronomers" is truly haunting.

This is not to say that Knight can't sustain a spiritual-philosophical theme beyond a single line. Songs like "The Buddha or the Bomb" feature traditional verse and chorus structures with lyrics worth extended contemplation: "Any thing I touch is being touched by a thing called me." In "Like Everyone," Knight takes John Lennon's comments on the Maharishi's less than honorable practices and flips them into the much more accurate and inclusive, "everybody and their monkey's got something to hide."

"Never Trust a Seagull (in Penguin Pajamas)" is another psychedelic tune reminiscent of The Monkees. I could easily imagine either Mickey or Peter singing it with gusto and panache. "Theoretically Being There" gives us big spiritual paradoxes delivered along fuzzy 1960s power chords and chaotic phasing with a hook reminiscent of the theme from *Sesame Street*.

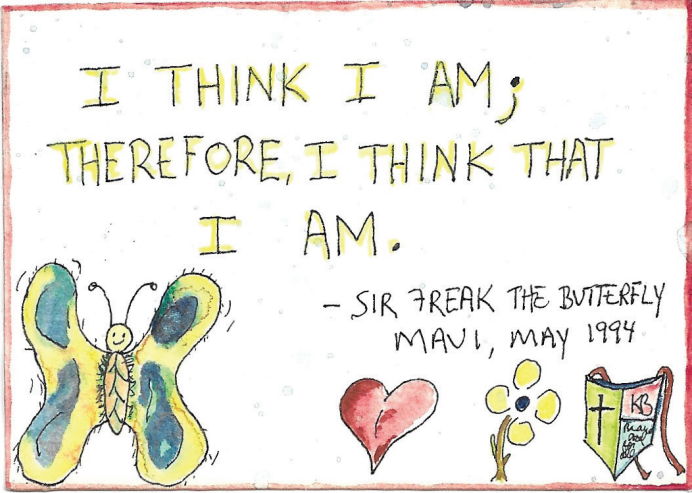
The last three songs I want to mention are ones that I've been listening to for years. "Love Bomb" is one of the first Marble Tea songs I ever heard, in 2002. "If Wishes Were Fishes" and "Life on the Moon" invite multiple listens to unpack fully their karma-cosmic Wisdom philosophy and lo-fi pop sensibilities.

Demolicious Man is Knight's gift to us on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. Give the gift of a listen to this collection, and let's let the Mantric Wisdom and Lucky, Lovely Love wash over us all in an eternal feedback loop of good vibes, lit candles, and energized cosmic communion.

Joey Madia
The Creative Cottage, Ohio
February 2022

LYRICS

01



An old 4-rack recording from the early 1990's. I'd just borrowed a Casio keyboard from a friend and had been listening to a Stuart Smalley meditation tape, so...

(Incidentally, Freak the Butterfly was what I was initially going to call this musical project before I settled on The Marble Tea).

[illegible]



02 Nowhere Angel

Written and recorded just days after David Bowie died, and a few of the lyrics were pulled from some of his songs as fragments for me to play with.

Don't let me hear you say life's
Taking you nowhere angel
The grass grows green where you cry
And if your present senses
Lead you through past intenses
The future's still standing by

From where your dreams are woven
And all your red hooves cloven
Your wings are still white and wide
But in the center there's a
Bright green reflecting mirror
You stand in front and inside
Uh oh

We're all looking for the Truth
But we're all looking through the lenses
Of these flesh vessel eyes
If we would raise our heads
And fly out from our well-made beds
We'd shake off logic, reason and lies

Uh oh uh oh uh oh
Uh oh uh oh uh oh

Up every evening when you
Give your complete attention
The loudest voice deep inside
The one behind it
Has another behind it
And they're all waiting their turn to drive
You outside

The Buddha or The Bomb

You've got left and right
 And you've got up and down
 Would you recognize silence
 If you didn't know sound?
 If I'm moving toward you
 I'm moving away from something else
 And anything I touch
 Is being touched by a thing (called me)

Black and white
 Day and night
 Right or wrong
 It's the Buddha or the bomb

Consciousness is renewable
 And evolving too
 Just look at the spaces in
 You think, you say, and you do
 Everything is vibrating
 But looks like sitting still
 And even destiny aligns
 To your own free will

Black and white
 Day and night
 Right or wrong
 It's the Buddha or the bomb

You've got left and right
 And you've got up and down
 How can anything intrude
 On your hallowed ground?
 Hallowed ground is everywhere



“The discoveries of modern science have no doubt given their own verdict of opposing alternatives – of either the Buddha or the bomb, for instance – and it is up to each of us to decide which path to follow.”

*–from Sri Aurobindo: Evolutionary Ideas Of Sri Aurobindo
 by Kishore Gandhi*

And everywhere is everything
 So what I do to you
 Circles 'round the ring (of life)

Black and white
 Day and night
 Right or wrong
 It's the Buddha or the bomb

04 Everywhere I Go I See You

You know how it is: you go to the bakery, there's that dude. You go to a show, there he is. You're standing in line at the DMV (for hours, I might add)...yup, he's there too. What is the meaning of this? This version is from a little CD I did called "2001: A Case of the Tea" that collected a bunch of songs I recorded that year.

Everywhere I go I see you
Everywhere I go I see you

You could be a centipede
I would find you on the street
It doesn't matter what you are or do
I will see you

Everywhere I go I see you
Everywhere I go I see you

You could be a piece of lint
I wouldn't even have to squint
It doesn't matter what you are or do
I will see you

Everywhere I go I see you
Everywhere I go I see you

You could be an antelope
I wouldn't even need a scope
It doesn't matter what you are or do
I will see you

I Wish It Would Snow (Electrically)

There's an acoustic version of this song on the Slave to the Tuna EP, but this more electric rendition first appeared on the aforementioned "2001: A Case of the Tea" CD. What's on offer here is the cleaned up version that Jeff Booth so graciously set his knobs to. Considering the state of my timing and singing, I think he pulled it far out of the mire!

She said,

"I wish it would snow all winter long
Because I need something fun to tickle my little tongue.
Oh, flurries are fine: dusting my face and glitter my hair,
But they're infrequent, just like my lovers,
And I'd rather just stay in bed...."

She said,

"I wish I could do whatever it is that you do."
Well, this forced him to laugh and re-evaluate everything.
"No, don't wear my shoes: I'm always tripping and stumbling about.
And even though they look like they fit
Well, they're really far too big...."

I never understood selective generosity
And why does the shame of the past
Govern my thoughts like a fog?

She said,

"I'm waiting for you down by the dock,
And I'm tempted to throw myself in to see what Shelley saw."
Are kind words enough for someone whose head may burst into flames?
And in her diary the words are all true
But it never seems the same:

I never understood selective generosity
And why does the shame of the past
Govern my thoughts like a fog?

06 Theoretically Being There

As Dr. Mystic and I have discussed, there's a plethora of theories out there about making your life what it should be, and most of them hold to the belief that it's important to see oneself vividly being where one wants to be in order to...be there. That's oversimplified, of course. Basically, thoughts precede action and all that. Wanna be a fireman? See yourself fighting those fires, complete with coat, axe, badge, and boots, and see it often. Rock Star? Tighten up those pants, lad, and strap on a six-string in your mind.

Anyway, our cat Cosmo brought this down to earth. When he was about to leap onto something unfamiliar, he stared at it intensely, vibrated for a moment, and then jumped successfully to his destination. Kate and I called this the See It...Be It Configuration. He saw where he wanted to be, and then he was there.

You can't be anywhere
If you're not already there

You've got to see where you want to be
If you want to be where you want to be
Coz

You can't be anywhere
If you're not already there

To the Lake

This feels to me like one of Eno's layered vocal type songs (as opposed to the ambient or "idiot energy" ones). Naturally, it didn't turn out exactly as I had envisioned, but I hope you will enjoy it nonetheless. Recorded around 2006.

