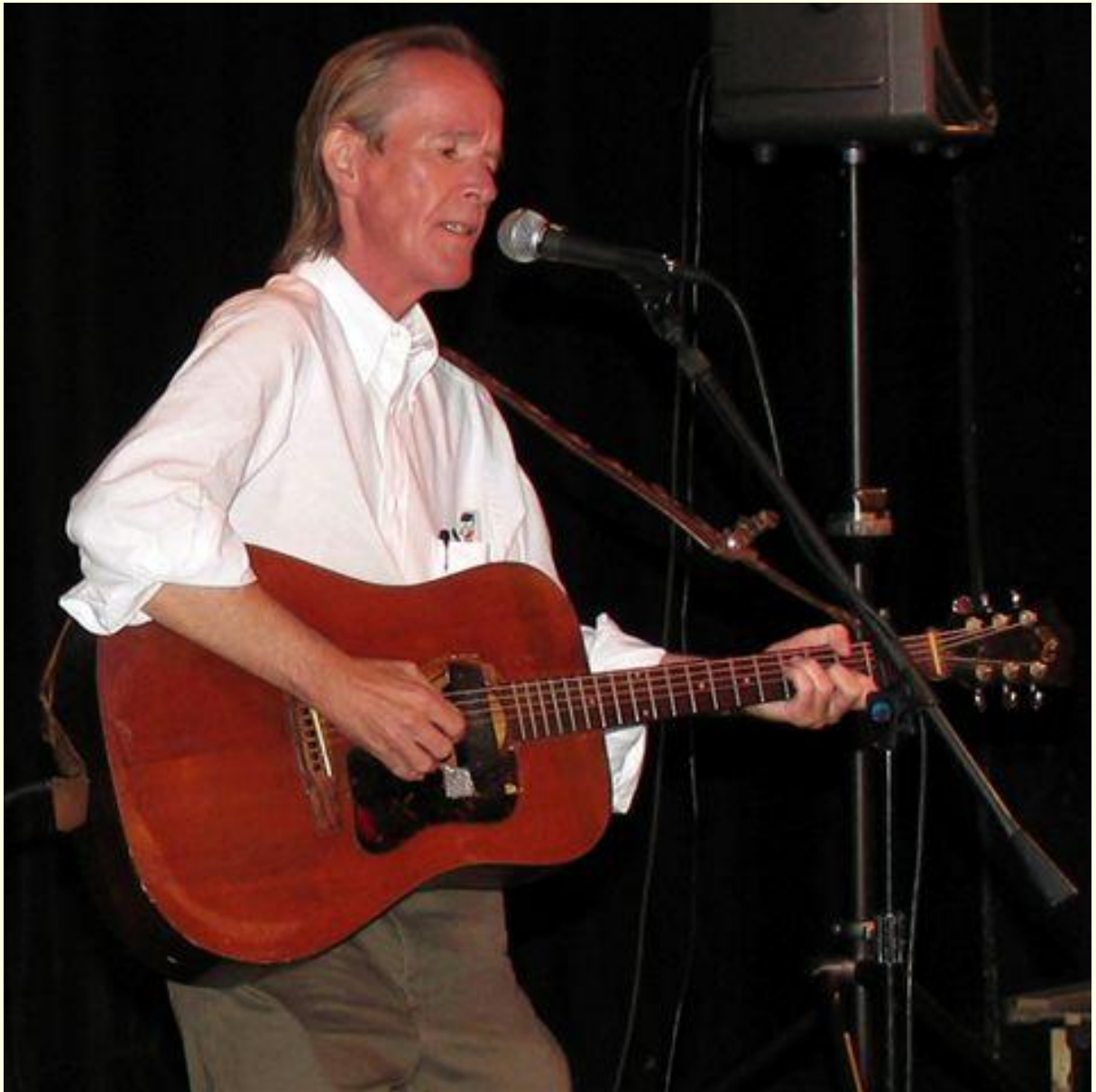


Songs of Bill Morrissey

The Complete Songbook



*"And there ain't much to ice fishing
Till you miss a day or more
And the hole you cut freezes over
and it's like you have never been there before"*

*"I don't know what happened or what I did wrong
But you know me I'll get it into a song"*

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Compiled by Hervé Oudet, February 14, 2013

“It was a miracle to my young eyes on St. Valentine's Day”

Thanks to Ellen Karas, Annie Provenzano, Peter Keane, Diane Juster, Ron Mura,
David Evpak, Connie Fredericks & Herb Van Dam, Knut Andre & Jan Kristoffer Dale
and Ramcey Rodriguez, and all the good folks on the [Birches](#) list

Special thanks to Greg Brown and David Hanners

Hervé's very special thanks go to Bill's mother, Mrs. Marion Morrissey,
and his brother, Thomas Morrissey

bill-morrissey.tumblr.com
www.turnandspin.com
www.billmorrissey.net
www.facebook.com/pages/Bill-Morrissey

Foreword by David Hanners

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These are Bill Morrissey's songs, but he gave them to us. When you read them all in one volume, you can't help but feel the weight of quality. We all had our reasons for liking Bill's music, but the thing that got our attention and kept it was the fact he was a damn good storyteller.

We hang on to these stories because they are our own. Bill wrote and sang about everyday people mired in the good and the bad and the mundane, the small heroics and small failures of everyday life. His characters reflect our own strengths and shortcomings, and that is why Bill's writing speaks to us and why we always wanted more.

It is great to see these songs compiled in one place. Bill's songs are important, and we can read them and be reminded, page after page, just what Bill's music means to us — and, we hope, what it will mean to new generations of fans. His songs are about life, so they should live on.

David Hanners, a winner of the Pulitzer Prize, was born and raised in Casey, Ill., and now lives in St. Paul, Minn.

www.davidhanners.com



Paris, April 2005 © Annie Provenzano

A poem by Greg Brown

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Bill

Pain down in him rang like a church bell,
sang like a little river, flowing on & on,
rolled like a loop in a well cast flyline.
All still here but Bill is gone.

Sang like barbwire hit with a walking stick,
sang like midnight talking to the dawn,
sang like an old man though he never was one.
All still here but Bill is gone.

Wrote songs like the dirt & granite he came from,
songs like mill town boards, rough sawn,
songs built to last through years of hard weather.
In them he lives, & will never be gone.

Greg Brown
Iowa City, 02/08/2013



Walden Festival in Concord, MA, 1991 © Diane Juster

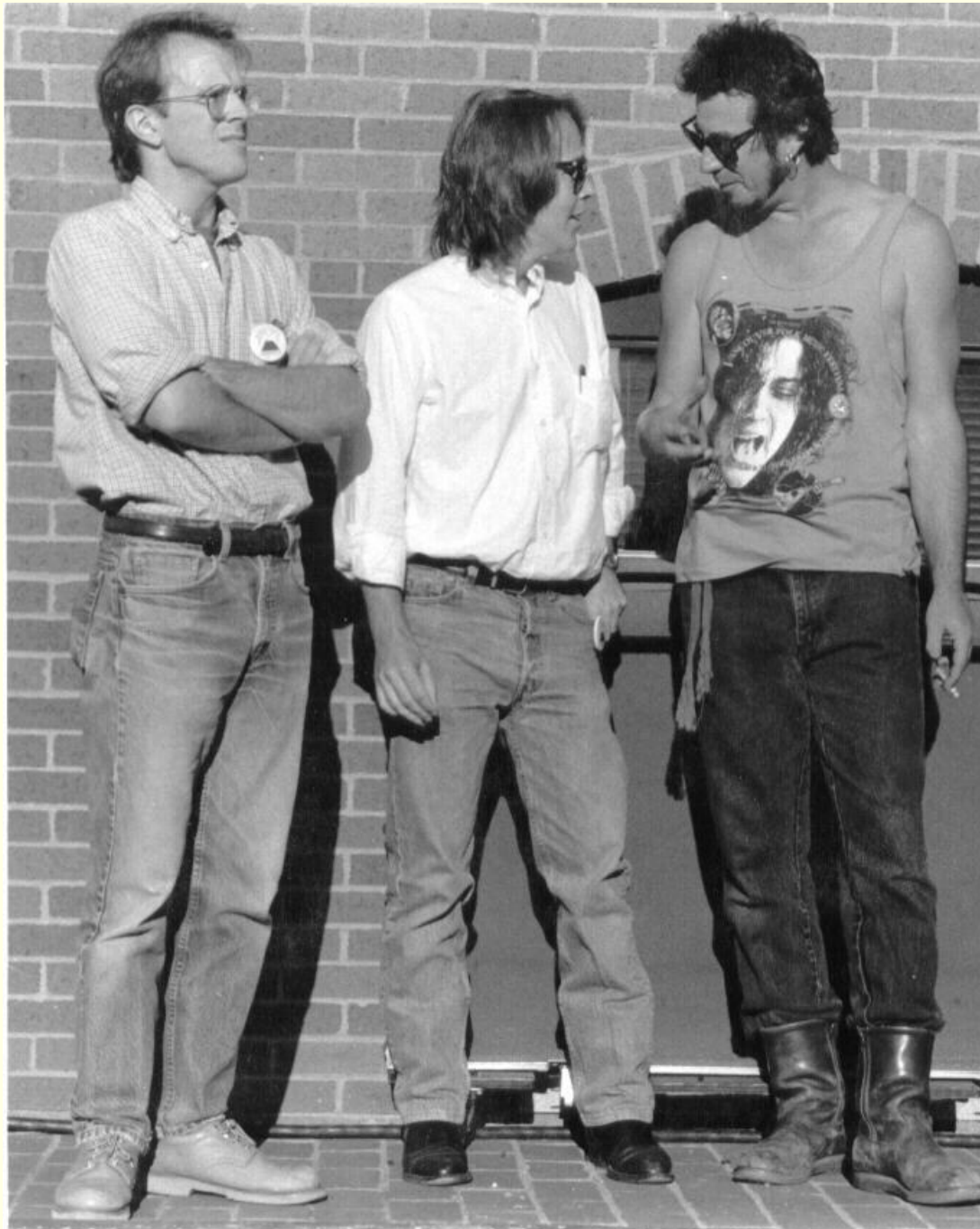
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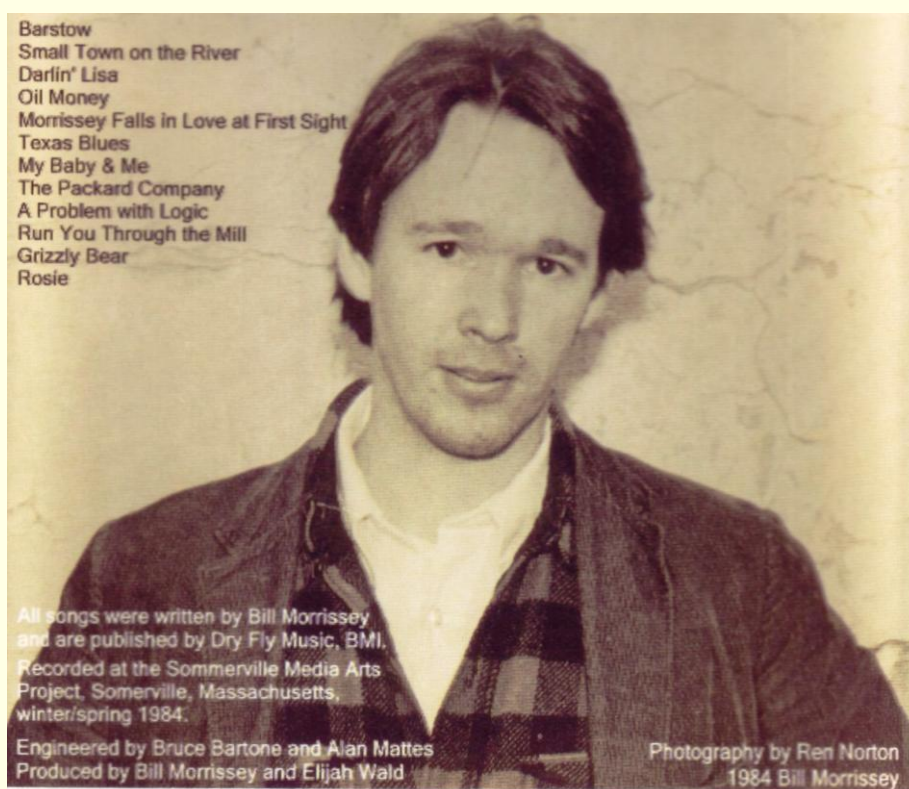


With Peter Keane (left) and Greg Brown

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Due to copyright issues, , some lyrics could not be reprinted

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Bill Morrissey: The Essential Collection