She sits in her chair
While the old man has his paper and coffee
Her knees bent, feet on the seat
With a glare that could topple Qaddafi
The walls oh the wooden walls
How she wants to tear them down
With a cry to the glistening sky
To the lake without a sound

She waits for the rolling of shoulders
Revealing a subtle benign-ing
Half-dressed in her favorite suit
When she sees me at the window signing
So we go down, so we go down
So we go down to the lake
Through the brush and the brambles and such
That get tangled in my cape*

To the lake, to the lake

We stand at the edge of the lake
Like content little conquering warriors
Our screams as we dive in delight
Surely fade into neighboring foyers
Mary Mae, Mary Mae, Mary Mae
Won't you take me in your fort
In the light till the coming of night
Till the autumn ships de-port...

* because I'm Batman, you see...

Good in Black

08

I used to bunk with a triumphant feline named Sidney The Mega-Cat who was feared far & wide around the apartment complex in which we lived in the late 80s, but who also suffered extreme bouts of abstract melancholia. When we took walks together, he'd never hesitate to enter a neighboring apartment, nonchalantly gliding past the hissing resident cat with a smirk. He was big and brave and fearless, but on other days he'd only sit and stare, that giant mug stuck in silent contemplation of the stereo's VU meters while I wrote songs about girls.

Sidney sits and stares all day at the stereo
I joined him today, I think I'll stay, I like it
He never says too much,
I wonder what he's thinking
Does he need affection?

I know all about that affection thing
Or lack of it
Do you, I know you do
You know I meant to tell you:
You look good in black
You look good in black

Sidney has a special way and a certain foe
I watched him today keep it at bay, amazing
You never see those things coming
That'll take you down
But you get a feeling

I know all about those creepy little
Comin' up kinda things
Do you, uh huh oh yeah

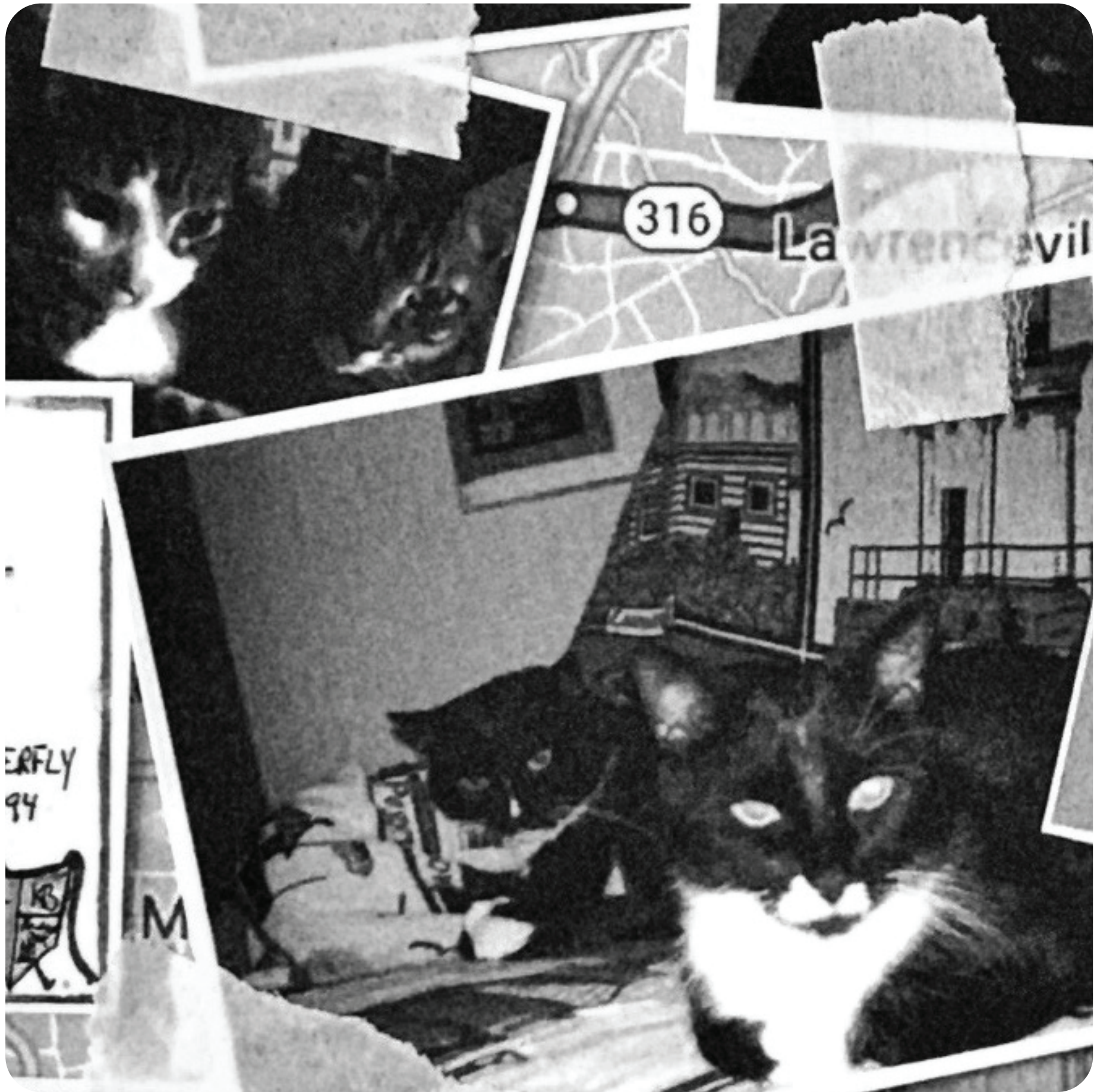
I was going to tell you:

You look good in black
From the front, the side and the back
While you're dressing, I'm requesting
That you put on the black

Sidney sits and stares all day at the stereo
I joined him today, I think I'll stay, I like it
He never says too much, I wonder what he's thinking
You look good in black
You look good in black

Zambiland, Zambiland...

Interiors
Amp Radio
Magic Fortune Teller
Rainbow



09 Love Bomb

A peaceful protest song of sorts. Look to the cookie, Elaine. Look to the cookie. Another one from the “2001: A Case of the Tea” CD

Drop a Love Bomb, baby
Drop a Love Bomb, baby

We’re suiting up for those fighter jets
With a can of tuna and all our pets

Drop a Love Bomb, baby
Drop a Love Bomb, baby

People all over the world are starving
We’ll give ‘em affection with a Love Bomb bombing

Drop a Love Bomb, baby
Drop a Love Bomb, baby

Get out and go make it happen
Take the world in a Cosmo love embrace

Drop a Love Bomb, baby
Drop a Love Bomb, baby

There’s no sense in fighting about it
Everyone’s excited about it

Drop a Love Bomb, baby
Drop a Love Bomb, baby

You Can't Believe What You're Doing

"I can't believe you did that!"

*I like phrases like that because, depending upon the situation
and tone of voice, it could be either a good thing or a bad thing
Even more intriguing is when it's both a good thing and a bad
thing. This one's probably from around 2009.*

You can't believe what you're doing
You can't believe

When you watched it grow
Did you ever even know
You would learn to love it so

And you can't believe what you're doing
You can't believe

When you let it out
Did you ever have a doubt
You would soar above the clouds
And you do...

You're dancing like an egalitarian
You flutter like a Beatle too
Your hands are comets in darkened skies
And they're orbiting you

When you watched it die
Did you ever wonder why
You were taken by its lie

And you can't believe what you're doing
You can't believe

11

Good Gracious Baby

A Southerner (was it Lewis Grizzard?) once described the difference between being “naked” and being “nekkid” like this: being “naked” means you have no clothes on, while being “nekkid” means you have no clothes on and you’re up to something. Apt, I suppose. This song is just a rollicking appreciation of my love, pseudo-hillbilly style. Also from the “2001: A Case of the Tea” CD.