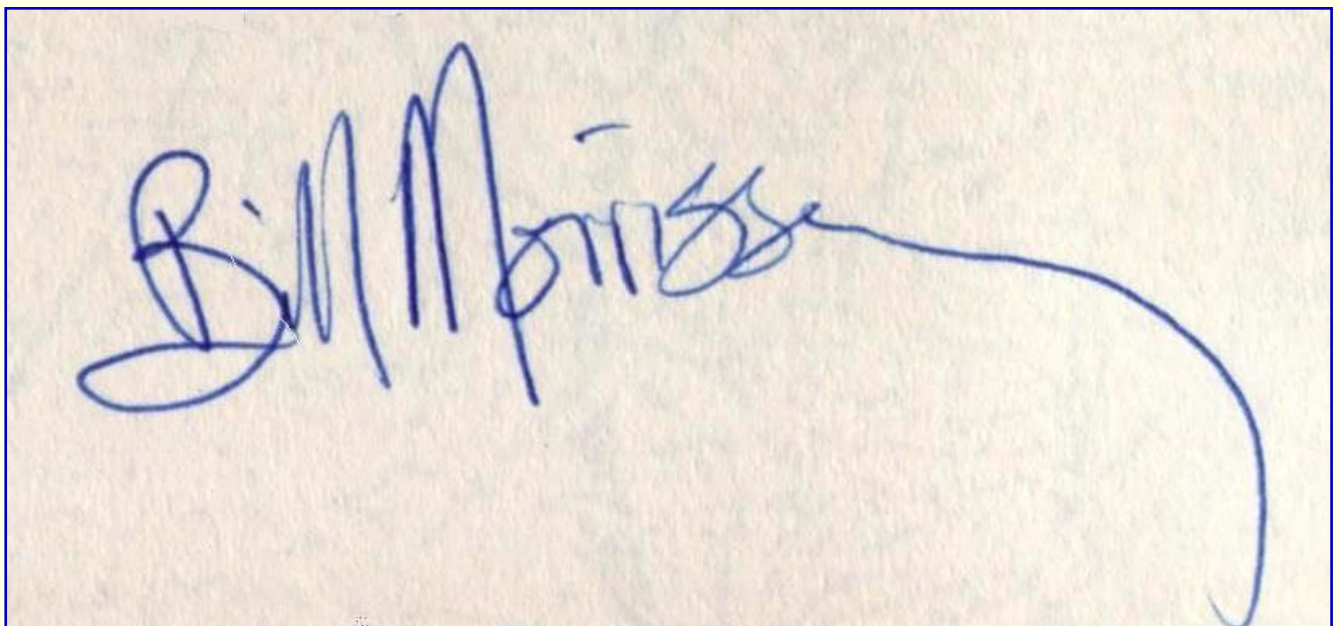
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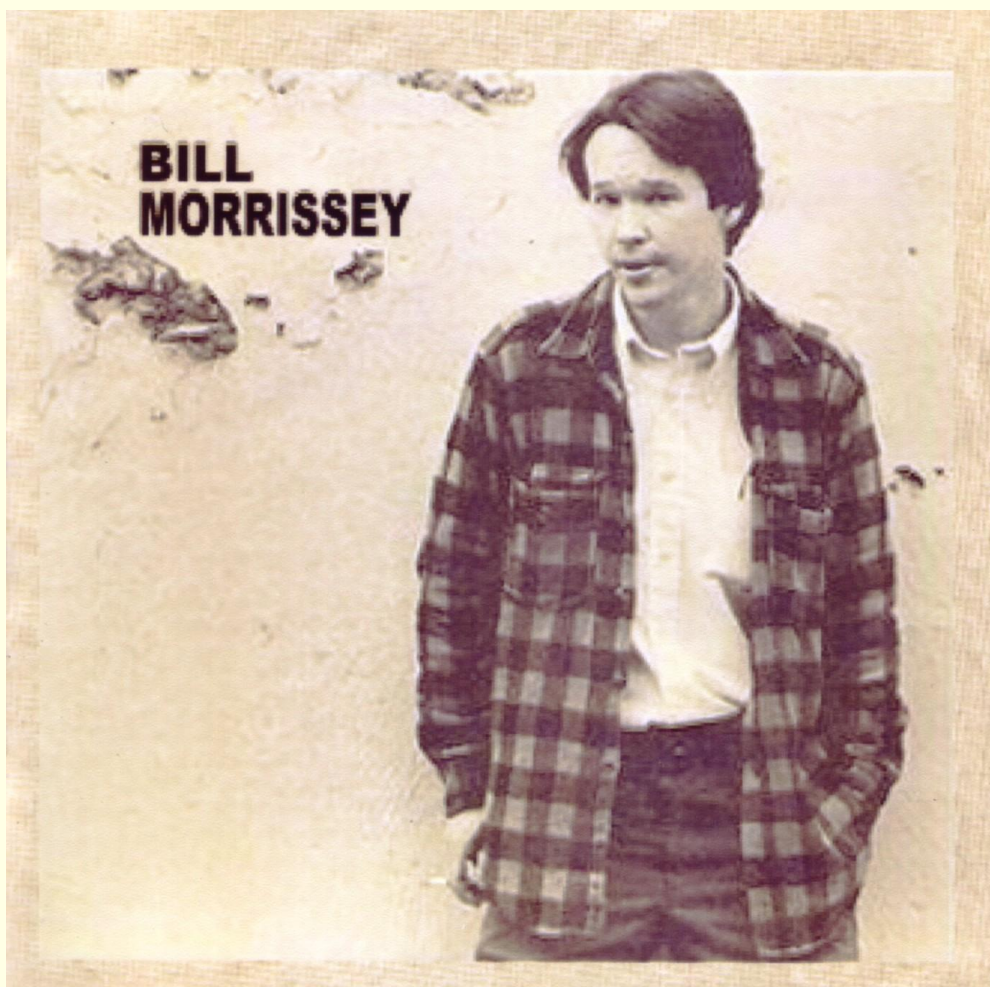
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Bill Morrissey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Bill" is written with a large, looped 'B'. The last name "Morrissey" is written with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

BILL MORRISSEY (1984)
Re-recording for CD of original album, 2/27/1991
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3. Darlin' Lisa
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9. A Problem With Logic
10. Run You Through The Mill
11. Grizzly Bear
12. Rosie

Extra songs, recorded on 2/27/91

13. Little Bit Of Whiskey
14. Live Free Or Die (Bill Morrissey & Trigger Cook)
15. Amnesia (Bill Morrissey & Nick Klaus)

1. Barstow

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Here comes Parks and he's found another bottle
He tips it up like a trumpet, he takes a drink and passes it on
And every man around the fire takes a chorus on the bottle
It ain't much, it ain't good but it'll get us through till dawn

Don't the freight yard sound like a drunk in a metal shop
I can't believe it gets this cold in Barstow
And I can't believe I pissed my twenties away
If you take me back this time
Baby, I promise you... I'll stay

Parks takes another drink and starts to sing off key
There's not a man around the fire big enough to shut him up
And in the cold morn he's singing, "Hey Okie, tell Arkie
Texas found a job in Californ"
And everybody around the fire cracks up

And then Parks hands me the bottle He says, "I'm gone to Tucson
Hole up all winter at the Sally if I can
I don't mind the prayin' and I don't mind sayin'
I can listen forever to that Sally brass ban"