I’ve been to the north
And I’ve been to the south
I’ve been to the east and the west
I’ve been to the mountain
Reaching to the sky
I’ve even been nekkid in a vest

I’ve lived on a couch
And I’ve slept in some cars
I’ve sailed in a boat on the sea
I’ve puked stinkin’ drunk
In the middle of a bar
I’ve prayed down on both of my knees

But I’ve never seen a girl
So gracious and good
Good gracious baby you’re so good
There’s never a doubt
As to what you’re all about
Good gracious baby you’re so good

I’ve swam in the mud
And I’ve ate at the ritz
I’ve stirred margaritas by a pool
I’ve held my head high
In the middle of a crowd
I’ve slumped in a chair like a fool

But I’ve never seen a girl
As gracious and good
Good gracious baby you’re so good
There’s never a doubt
As to what you’re all about
Good gracious baby you’re so good



12 Janie Said

Also from the “2001: A Case of the Tea” CD, though written several years earlier, I always envisioned this one as more of a dirge, or at least a very depressing piano tune, but it came out in a much less distressing manner.

Janie said to me
You know I’m just having fun
While I’m still young
But nobody told her
That you don’t have to be young to play
Well I know she knows
Certain things are important
And these things are getting over me
But I don’t think she cares

I went for a walk
I talked at the trees
I felt like the tin man
I needed a heart
I sat in the grass
And drew up some leaves
Then I cried so many tears

What do you want from your life
Why do the things you do
That’s what he said to me
When he came back from the institute
Well I know he knows
I’m strung out like a disease
And it’s killing me gradually
I need to get away

I thought about her
I thought about me
I thought of the clothes
And the paintings and toys
I thought about everything
I ever knew
Then I cried so many tears

Janie said to me
You know that nothing lasts forever
And that’s a fact
And I can’t spend my whole life
Just trying to get things back
Well I know she knows
The days go by like a dream
And I’ll always be somberly
Wishing them away

Life on the Moon

I'd really rather not live on the moon... Mars might be kind of cool, though. Recorded in 2007.

Life on the moon
Has got to be better than this
No one can call
Or even send packages
No one to kiss and then miss
No one to kiss and then miss

Like Everyone

As is often the case, I wanted to write a song with a positive message and, while this one ultimately does I think, it comes off a little negative. But that's just the initial impression I hope.

From the February Album Writing Month (FAWM) challenge of 2011, where you write AND record 14 songs in 28 days.

It doesn't matter if your mother is a Catholic
It doesn't matter if your father is one too
It doesn't matter if you're living in a castle
It doesn't matter if you're living in a zoo

You're alone like everyone
Everyone's alone like you
You're alone like everyone
Everyone is just like you

It doesn't matter if your face is uncertain
It doesn't matter if your smile is three miles wide
It doesn't matter if you think you've got it figured out
Everybody and their monkey's got something to hide

You're not alone like everyone
Everyone is just like you
You're not alone like everyone
Everyone is just like you

Are you like everyone?

15 **Homemade Sour Cream Coffee Cake**

I like food, and sometimes it's worth singing about don't you think?

There are a couple of word choices here that make me cringe a bit, though.

Also from the FAWM challenge of 2011.

I was feeling kind of down when I pulled into town
I was looking for something to turn me around
I walked into a coffee shop I'd never seen before
And that's where I found what I was looking for

They had couches and chairs and some art on the wall
And they were playing my favorite song by The Fall
Everyone seemed friendly tho I don't know how I knew it
I guess it's intuition, yeah I'm really into it

I slid to the counter to survey the fare
Muffins and pastries and cakes were all there
I didn't even need to see the menu on the wall
'Cause here was a fine cake that trumped them all

It was a
Homemade sour cream coffee cake
Homemade sour cream coffee cake
Homemade sour cream coffee cake
And I'll never be the same

I ordered it up and I took it with me
To the center of the room so everybody could see
The glory & the splendor of this magical choice
Coffee cake delicious with a center so moist

It was a
Homemade sour cream coffee cake
Homemade sour cream coffee cake
Homemade sour cream coffee cake
And I'll never be the same

A Great Moving Wave of Bliss

Certain songs of Brian Eno's feel to me like electronic hymns, and I don't think that's a bad thing to have in this world, whether secular or spiritual. Recording this in 2011 allowed me to play my gnat guitar, which appears about midway through this song. Yes, Charlotte...gnats are beautiful too.

Nodding musically to Eno, and mangling a poem by Evelyn Underhill...I guess it's kind of what we do around here.

A great moving wave of bliss,
Down the sheer and fathomless
Abyss of being pours.

Inlet

Another exercise in repetition. Another exercise in repetition. I dream of one day writing a song with no repetitive elements. A song that grows, as Virgil Thomson has said, like a plant, organically flowering from root to stem to limbs stretching toward the Sun. A natural progression that builds upon itself and then takes leave of its previous melody and rhythm.

This sketch is about something that may or may not have happened. It certainly could have I suppose, and possibly did somewhere. Recorded 2009, I believe.

Will you walk with me
Down to the inlet
I'll show you the boats
I'll tell you a story

Here's where the wind blew hard
And here's where the waves crashed in
And here's where the ship went down
And here's where the men fell in

It seems so safe here
Down at the inlet
But you never know
How fast things can change

Here's where the sharks appeared
And here's where the full moon moaned
And here's where the sea turned red
So close to home....

18 Kimono Flesh

Originally, this one comprised an entire poem called “kimono/fingernails,” so if the sombre tone of the song doesn’t seem to fit the sexy lyrics, just know that the singer’s appreciation for the beauty at hand was short-lived. This is another one from the “2001: A Case of the Tea” CD.

A silk kimono
Colored blue, green and gold
Lights your naked flesh
Dims the ever-glowing t.v.

19 If Wishes Were Fishes

Pardon me for being an old hippie, but I think that in much the same way Love can wound or heal, Vision can be a prison or it can be freedom. How do you see the grass, Glasshopper? Probably recorded in 2007.

If wishes were fishes
Then dreamers would fish
For wishes and fishes
And dishes delish
And I’d still be in a boat
Out on the ocean

If money was honey
It’d hang from a tree
Like honey but money
And all very free
Would you still stick your paws
Down in my wallet?

Don’t get any ideas about my beehive
Don’t get any ideas about my fish

If oranges were violent
We’d all be surprised
We’d put them in cages
And run for our lives

Maybe they’re not dangerous
Just different

If lovers were dolphins
They’d never say ‘No’
They’d always be happy
And ready to go
Would I keep dangling worms
Into the water?

Don’t get any ideas about my oranges
Don’t get any ideas about my girl

If doctors were lawyers
They’d put us on trial
Disease is illegal
Buy your health in a vial
Maybe we should reassess
Those fishes

If vision was prison
Well maybe it is....

Nothing But Nothing

I felt like writing a droney Velvet Underground type number, but this came out sounding more like the Black Angels I think. Which isn't bad as I really love them too. Of course, not nearly in the same league goes without saying. I am trying to sing like Ian Curtis ha ha.

Another from the FAWM challenge of 2011.

You were afraid of
Nothing but nothing

Her Name Is Pretty (Original Version)

A silly yet heartfelt song that's as much about the ill effects guilt and cigarettes can have on our bodies as it is about dancing in the kitchen while The Monkees play on the stereo. A delightfully confusing time.

Early 1990's 4-track recording of this song that finally appeared on the "Truman's Hat" EP.

Her name is pretty
And we know each other well
In fact we know each other well
Than anyone else thinks that we know
Each other well that is

Her hair is very red
And her skin is very pale
Her eyes are like the secrets
That you tell when you're in jail
I've got 2 litre dreams
And a case of missing wood
But it doesn't mean that I don't think
The things she does are good
Just ask her

She's loved a lot of men
But none of them were me
At least none of them were me
Until one of them just happened to be me
You know, not one of them

Her humor's very strange
Her obsession's very strong
Her tape collection's bigger
Than the eggrolls in hong kong
I've got 200 bucks
And a bed that's on the way
But it doesn't look like I'll be sleeping
As a team today
Maybe tonight

Her name is pretty
And we know each other well
In fact we know each other well
Than anyone else thinks that we know
Each other well

22

Travel Light On Your Road

Just a mantra for freeing up your mind and your body as you take your journey down life's lonely and exciting highway.

Travel light on your road

Travel light on your road

Doo doo

Doo doo



23 Wild Turkey

I don't really drink anymore, but when I do I still prefer whiskey to anything else out there. Except maybe vodka. Or tequila. Or beer.

Another from the FAWM 2011 challenge. Short and not so sweet.

Wild Turkey

Wild Turkey

Wild Turkey

Give me back my dinner, evil fowl.

24 Temporarily Not the K - Man

Oh you know, just the usual: being pissed off at Republicans and FOX News back in 2008.

My friend Eric, he's got a pretty good job

He works in a bottle shop and he drives a Volvo

He's a sensible guy, he's a very fair man

So it came as no surprise when I heard he took a stand against The Man

He was working alone one night for about the seventh time

Because the company didn't think it was necessary to pay a back-up

As these things go you know, he was gettin' a little hungry

'Cause we all know you gotta have fuel if you wanna work in this country

Temporarily not the K-man anymore

So he locked the door for a minute and he shuffled down the street

Everybody needs a minute to whizz and get something to eat, isn't that right?

Well, people were mad because they couldn't get inside and get their booze

When the company found out they said, "Eric, my friend, you lose."

They suspended him without pay

Temporarily not the K-man anymore

It's the rule within this mighty nation that if you've got a corporation
Well sir, you've got an obligation to earn a profit no matter what the cost
Now this creates a culture based on greed that doesn't always recognize the human need
And when it permeates society, well brother then we're lost

Temporarily not the K-man anymore

Eric's a fine American, just like me
He's not a fan of George Bush or Dick Cheney
He thinks that war is wrong even in a world this sick
If you think that's unpatriotic, well you can suck my....

Eric eventually lost his job after they kicked him around for a couple of weeks
That's a couple of weeks without money and you need money if you want to eat
These fat cats strolling through their corporate vestibules think their workforce is just cattle
Yeah, they think they're mules, but they're not [insert Bob Dylan reference here]

So let this be a lesson my friends in the way this world's become
You're just a means to an end, you're not any-one
And as you ponder it all and think to yourself What is This?
Remember the words of the man with the tie who said, "It's just business."

Goodbye to Summer (Version)

Summer was ending when I wrote this many moons ago, but it came out being more about the transition from shorts and sandals to slacks and loafers, the unfortunate discarding of childhood for the suited life of maturity. Where, I'll never do that again! A different version of this song appears on the "Jersey Shoreline" release.

I remember the waves on the beach
How they knocked me over
Like the Miracle Strip
With the sand in your suit
Swimming time for you is over

Good-bye to summer
Say it isn't so
Slacks and umbrellas
Summer has to go
It has to go

All the jellyfish on the sand
Like clear blue piles of dogshit
And the shrimp in the beer
And the snake in the box
Uncle Monster lurking somewhere

Where's your choice for sleeping tonight
By the open ocean window
There's the smell of the house
We were all in the shower
We all knew each other well then

Good-bye to summer
Say it isn't so
Rep ties and blue blazers
Summer has to go
It has to go

Never Trust a Seagull (In Penguin Pyjamas)

I write in order to hear; never do I hear and then write what I hear. Inspiration is not a special occasion.

~ John Cage (from Silence)

An experiment with reassigning midi instruments from 2011.

It's not the same
As the song of the bird in your hair
It's not the same
As the song of the bird in your hair

And I don't and I don't
And I can't forget
And I don't and I don't
And I can't forget

It's not the same
As the bird of the song in your hair
It's not the same
As the bird of the song in your hair

And I don't and I don't
And I can't forget
And I don't and I don't
And I can't forget

27 The Quiet Game

When I was a young lad and my family would pile into the car for a long trip, my sister and I would – as children do – be quite loud and obnoxious in the backseat throughout the journey, deprived as we were of any of the usual stimulations and attention required by those of that age. (This was long before we even dreamed of having a portable DVD player to calm us.) In what was to be at once a successful and beautiful stroke of genius, my parents told us how to play “The Quiet Game” which was a very simple game to play in that whoever made any sound first lost.

Determined to be winners, my sister and I shut up for long stretches at a time, much to our parents’ delight, though we weren’t beyond trying to trick each other into laughing or screaming. Naturally, the rules were modified a little to prohibit any touching or prodding of the other contestant.

I’ve never been the quickest bullet out of the gun, but years passed before I realized the true purpose of that game, presented as it was in the spirit of fun. Both of my parents acted in the local theatre, so I’m sure that didn’t dampen their persuasive skills....

Anyway, one of the things that stayed with me from Haruki Murakami’s book “The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle” was the magic achieved by the protagonist during his imaginative time spent sitting alone at the bottom of a deep, dark, quiet well. A place of silence and sensory deprivation, where he was able to, if not unravel the mysteries of his life, at least journey through them toward some resolution.

This recording is basically me droning over some effected loops in 2007.

Let’s play
The Quiet Game
Let’s play
The Quiet Game



Carry A Lamp

You think that people would have had enough of silly love songs. I've never particularly been a fan. I mean sure, they're very nice and everything, but after a while it all sounds the same, and besides, there are plenty of other topics to explore that might offer something new to think about, eh? Meh, I'm a heartless old fool...but it wasn't always this way back in 1986, when Blond Pospsicle recorded this song. This version recorded 2011.

If I fell for you
Would you love me true
Would you never make me sad

I've been in love before
I always needed something more
Something more than I had

Carry a lamp
Carry a torch for your love yeah
Carry a lamp
A torch for your love

If I gave you all
Would you let me fall
Would you treat me like your own

I've tried many times
I never saw the signs
Never saw the signs toward home

Carry a lamp
Carry a torch for your love yeah
Carry a lamp
A torch for your love

29 **Don't Look At Me That Way**

Written and recorded one afternoon at Mau's place in Brooklyn in the early 2000's while he was off on an errand, using my new-at-the-time iBook with GarageBand, his old guitar and the built-in computer mic. No headphones were involved and no animals were harmed.

She said

Don't look at me that way

Well at least that's what

She would have said

If she knew what I was thinking



30 Cheese

“This song is boring, out of tune, and thoughtless. The lyrics are trite, senseless and confusing and the vocalist cannot carry a tune.”

Despite that encouraging review - which may or may not have been about this song - I continued to make hissy 4-track recordings throughout the 90s and eventually worked my way up to the computer...which took away some of the hiss, I suppose.

Today I had my picture taken
Today I had my soul stole
Today it went into a camera
And landed on the film roll

We took it to the drugstore quickly
Development in just one hour
It's rare that these things often happen
But when they do it's Action Tower

I sat around oblique and friendly
Unaware I was un-whole
My friends took care of all the details
And soon they had the prints in tow

They put them in my hands discretely
And magnetism did its job
It filtered through the waxy colors
And I had what was almost robbed

Cheese

Transit Ford in the Fourth Dimension

In 2009, I was wondering if there are dimensions within dimensions.

I'm slowly coming through my skull and out my face.

I'm slowly coming through my skull and out my face.

31

Suburban Girls on Tranquilizers

Or perhaps "they feel kinda sexy, but they look pretty dumb." You know the look: droopy eyes, funhouse mirror faces. I rather dig it sometimes....

Yes it's true. I never had a synthesizer back in the 80s and I was experiencing a mid-life crisis. Wouldn't you? This one's from 2006.