And then Parks starts laughing hard but he doesn't make a sound
He grabs the bottle back and kills the last of the wine
In the fire glow I can see his eyes and they shine like brake lights
And I am just glad that I cannot see mine

2. Small Town On The River

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

They used to come to town from the naval base
Looking for a stiff drink and a pretty face
Hang around the whorehouses all night long
Some were drifters and some were bums
Some just waited for the war to come
Out behind the factory with a bottle and a factory girl

In that small town on the river
Just a small town on the river

That December war broke out
Many a woman lost her man
Some wrote from overseas, some didn't
And their women didn't understand
And the whores left for the harbor towns
Where the business was still good
And the factory girls put in double shifts
Worked as much as they could

Well, some came men came home aces
And some were carried home
All of them were heroes
No man was left alone
Some took jobs, some went to school
Some found they'd fathered kids
Well, most men tried but could not forget
And some wound up on the skids

Forty years later the town remains the same
One mill burnt down, another one was built
The paychecks now come from a different name
And at the Eagles and the Legion Hall
No-one seems to age
With the same jokes told and the TV on
The paper open to the sports page

And I was talking to the bartender last night at the PAC
A navy man from World War Two
Sharp dresser, though he didn't have to be
And over a double bourbon
He said "I'll tell you man to man
The town died forty years ago, son
Get out while you can
It's that small town on the river
Nothing but a small town on the river

3. Darlin' Lisa

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Well I've got a house way up North
I've got yards and fences
I've got a wife who sings
Like thirteen drunken Joseph Spences
Oh, my little darlin' Lisa
Round and round and round we go

We can climb right up that beanstalk
Slide back down and chop the trunk
Go on home, turn on the TV
Watch the Waltons and get drunk
Hey, my little darlin' Lisa
Oh, my darlin' Lisa-O
Hey, my little darlin' Lisa
Fe fi fun fo

I loved her many years ago
I truly love her now
If I were the captain and she were my boat
I would love her stern to bow
Hey, my little darlin' Lisa
Oh, my darlin' Lisa-O
Hey, my little darlin' Lisa
Yo ho ho

I've got a twenty gauge and a Hawken gun
I've got a Barlow and a Bowie knife
The smartest thing I've ever done
Was to ask that girl to be my wide
Hey, my little darlin' Lisa
Oh, my darlin' Lisa-O
Hey, my little darlin' Lisa
Round and round and round we go

4. Oil Money

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I'm sitting in a bar on Morgan City
In the state of Louisiana'
Just been made a captain of a cargo boat
I worked my way up from deckhand

They take me for a native here
I've heard my speech turn soft and slow
But it's just been five years since I came down from New Hampshire
To earn my living on the Gulf of Mexico

Oil money can lure a man away from home
And I was one of many, boys, to set off on my own
Oil money, a million jobs in the oil trade
A million dollars waiting to be made

I've got friends here who just came down from the pipeline
I know college boys who work as roustabouts
Well the hours are long but they say you can't beat the pay
And that's what it's all about

So tonight you'll find me drinking
I'll celebrate my promotion then go home
I've got a pocket full of change I don't know what to do with
I've got one eye on the bottle and one eye on the payphone

Hello operator, information for New Hampshire
No town special, anyone will do
There's nobody back there left for me to talk with
I just want to hear the operator talk the way I used to

5. Morrissey Falls In Love At First Sight
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Well, my heart skipped a beat when you walked into the room
And in five seconds I was thinking bride and groom
I was thinking bride and groom, thinking man and wife
Never fell in love so fast in all of my life

I know you'll like my friends and you've got to meet my parents
My dad is pretty funny and my mum looks like Betty White
I've got to have another drink to figure out
A way to introduce myself to you tonight

I'm lousy on the first night, better by the third
I was raised Catholic, in case you hadn't heard
But I ain't the type of man who lives on dreams and wishes
Or walks around the house breaking bread and blessing fishes

If I sent a dozen roses just out of habit
Would you press those flowers in a copy of Babbitt
I need another drink, I need a cigarette
I ain't giving up, I'm gonna get you yet

I'll give you the rights to my ten best songs
If you want to talk, I can talk till dawn
Right there I need a word that rhymes with urn
I guess your name is the first thing I ought to learn

I hope you're a Democrat, I hope you like the Red Sox
Hope you like Bourbon with a splash of water on the rocks
Bourbon with a splash is the only drink I make
But baby I can learn, there's a course I can take

You might as well give up I'm gonna make my move
We can honeymoon in Paris, hang out at the Louvre
We can winter in the city, summer up in Maine
And all of this will happen
As soon as I learn your name

6. Texas Blues

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Never been so lonesome, never been so blue
It's midnight on the highway, I'm coming back for you
Stuck in Ozona, Texas, out on Highway 10
I'm gone to Arizona to win you back again

Last time I saw you, your voice was cold as ice
And you spoke of some old lover like a lonesome paradise
Time, like a sailor on his way back to the sea,
It trips and stumbles, rarely passes gracefully

I'm standing on the highway and the only light I see
Is just the cold and heartless moon shining down on me
Never been so lonesome, never been so blue
It's midnight on the highway, I'm coming back for you

Texas Blues - Bill Morrissey

Shawn Colvin harmony

D
Never been so lonesome
Em
Never been so blue
G
It's midnight on the highway
D
I'm coming back to you
D
Stuck in Ozona Texas
Em
Out on highway 10
G
I'm going to Arizona
D
To win you back again
D
Last time I saw you
Em
Your voice was cold as ice
G
And you spoke of some old lover
D
Like a lonesome paradise
D
Now I'm standing on the highway
Em
And the only light I see
G
Is just a cold and heartless moon
D
Shining down on me
D
Never been so lonesome
Em
Never been so blue
G
It's midnight on the highway
D
I'm coming back for you

>From Lucy Kaplansky The Tide CD
Red House Records 1994
Dry Fly Music(BMI) 1984



*“In that small town on the river
Just a small town on the river”*

Newmarket, New Hampshire

7. My Baby And Me

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

My baby and me know a good day when we see it
Mid-November, so long fall
Well as warm days go, this is last call

My baby and me we're going out for one last fling
One last howl before the winter snow
Socks us in till spring

Baby's wearing make-up
She's got Chanel No. 5
She's put on a dress with a little fill
I've got a jacket and a tie
I've splashed on some Hoppe's No. 9
I guess you could say I was dressed to kill

We're going out tonight
We're gonna hit the bars in town
We're gonna mingle with the flatlanders
And buy them all a round

Well summer's over, autumn's gone
Winter's here, turn the page
I'm gonna trade my Hawken .50
For a lightweight gauge