Yeah they look kinda sexy

But they feel pretty dumb

Yeah they look kinda sexy

But they feel pretty dumb

Suburban Girls on Tranquilizers

Suburban Girls on Tranquilizers

32

33 Old Letter Opener

There was an outpouring of songs when my father died, and they live in various states of completion and predictability. Here's one about the letter opener I watched him use since I was kid (it had been his father's before him), and which I now count as one of my most valuable possessions. This noisy and quickly recorded little rascal is from 2007.

I'm looking at an old letter opener
It's got to be 45 or 50 years old
The handle has your father's name engraved upon it
It's made of silver but in my opinion it's gold

The handle's kind of worn from your hands upon it
I can feel the imprint of your fingers where they would bend
As you opened up your correspondence with glee or horror
And I'm sure on occasion with some indifference

This was your father's key to the letters
It was your key too for a while
Now it's mine, and I'll keep it here with me
To open the letters that'll never come from you again.



34 Hey! You in the Tuxedo!

Christmastime always reminds me of all the debutante balls thrown in my hometown, and the fun we had putting on tuxedos and getting drunk and into trouble as the chilly nights arrived. I'm sure the girls were excited for their society debuts but – sorry ladies – my crowd never paid much attention to that part of the festivities. Our first words uttered upon arriving at the galas and shaking hands in greeting were inevitably “Where’s the bar?” And that, my friends, always set the tone for the evening.

But this is another song about my dad. He was the Master of Ceremonies for one of the finer balls in town, and I was always thrilled and proud to see him up there doing his thing. It seemed perfectly natural as he was always a ringleader and a center of focus in any crowd. As my Uncle Bryant said, “He does fill up a room.”

Hey, you in the tuxedo
Well you’re looking so
So debonair

Every eye’s on you
As you make your way
Through the room
But what else could they do?

Hey, you in the tuxedo
Well you’re looking so
So debonair

Every eye’s on you
As you fill up the room
It’s just that thing that you do

Where’s the bar, show me
Where’s the bar, where’s the bar
Show me, show me the bar

Hey, you in the tuxedo
Well you’re looking so
So debonair



35 Time is Like a Dream at Dawn

I have a real problem with time, besides there never being enough of it. For one thing, I can't wear watches because there's some weird electro-magnetic current situation in my body that always causes them to quit working. It's true, and not a particularly rare condition from what I understand.

I have a real problem with time. However, I've always felt Philip Seymour Hoffman would've made a delightful Cheshire Cat. This song is from 2007, when he was still alive.

She wants to make a movie
Based on the life of her cat named Cole
And she wants Philip Seymour Hoffman
In the title role.
But these things take time
And time is like a dream at dawn
It's gone by the time you wake.

Welcome to the Neighborhood

Here's a song based on my friend Cliff's experience moving our friend Lisa Marie up from Montgomery to Atlanta several years ago. As these things generally go, the lyrics are a combination of separate events, and I'll have to admit that Cliff was somewhat disappointed that they didn't reflect the seedier aspects of the situation. I'm inclined to agree, but was pulled in the direction of writing a fairly "safe" laid-back country-ish tune this time around. 2006 for this one, I believe.

I moved Lisa Marie into the gay ghetto
On a snowy afternoon
Three flights of stairs
And three hundred odd miles
Thank you Jesus we're alive

She says to me
Oh what am I to do now
With no money and
My boyfriend still a year away?

Lisa Marie
Lisa Marie
Lisa Marie
Someone's standing at your door

Hi, my name is Dan
I live downstairs from you
Pardon my mascara
I've been crying too
Where are you from?
It doesn't matter
I want to share something
Share something so good
(Take this)
Welcome to the neighborhood

Welcome to the neighborhood
Welcome to the neighborhood
It's cold as hell
And the hallway smells
But welcome to the neighborhood

37 Lion Water Sign

When I wrote the first verse of this song some number of years ago – and there it sat, as they do, for many many forgotten days, until it finally stood up one weekend in August of 2008 and shouted, “Finish me!” – the dangerously little knowledge I possess of astrology had me presuming that I, as an Aquarian, was a water sign, due to the depictions of carrying around water and all that. I mean, it makes sense right? Wrong, Winston Tong. I am an air sign, as are the rest of you wet and watery Aquarians out there (and you know who you are). Well dry me off and call me Fluffy...you do learn something new every day, don't you?

You are a lion, and I am a water sign
I think things are looking good
You are a lion, and I am a water sign
I think things are looking good

When you start to roar
And I call you a bore
We're on our way

You are a nightgown, and I am your thorny crown
I think Heaven's smiling now
You are a knightgown, and I am your thorny crown
I think Heaven's smiling now

When you dress me up
And I hand you the cup
We're on our way

There has got to be no reason for it all
But it doesn't mean there doesn't have to be
If you feel like throwing metal forks around
Well then go ahead....

You are a prayer, and I want to be the mayor
I think we could win this town
You are a prayer, and I want to be the mayor
I think we could win this town

When you start to rise
And there's less nay's than aye's
We're on our way

You are a knick-knack, and I am a bric-a-brac
I think we are on display
You are a knick-knack, and I am a bric-a-brac
I think we are on display

When you flash your ass
And I smash through the glass
We're on our way

There has got to be no reason for it all
So just go ahead....

Listening to Richard Brautigan

Somehow many years ago I acquired a cassette dupe of the "Listening to Richard Brautigan" record, and was surprised by the sound of Brautigan's voice, an almost cartoonish sound that was much different from the one I had imagined narrating all those books of his I'd read. It was deep yet innocent, awkward almost, like a child inside a large bear costume unicycling mischievously and recklessly through a formal ballroom dinner party. Once I was over the shock, I enjoyed it and even found a strange comfort in it.

And so I began to write this song. But years passed and I'd revisit it now and again, changing something here, adding something there, waiting for the right context for it before I committed to finishing it. Circumstances finally aligned in 2012 and the deed was done.

He wrote mini-poems about life's miniature things
 Read them in a voice not unlike hippos sprouting wings
 You could almost feel devout again
 Listening to Richard Brautigan

He lived way out west between the hippies and the beats
 He was really tall so I assume he had big feet
 He was up & out and down & in
 And his name was Richard Brautigan

Can you see the sea a tidal wave of pumpkins rollin'
 Can you feel the way her body looks and write it down
 Were the deeds done and then done again as your life is done
 Can you burn a song and as it melts describe the sound

He would be your catfish friend and drive sad thoughts away
 Hitchhike across Galilee in an old Model A
 Watch her long blonde beauty play with gentle glass and things
 Shadows of the wild birds of heaven and their black wings
 "God lives like music in the skin,
 And sounds like a sunshine harpsichord."

He died in Bolinas back in 1984
 He escaped steel spiderwebs by blowing down the door
 Kisses in a vase at dawn again
 Save them all for Richard Brautigan

39 **Blueberry Blue (Early Version)**

Early 4-track recording. Either this version or another may have appeared on the “2001: A Case of the Tea” CD but I’m not sure.

Raja Raja. An attempt to be Hindu and find a place where blue extends beyond sadness and well into the orchard. Deliciously overwrought.

Blueberry Blue

Very blueberry blue

Very blueberry blue

Very blue

316 (How High the Moon Version)

When I lived off Ponce de Leon Ave in Atlanta, I used to joke that Athens was just down the street since you could basically take Ponce (and its various name changes) all the way into that feisty little college town. But then GA Hi-way 316 came along, and that changed everything

The original version of this song appears on the “Jersey Shoreline” CD, and I’d wanted to re-record it ever since. I finally seized my chance in December 2008 in what started out as an innocent test to see if I could get my microphone working properly (if it didn’t – and the little cylinder had been giving me trouble for some time – I only had till the last day of that month/year to get a great deal on a new one). Before I knew it, I had fallen headlong into recording this song. It still hasn’t quite gotten up to snuff, and even now in 2022 I can’t quite get the harshness out of the spoken part.

We were listening to Urban Urbane by David J
And you had the world tattooed upon your body
And heaven is a place in your head
Everything else is incidental

When night came inhibitions fell
Like autumn leaves
So we drove and drove and drove
Along the highway
And as you gave yourself to the moon
You flickered on and off in headlights

Lonely moon sends flowers
To the streetlights
He sees up their skirt
With his shiny shoes
They blush for a moment
And then they sigh
They don’t mind
Because he’s the moon

41

My Little Animals

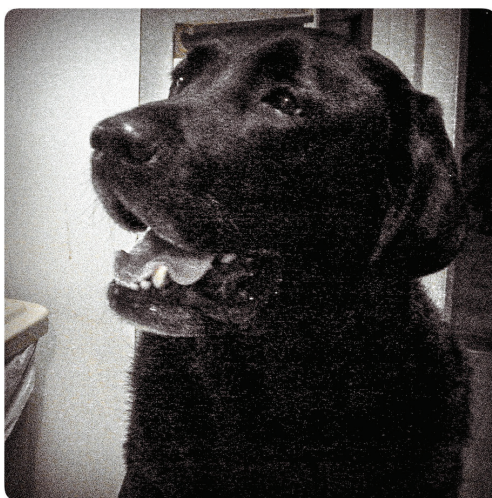
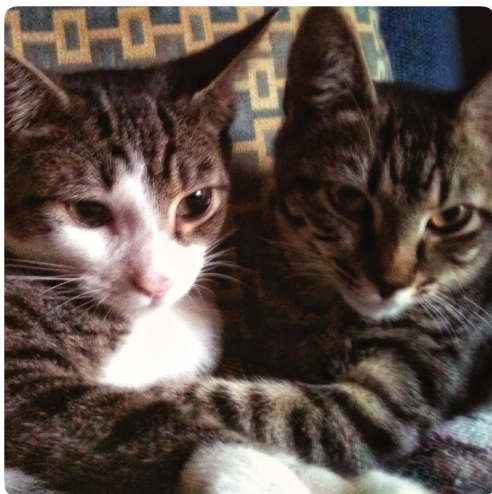
Must...love...the...little...ones. 2008.

My little animals

My little animals

My little animals

I love you



Why Can't I Say What I Mean? (Glowing Water Version)

Have you ever had the experience with certain people that no matter when you happen to talk with them you always end up saying the stupidest things? No? Well this song isn't really about that anyway....

The original version of this appears on the 2004 "I'm Batman" EP, but I didn't understand about recording to a click track at that time so I wanted to re-record it with better timing. Plus, Joey misheard one of the lyrics as being about the water glowing, and I liked that so I incorporated it into the song's second verse.

After every conversation
I feel just like a fool
And there's no consolation
In the things that I do

So I take a walk along the seashore
Feel the sand in my toes
Stare out into the water
Until it goes

And the waves roll in
And the waves roll out
And the breeze blows by me

It's thoughtful of the blue sky
To turn cloudy gray
And if no one listens to me
Have I anything to say

So I take a walk along the seashore
Feel the sand in my toes
Stare out into the water
Until it glows

And the waves roll in
And the waves roll out
And the breeze blows by me
Everyday



43 **Checks in the Mail**

Another noisy 4-track demo from the 90s.

I can't wait to get my checks in the mail
I can't wait to get my checks in the mail
I can't wait to get my checks in the mail
I can't wait to get my checks in the mail

It's a record of what I spend
I could spend it on a record
It's a way to keep things in order
It's a way to keep me north of the border
It's a book with numbers and lines
Scraps of paper for the money that's mine
I don't have to be a cash-toting man
I'll have a bank in the palm of my hand

It's a record of what I spend
I could spend it on a record!

Dinner at Six

I used to think it was funny that my girlfriend (now wife) liked to eat at 6PM (so early!). Now I've gotten used to it and even enjoy it.

This was written and recorded quickly for that FAWM thing in 2011 that I was telling you about earlier. Wish I'd spent a little more time on the lyrics, but I was thinking about Luna a bit with those electric guitar parts.

Dinner at Six

Well that sounds just about right to me
It's been another long day of reluctant diplomacy
I could use a hearty meal, I worked through lunch again
Something warm would be so good
In this cold mid-winter rain

Dinner at Five?

That would be too early
Well, maybe not for the Ropers and Mr. Ralph Furley
But we're younger than them
And our hunger begins on a different time-rate
But we're getting old and time is time for every primate

Dinner at Eight

That's a little late, don't you think darlin'?
We need some time to sit up straight, at least until Ten
Dinner at Six

That sounds just about right to me
It's been another long day, and I'm already hungry

April May I

Written and recorded on the last day of April, 2009 because I had made a commitment to release a song before the month was over.

April May I?

46 You Really Piss Me Off

Not sure if this is an early 2000's or a late 1990's attempt at singing like Transformer-era Lou Reed. In either case, I'd like to apologize for the harshness of the recording and the lapse of judgement on my part.

You really piss me off
When you don't do the things that you say you'll do
You really piss me off
When you don't act like I want you to

You really piss me off
When you tell me you're not going out with him
You really piss me off
When you lie to me again and again

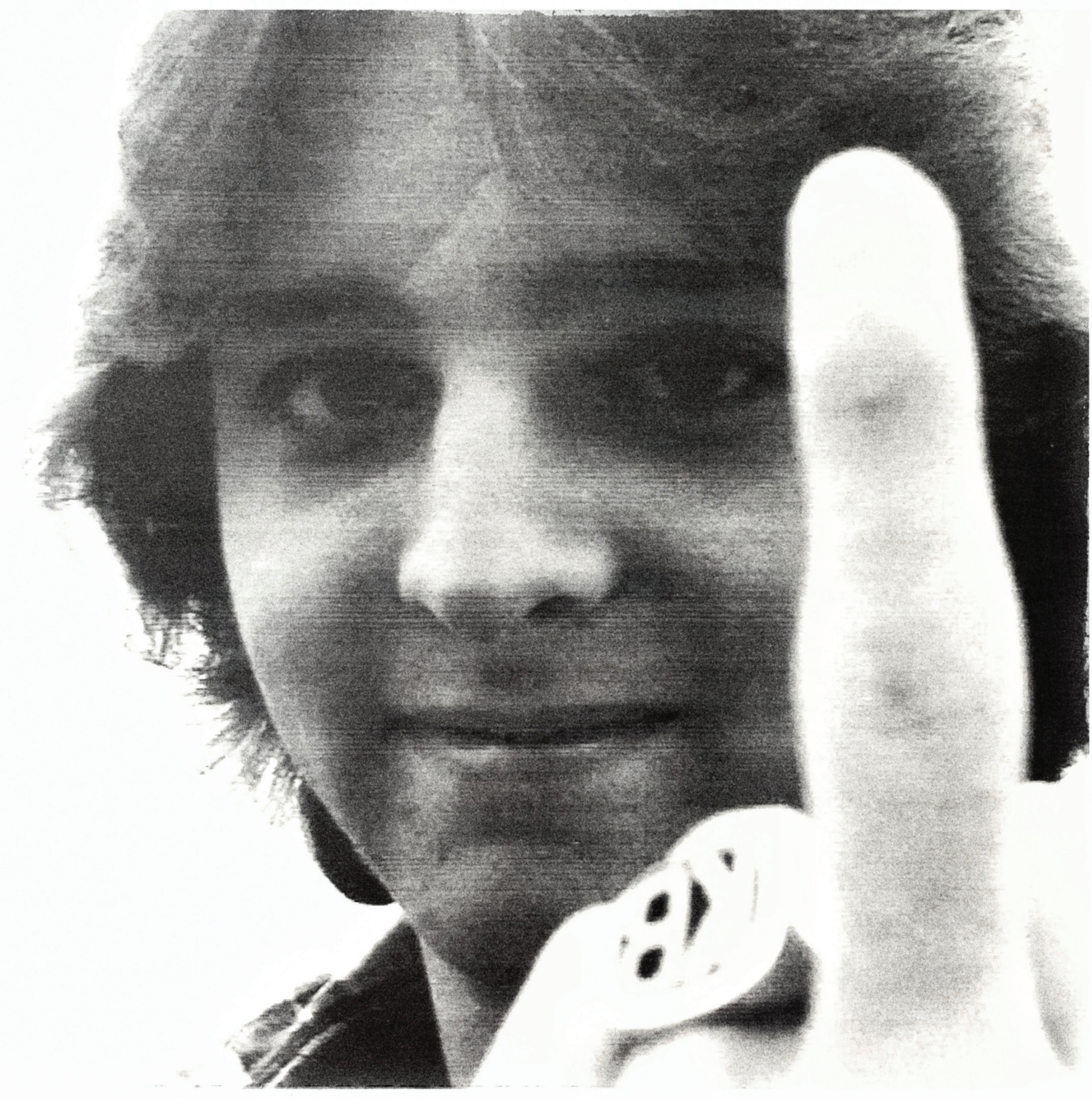
But I tell ya
If I had a million wishes
I'd wish a million times
That I never really cared