I'm going out tonight
And get as drunk as can be
And let my baby drive home
Cause she drinks moderately

Tonight is our last chance
Top go and blow off steam
Cause once the snow hits around here
All you can do is dream and dream
And dream and dream

8. The Packard Company

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I don't want to hear your ideas
I finally like it here
Every man's got his job to do
Every man drinks his own beer

And I'm not too far from foreman
If I get it that's okay
I could buy my wife her own TV
With a foreman's raise in pay

I had two weeks off in August
We went to Washington D.C.
My wife, she's got a brother down there
And there were some things I always wanted to see

We took a Greyhound back to Ashland
I watched the turnpike all the way
And as we left New York behind
I had no words to say

My wife nodded off so soon
Slept all the way to the Mass line
Well, everything's okay I told myself
Everything is fine

And if it hadn't been for whiskey
I never would have made it through our first years
But every man breaks down with time
And now those whiskeys, they're just week end beers

No I don't want to hear your ideas
I finally like it here
Every man's got his job to do
Every man drinks his own beer

And I've got the sun in the morning
I get the cold every night
If I had to do it all again
I'd have been born in flight

9. A Problem With Logic

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

When you left I got so upset
I walked around in circles
And smoked a lot of cigarettes
I did all the things ex-lovers do

You were good for a laugh
I wonder who did it right and who done wrong
Ah, you know I was half-planning to leave you too

Though I always did love you
I can't say I always will
Oh but if you want to try it again
If you do, you know, maybe I will too

I've got your picture in my wallet
That portrait of a child
I keep it with my money
It'll stay there for a while

And I can make it on my own
There's no trouble there
I'm a little worried about you, though
But you don't seem to care

Where'd you get this new guy
I wish I knew what he said
That swept you right off your feet
And set you down in his bed

Well I remember how you said in the middle of the night
We could never make it work
We're too much alike
Well I thought and thought*and wondered if that's true

Well, if we're so much alike
Then it must be true
That you still want me
Just as much as I want you

10. Run You Through The Mill

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Oh, honey, I get tanked just soaked up in the spirits
I get rowdy, I get clumsy
I get as trite as jazz lyrics
And I stay drunk all the time
I stay drunk all the time

Well, I'm a walking twelve bar blues with a lover I can't lose
I'd run you through the mill, honey
Just to prove my point
That you'd never last till day
You'd never see the night

And soon someone will climb your stairway like it is a golden braid
He'll be sober, he'll be working
Just a one man masquerade
And you'll have him till you die
You'll have him till he dies

'Cause when the rain starts to falling and I can't get out of its way
Honey, can you take it like a trooper
On that very lonely day
It's happened once before
It's happened twice before

Oh, honey, I get tanked just soaked up in the spirits
I get rowdy, I get clumsy
I get as trite as jazz lyrics
And I stay drunk all the time
I stay drunk all the time

11. Grizzly Bear

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Let me tell you about this girl I met just the other night
She'd spent so much time in the mirror boys
She couldn't tell left from right
And I knew she came from money
By the way she ought me drinks
But I'll be damned if I ever understand
Just how a rich girl thinks

And she wants me to call her Monday
Could be a blessing, maybe a curse
She wants to fly us both to the Bay of Fundy
Just to watch the tide reverse
She wants me to meet her girlfriends
One named Pookie one named Clair
But I just wanted to take her home
And dance the grizzly bear

Well I'd never seen a girl with so many names written on her clothes
I'd never seen a girl so pretty with a dollar up her nose
I said let's have one more drink and go home
It's getting late but she shook her head and said
She wanted to dance till we dehydrate

Now I could tell by how she high-stepped she'd learn to dance uptown
Where I come from we just kinda like to get drunk
And slam bodies all around
I guess I might've embarrassed her
Before she could work up a sweat
She picked up her purse and picked up the tab
And ran away to her Corvette

12. Rosie

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Rosie, the rain don't stop and the window's steamed
I've two weeks off in port
My nights are spent like a sailor's dream

Rosie, you don't sound right on the phone
And from the tone of your voice
I know you're not alone
Well, you're talking fast
I don't know why
You tell me that you found some new guy
Rosie, yesterday

Ah, you know you must be crazy just to talk this way
Yeah, you know you must be crazy just to talk this way

Well I'm drinking
The rain don't stop this time of year
It's three bucks for a shot of Jack
Two bucks for a beer
And they tell me this place is the last frontier
The jukebox plays a country tune
Soon I'll be out of here
Well I smoke, I drink, I'm shooting pool
I walk around to town like a drunken fool
Rosie, wait for me

Now tell me that you want me coming home
I left to make some cash for us
I didn't want to leave you alone
Rosie, all I do is think of you, trust me darling Rosie
I'll be back before the month is through
Well, you say that you're in love with him and it's over now
But I won't give in, Rosie

13. Live Free Or Die

(Bill Morrissey & Trigger Cook)

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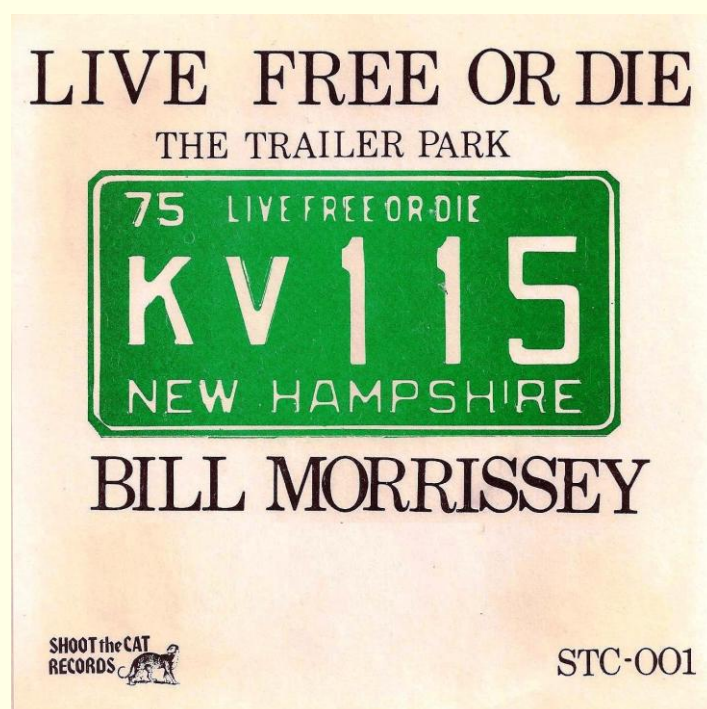
Well, I'm doin' ten to twenty in the frozen granite state
And every day I go to work to stamp out license plates
Every day I got to work and every night I cry
'Cause every license plate I make tells me to Live Free or Die

Live Free or Die, oh Lord, tell me why can't they say "Seat Belts Fastened"
Or "Oklahoma is Okay," "Vacationland" sounds mighty great
I wouldn't mind stampin' out the Garden State
It's enough to make me cry, Live Free or Die

Well, I didn't mean to shoot that man, why the gun just went off in my hand
I caught him with my wife and it cost that man his life
I'd just got home from the factory and that man was sittin' where I'm supposed to be
Now he's up there in the sky and I'm stuck with Live Free or Die

Live Free or Die, oh Lord, tell me why, can't they say "Seat Belts Fastened"
Or "Oklahoma is Okay," "Vacationland" sounds mighty great
I wouldn't mind stampin' out the Garden State
It's enough to make me cry, Live Free or Die

So let this be a lesson to all you married men out there
That patience is a virtue, so make your plans with care
So if you catch your wife with another man, it's best to hold off as long as you can
Then shoot him in another state where they got a different license plate



14. Little Bit Of Whiskey

([Back to bonus tracks](#) — [Back to album tracklist](#) — [Back to album list](#))

Little bit of whiskey, in a little cup of tea
Just to take the chill out of poor frozen me

Shovel the sidewalk, and the driveway then,
Snow keeps falling, start all over again

I've got my shovel, I've got my glove
Oh, I've got trouble with my true love

Snow keeps falling, been falling all day
Weather report says there's more coming our way

Me and the missus, been fighting again
I won't talk and she won't listen

Now they say true love, is a game for fools
And every time I play, she keeps changing the rules

I want to go inside, I want to warm up
and drink a little whiskey from a little tea cup

15. Amnesia

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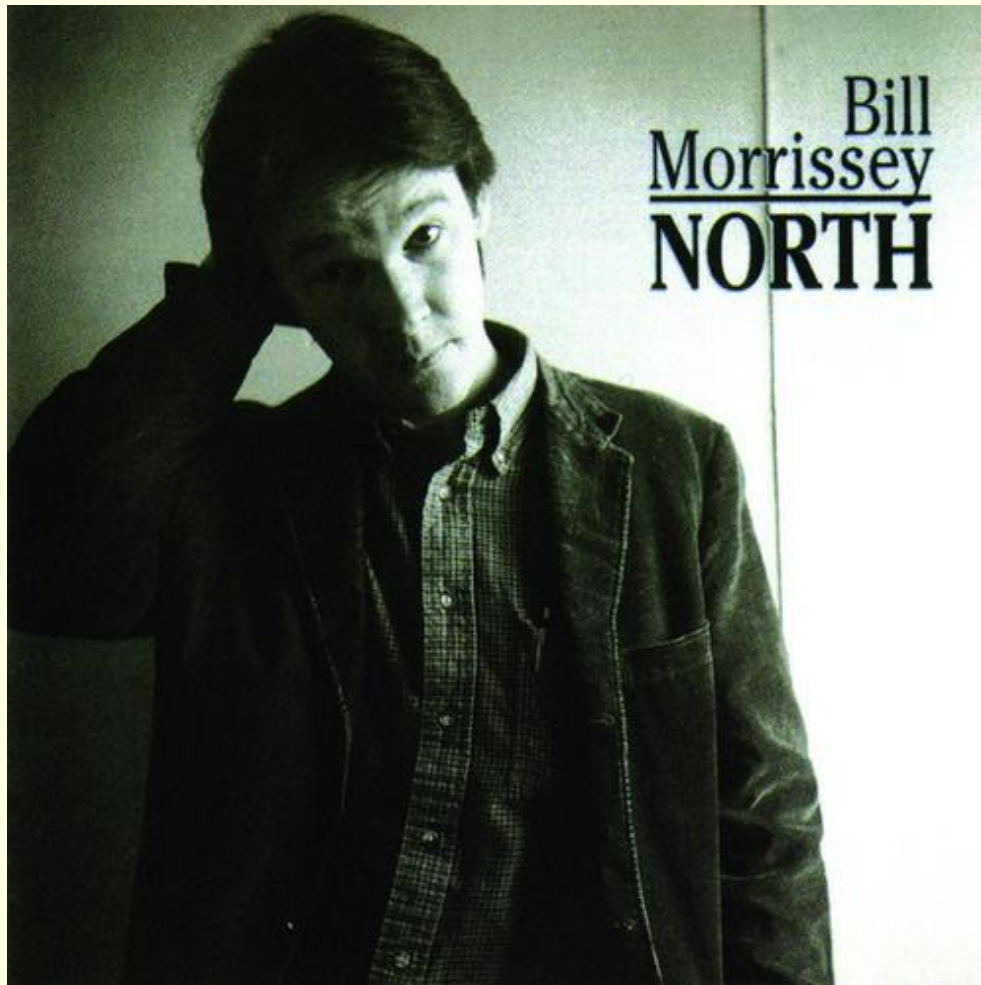
I got amnesia this morning, I got hit on the head
And I woke up today in a hospital bed

I can't remember my name, but one thing is clear
I must have insurance or they'd not keep me here
So maybe I'm rich, maybe in debt a lot
If they come to collect, I'll just say I forgot

Are my friends all hip? Do they play tenor sax?
Or belt their pants at their armpits and wear plastic pen-packs?
Do I have honest work, or lead a life of crime?
Please shoot me dead if I'm a lawyer or a mime

Now what is my religion? I hope I'm a Buddhist
I could be a Hindu, a Catholic or a nudist
What if I'm born-again or in some weirdo sect?
I know I'm not Jewish, I looked down and I checked

NORTH (1986)
Back to album list



© Susan Wilson

1. Pantherville
2. It's Dangerous Out There
3. Night Shift
4. Married Man (Bill Morrissey & Cormac McCarthy)
5. Ice Fishing
6. My Old Town
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8. She Moved Through The Fair
9. He Drinks Alone
10. Snow Outside The Mill
11. Fishing a Stream I Once Fished As A Kid

1. Pantherville

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

When it snows in Pantherville the road just disappears
When it snows in Pantherville the road just disappears
You can watch it fade like daylight till there's no way out of here

And when it snows like this the state man don't come around
When it snows like this the state man don't come around
Well, I wake up a happy man when the snow is falling down

Ah, put down those dishes, daughter, and sit down over here
Take a look out by the skidder, we got dogs a-running deer

Well those dogs that run that deer will kill him just for fun
Those dogs will run that deer and kill him just for fun
Now the state man say that he won't rest till I'm up in Thomaston

Ah put down those dishes, daughter, and come watch these clouds above
Sit here right beside me girl tell me who you love