You really piss me off
When you take my car and stay gone for hours
You really piss me off
When you try to make it up with flowers

You really piss me off
When you act like that when we're shooting pool
You really piss me off
When you hold court from your big bar stool

If I had a million dollars
I'd spend every last dime
Drinking you out of my life

You really piss me off
You really piss me off



47 Falling (Even the Angels)

The revelation hit me hard once, as I lay in the grass looking up at the sky, that I was in reality looking out at the sky – much as a magnet stuck on the fridge is looking out at your kitchen – and I swear to you I became dizzy with the thought of suddenly catapulting out into space if gravity decided to unexpectedly give up the ghost. And who's to say it won't one day? You can't take these things for granted, you know.

Anyway, it was autumn and one of the best things about that as a kid was playing in the piles of leaves on the edges of suburban lawns, the sweet smell of Fall all around. When the air's just right, you can see the angels sparkling in front of you like tiny white fireflies. Oh you'll blink your eyes thinking it's a trick of the light, but they're there all right – dancing and winging about elusively and challenging your ability to hold them in your site, taking the pleasure with the pa-pa-pa-pain.

A very early recording that I had hoped to have another go at one day.

We took a blanket and laid it down
Smoothed out the grass beneath
Like icing
Untied our shoes and then
Tied up our arms
Stuck to the side of the world
We looked out to the sky around

And there were angels dancing
But we didn't know what they were
So we laughed until they ran

It's like I told you
There's pain in humility
And even the angels will tell you

We had a magnolia in Cloverdale
The street smelled like autumn
For so long
Into the leaves we fall
Into the leaves
Over and under again never thinking
Of falling out

And then the angels brightened
Just like they were lightening bugs
So we tried to touch their hands

It's like they told us
There's much to be sorry for
And even the angels will tell you



48 Pumpkin Postcard



I received a postcard once that had a picture of all these little kids dressed in crazy animal Halloween costumes, and they were splayed about someone's yard amongst a smattering of pumpkins. It looked like they (the kids and the pumpkins) had all been thrown there haphazardly by some giant hand, and it kind of freaked me out. Sometimes when I get freaked out I write a song, like I did in October of 2006.

It looks like someone was rolling dice
But instead of dice
They were rolling pumpkins
I guess they had to be very big
Bigger than anyone that ever lived
'Cause that's a lot of pumpkins
And they're all over the yard

What's that in the pumpkins
Scattered and battered too
A penguin and a bunny
A zebra, a bumblebee
There're some things that I don't recognize
One of them looks like it probably flies
And they're gathered in the pumpkins
All over the yard

The Real's So Hard to Find (Demo)

One morning I woke up with the feeling that perhaps I was some kind of alien creature that had committed a crime, and my punishment was to live a human life. So I wrote this song as part of a Fegmanix project where the members would write songs for other members to cover.

There's a short in the helmet, I see I'm in a cell
And I'm not who I thought, this isn't going very well
Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no

Like a bee in a bonnet, I'm bouncing off the walls
I was drinking limoncello, now I'm not human at all
Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no

Everything that I thought was real is just pixels in my mind
What's the point of reality when the real's so hard to find

There's a flash on my mind-screen that shows I'm doing time
But I can't fully fathom the nature of my crime
Oh no, oh no, oh no, oh no

Everything that I thought was real is just pixels in my mind
What's the point of reality when the real's so hard to find

If I can trace all the footage that's leaking from my brain
I could conquer my captors and get back home again
Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah

50 Tryptophan

I'm not a scientist, Jim. I don't even play one on TV. But I felt turkey was getting all the blame for Thanksgiving day sleepiness and wanted to set the record, somewhat at least, straight. This month's song explains my understanding of how it works, even if it inadvertently conjures a bit of Adam Sandler. Recorded Thanksgiving 2010.

[O Lord, please don't make me type out the lyrics to this one.]

51 Petri Dish

I do feel that way sometimes...more often than I'd prefer. The rain on the car's windshield always looked like little bubbles to me, bless them. Apparently I posted this online in July 2010 saying it was an old recording I found on my hard drive, and that's probably accurate as I remember using Pro Tools LE to record this one and I was well into Logic by 2010.

Sometimes I feel like a failed experiment
In a giant scientist's petri dish
Sometimes I feel like a failed experiment
In a giant scientist's petri dish

Today the rain came down in bubbles
The bubbles wiggle then they disappear
Then some more come down to take their place
Ignorant of any fear

Sometimes I feel like a failed experiment
In a giant scientist's petri dish
Sometimes I feel like a failed experiment
In a giant scientist's petri dish

Today the morning looked like Summer
By afternoon everything was gray
When the evening came it all shut down
Creaking as it crept away

I can't get no result
I can't get no result

Sometimes I feel like a failed experiment
In a giant scientist's petri dish
Sometimes I feel like a failed experiment
In a giant scientist's petri dish

Vanishing Into the Sea

Oh sure, I have abandonment issues. At least I didn't write a dreadfully long crybaby song about it, eh? From the FAWM 2011 sessions.

What can I say when my hands are like children
Clutching the dress of a mother who's leaving
But the fabric is my glass, and the hem has come undone
And the ice is like the ships that sail
Vanishing into the sea....

Raining California

It rained the first 2 1/2 half days we were in California in Feb 2011. This song is just a coincidence. But it was written and recorded as part of that FAWM 2011 thing too.

Raining California
There's a mist on the coast
Even in the mountain
A shadow like a ghost
Saying heal me heal me



54 Painting A Cat

I came home from work one afternoon and found white kittens running around the living room, but when I looked closely I saw that each kitten had designs painted on it: red or blue circles on their tails or sides, or purple or yellow tips to their ears and paws. What the...?

Walking into the kitchen, I found her at the table holding a kitten-in-progress and dipping a paint brush into a messy palette of food colorings in front of her. More kittens were playing on the kitchen floor as she painted shaky mandalas on this one's shank and thigh. Almost done, she said.

That was in the late 80s, so this song was probably written shortly after and recorded several different times between then and the early 2000s. This is the first version I found as I went digging around.

She was painting a cat when I walked in the room
And she said Hello
I said Why paint a cat?
Well it's pointless to ask
Only two more to go

I knew that it was raining 'cause my cheeks were turning red
And the feathers in my head were whirling 'round
Can't we just go out for a while?
I love you but I'm really bored
I know where we can get something to make us smile
Then I won't be so bored

She said
I'd love to go out, but I'm not leaving the house
I'd have to put on my shoes
And then there's that whole getting in the car thing...

Your Whiskers Keep Me Up at Night

My cat likes to put his face very close to mine at night when I'm trying to sleep.