2. It's Dangerous Out There

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

There are Russians in the front yard
There are Martians on the ceiling
There's a cape buffalo on the patio
And you ask me how I'm feeling

There's a sniper by the swing set
The hallway has been mined
Then here you come with a great big smile
Singing "Rise and shine"

Well, there's nothing you can say that will get me up today
Nothing you have ever said that can drive me from this bed
You can call me lazy, crazy, call me stupid I don't care
I ain't getting up, it's dangerous out there

There's a hunter from New Jersey
In my kitchen drinking beer
There's a Texan out my window
With a chain saw and a leer

I could take a walk around the block
To shake me from this slumber
But there are students drivers out today
And one has got my number

There's a pounding on my front door
It's enough to make me scream
Well it's two girl scouts, one Jehovah's Witness
And a whole S.W.A.T team

So listen to me darling
Please hear these words I say
It's too scary here in February, dear
Set the snooze alarm for May

3. Night Shift

([back to album tracklist](#) — [back to album list](#))

The bar was packed on a Tuesday night
The Bruins were on TV
Everybody in the place was tight
Make no exception for me
I've been drinking to my traveling days
I should've been at work long ago
But tonight I ain't coming in
Tonight I just can't go

I should be making shoes on the night shift
But I can't drive in through the snow drifts
That's what I told them at the factory
I wonder how the boys on the night shift ever got along without me

The guys I work with are lifers here
They talk shotguns and TV
They can call me names in French or English and do it frequently
And their wives, they don't smile much but their hearts are made of gold
They run their families but make it look like they do what they are told

So bartender pour me another shot and back it with a beer
Tonight I'm thanking heaven
I can still get out of here
Because for a while I thought I could settle down
Then I called my own bluff
Well, the road get longer as I get older
But I still got the stuff

4. Married Man

(Bill Morrissey & Cormac McCarthy)

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I got married and settled down
I use a smaller brush now to paint the town
I still drink my whiskey I just water it down
No more showing up in night court
One day late and two dollars short
I still play the dogs but just for sport

A married man, a married man
Some women think they can turn a bum into a saint
Well look out mama, now here I come
You've got the same old bum with a new coat of paint

I'm in love this time I swear it's true
I meant both words when I said "I do"
And I liked it when she said it too
I ain't no sow's ear, I ain't no silk purse
I spend my days at home writing idiot verse
Still my wife knows she could have done much worse

There's two names printed on the checks
There's Bud in the 'fridge instead of Beck's
And I ain't seen any side effects
I got married and settled down
I use a smaller brush to paint the town
I still drink my whiskey I just water it down
I water it down

5. Ice Fishing

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The snow lay up against the curb
Finally beaten by the sun
Across the street the noon whistle blows
Calling back everyone

They came out from the luncheonettes
Taverns and pharmacies
Crossed the wet street back to work
Coats unbuttoned, talking easily

And there ain't much to millwork
The days just go on and on
And there ain't much to leavin' home
Till you finally cut the cord and know that you're gone

And there ain't much to ice fishing
Till you're gone a day or more
And the hole you've cut freezes over
And it's like you've never been there before

6. My Old Town

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

What's happening to my old town
They went and knocked half the buildings down
They built them backup from the ground
While I was gone away

Now there's knick-knack shops and restaurants
In the place of my old haunts
Everything a man could want
At least that's what they say

I hit my old bars on the pier
Where I've been drunk year after year
And find I can't afford the price of beer
Unless I drink at home

The street lights and the cops abound
I've never seen so many cops in town
Protection now when the sun goes down
That was only us before

What's happening to my old town
They went and knocked half the buildings down
They built them backup from the ground
While I was gone away

7. North

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Mama always said me and the old man were two of a kind
And now, just like he once did
I work these woods north of the C.P. line

Mama gets upset when I call her;
She's living home alone
And I guess the old man's voice and mine
Always sounded the same over the telephone

Papa's been gone six years now
He got to choose the how and when and where he'd die
I think about him after work sometimes
Once I've passed the halfway point on a fifth of rye
Papa told me once a man must work if he's going to take care of his
And you've got to work the big woods when that's the only work there is

But the big woods will just use you up
Drain your strength and soul, and ask for more
Until you find yourself a broken man pushing forty who just can't do the job no more

Tonight in this bar I caught myself holding a cigarette the same strange way he did
So I raised my glass and I drank a round to the old man
And the old man's kid

I believe I was the last one to see the old man alive
He lost his job at forty-one, took himself out at forty-five

I saw him walking down the tote road with his twelve-gauge pump and a pint of rye
And it just wasn't in me to stop him
Good-bye, Papa, good-bye.

8. She Moved Through The Fair

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

She moved through the fair
Her cotton dress was new
She looked like a queen
She moved through the fair
Slowly and alone
She wanted to be seen

She moved through the fair
Down along the midway
The paper lights were hung
She moved through the fair
Twenty two years old
I'd never seen her look so young

She stops and waits
She stands just beyond the light
And if heaven calls, she knows she'll go
And if not she'll be all right

She moved through the fair
Her green eyes darted like the wind
She moved through the fair
As if it were some place
She's never seen again

She moved through the fair
Her cotton dress was new
She looked like a queen

9. He Drinks Alone

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've got a little shop on the waterfront
I open every spring
And I cater to the tourist crowd
They'll buy up everything
In the bar next door there's a string band
They play those old Nantucket songs
Put a grown man to sleep
Christ, they're 99 verses long

When I was young, I went to sea
When I was young, fishing was the life for me

From the back door of the bar next door
I can look out on the bay
And watch the trawlers coming in
I watch for my son's boat that way
One by one they tie up
The same story's always told
Between the quota and the foreign fleet
There's no way to fill the hold

I was 39 years old
When I quit my life at sea
That was the only thing
My wife ever asked of me
And back then the North Atlantic
Could bring a man a decent wage
Well, I've tried to tell my son that
But you can't talk to those his age

I've got a little shop on the waterfront
Keeps me in smokes and gin
I keep a place in my business open
For when my son wants to come in

10. Snow Outside The Mill

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

When I was a young man I traveled around
I worked every hard bar in every hard town
For the whiskey, the draught beer, the porter and stout
I sang everywhere until I sang myself out

And now I'm getting older but it don't bother me
When I can't hit the high notes I just drop the key
And sometimes when I sing now the words escape me

I drifted back North, took a job at the mill
I did not plan on staying but now it looks like I will
Got a room near the mill where the rents are still cheap
Got a job in the card room I can do in my sleep

Well I met a girl in the weave room one day
She promised to love me if I promised to stay
I made her my wife one day that same spring
Now she turns up the TV when I start to sing

So I sit and look the card room window
As the snow starts to fall and the wind starts to blow
Well, I've seen better days, I've seen worse ones too
I've had better jobs but this one will do