Your whiskers keep me up at night
Sometimes it's your tail, but usually it's
Your whiskers keep me up at night

55

Such a Beautiful Bird (Time Twister Version)

An alternate version to the one found on the CD edition of the Truman's Hat EP. This one's a time-twister because it was recorded later than but released on the weblog before that CD came out. Got that? It's a song for my birdling. Recorded, mixed, and unleashed on April 29, 2012.

Such a beautiful bird
Such a beautiful bird
Such a beautiful bird

Why can't you fly
Are your wings just a myth
I thought I saw them
When you were blowing me a kiss
Maybe it was just the sunlight in your hair
Coming down to touch you every single where

56



Illustrations courtesy of Tom Hachtman



Nine Stories

*You can hate me if you want, but *Catcher in the Rye* is my least favorite book by J.D. Salinger. In fact, it's not even one of my favorite books by anybody. And yet, oddly enough, Salinger is one of my favorite writers.*

*Certainly I recognize the importance of *Catcher* in shaping the lives and outlooks of any number of angry young men (and, perhaps, the women who love and hope to understand them), and I realize too the profound cultural impact it's had. However, it seems to me that Salinger was just warming up with that one.*

*I was sitting on an airplane once, reading yet again my worn paperback copy of *Franny and Zooey*, when the gentleman next to me said he had heard Salinger had only written one good book, that *Holden Caulfield* one. This was probably thirty-five years ago, and the man appeared to be about the age I am now, though much more successful judging by the fabric of his suit, the shine of his shoes and the length of his belt.*

*I looked at him with every intention of explaining why the other books were at least as worthy of the praise – my God, the spiritual themes, the poetry, the letters, that wedding, the soldiers, the bathtub, the apartment buildings, the cigarettes... *Seymour Glass*, of all things beautiful and holy – but all I said was, “No, the others are really good too.”*

How could I explain to him the magic and power of that slim little book I held in my hands; the way, after each reading, I'd slid into a cocoon of sorts, a place not completely unlike Murakami's deep well where time and place and I were indistinguishable, and from which I emerged each time with renewed vigor and creativity as though I had indeed been a caterpillar waiting to blossom into a colorful butterfly, now free and vividly alive in the world – in it and of it – embracing and lifted by the spontaneous and erratic breezes of life? “No, the others are really good too.” That's all he needed to know, and probably all you need to know too if you haven't read them. So do. Please.

This is a re-recording of an old 4-track version I'd done in the early 90s.

He gave me “Nine Stories” by Salinger
And I gave them all to you
Will you think of me every time Seymour dies
Because you know I was over that line

I been dreamin'
I been dreamin'
I been dreamin' about bananafish and you

58 Mine All Mine

So there was this slasher flick that was looking for a song to compliment a scene where one evil, punkish sorority sister had kidnapped and seduced the devout and angelic girl she'd had her eye on for some time... This is from 2007, as best I can determine.

I've been waiting for you like a night for a moon,
To hold it in its arms and to love it

Oh yeah Oh yeah
You're gonna be mine
You're gonna be mine all mine

It's not like you have wings and I'm pulling your strings
But my heavenly girl, don't you want it
In the fleeting of flight, I'll be your only light,
I'll be your start and end, and you'll love it

Oh yeah Oh yeah
You're gonna be mine
You're gonna be mine all mine

I've been waiting for you like a night for a moon,
To hold onto its light and to love it
It's just like you have wings and I'm pulling your strings
O my darling delight, don't you want it

Oh yeah Oh yeah
You're gonna be mine
You're gonna be mine all mine



59 **Astronomers**

Experimenting with a new delay effect for my guitar in September 2018.

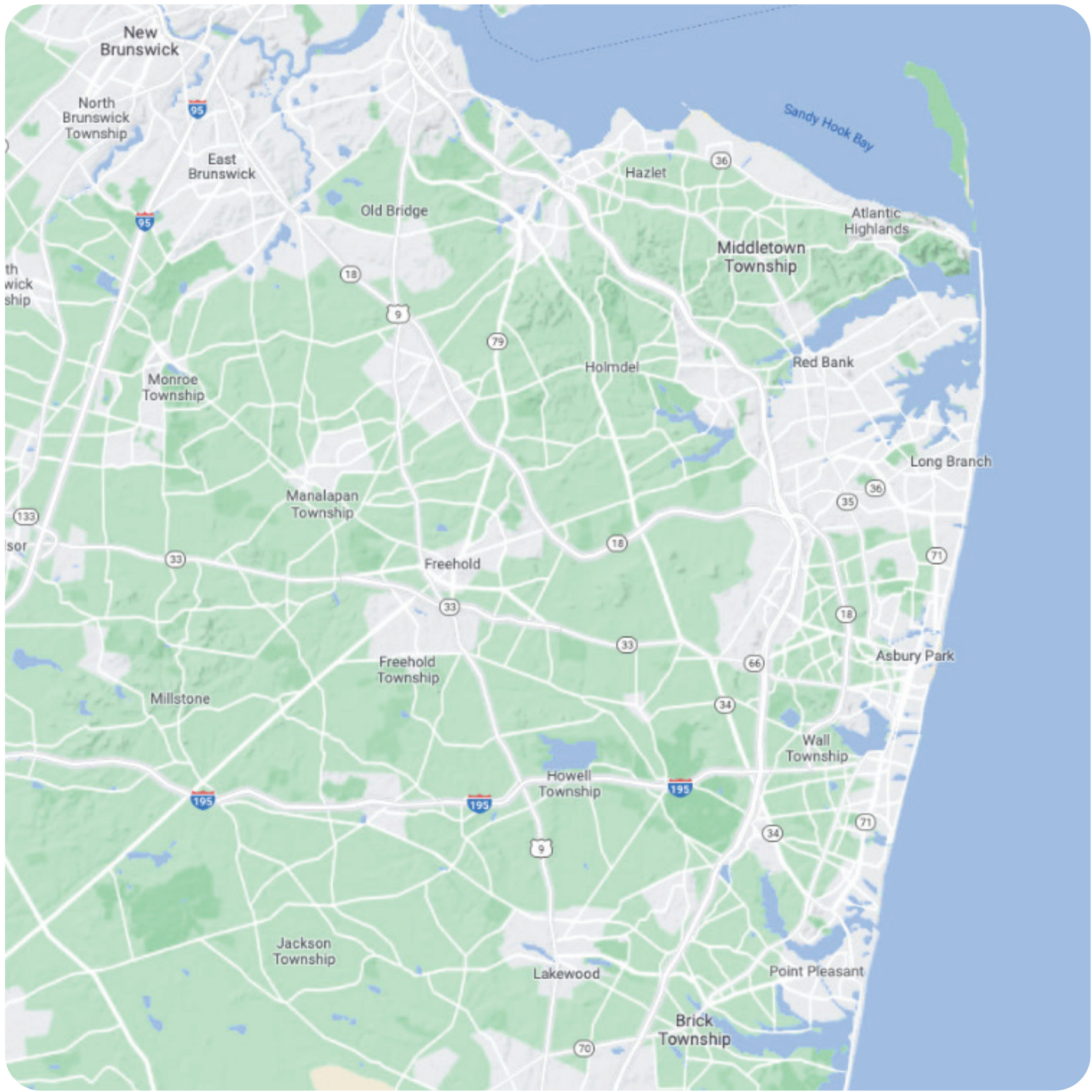
We are astronomers
And we are looking at the skies
The stars so very far
Seem closer in our eyes

We are alone here
Marooned by fate or chance
We're searching for our home
Across the great expanse

60 **The Whole Point**

This one went up on the weblog on July 24, 2008 and I called it "a song from the vault" at that time, so I reckon it's a bit older than that but it still reflects my goals.

And so it goes
I keep looking for a way
To make my lows much higher
Than they are today





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