11. Fishing A Stream I Once Fished As A Kid

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

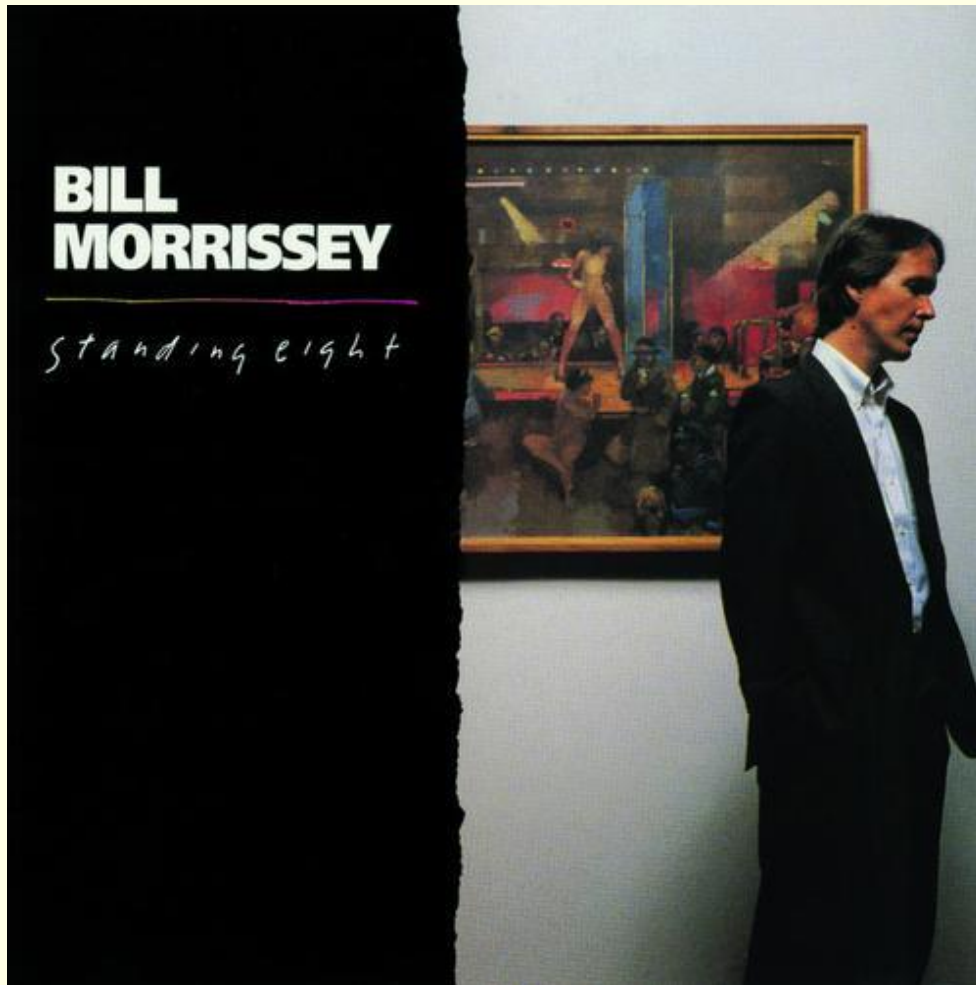
Were it not for rainbow trout
I would have to fish for bass
Were it not for the seasons changes
I would never see time pass
And were there not a chance for whiskey
I could make do with a beer
I wish I'd have known when I left home
Every road just led back here

Oh, I've pumped gas and I've picked apples
I've dispatched for an ambulance
I've even worked on the ocean
But that was when I had no sense
And in every town I did believe
There was no job I could not leave
Some I quit when I got tired
On some I admit I was fired

Now I'm standing thigh deep in this trout stream
The air is still the sun is low
Day is almost over now
I can see myself here years ago
And I dream I am nine again
When it seems like Summer never ends
Hear the crickets sing, hear the peepers call
See the full moon shine like a whiffle ball

STANDING EIGHT (1989)

(Back to album list)



© Tobey

1. Handsome Molly
2. Love Song/New York, 1982
3. Party At The U.N.
4. Last Day of the Last Furlough
5. Motels And Planes
6. Up On The C.P. Line
7. Summer Night
8. She's That Kind Of Mystery
9. Girls Of Santa Fe
10. The Driver's Song
11. Car And Driver
12. John Haber
13. She's Your Baby Now
14. These Cold Fingers

1. Handsome Molly

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I park my cab on Water Street, I'm waiting for a fare
Watch the young girls in their first heels
Step like colts across the square

Fire on the ocean, thunder on the sea
I think of Handsome Molly, wherever she may be

Now, I'm either in this cab or bar, never in the choir
Sometimes howlin' and amazed like the wind hung up on barbed wire

Fire on the ocean, thunder on the sea
I think of Handsome Molly, and what she promised me

Well, it's pretty doe-eyed Molly could see so well at night
It was a hard trade she made just to see it black and white

Now the word's gone down this north coast and its "Boy you best take care
Cut yourself with a knife, find all the salt that's in the air"

Fire on the ocean, thunder on the sea
I think of Handsome Molly, who cried so easily

Now the soldiers down on Water Street, they eye the little girls
And the little girls of Water Street will take them 'round the world

Fire on the ocean, thunder on the sea
I think of Handsome Molly, wherever she may be

2. Love Song/New York, 1982

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I remember her frightened eyes and her mouth so quick to mock
Listening late at night, surprised by her soft Midwestern talk
In the corner of the cafe, as dark as an eclipse
Well she tried to smile, but her cheek lines put parentheses around her lips

Walk down Grand Street, the wind would blow us round and round
And all her talk was incomplete, so I just listened to the sound
She could never see my heart, back then it was a blur
Oh, but it's true, I was the handsomest man in New York
When I walked down the street with her

Ah na na na na, na na na
Ah na na na na, na na na

We were walking, sort of dancing, up on the rooftop real slow
Quietly waiting to get stung by Lester Young over that tiny radio
There were so many men in her eyes, I knew she never could be mine
But everyone must die alone, and that's just how some men will always walk the line

Ah na na na na, na na na
Ah na na na na, na na na

It was out at the newsstand, the corner of MacDougal and West Third
She took back her hand and said goodbye, to this day I pretend I never heard
Let the years roll away, let the seasons disappear
And if I seem to be okay I'm just thinking of the time I held her near

3. Party At The U.N.

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I went to a party at the U.N.
It was the weirdest place I've ever been
I'm gonna tell you who was there
I'm gonna tell you even if you don't care

There were Haitians on vacation, and Frenchmen with henchmen
Brits eating grits and Celts eating smelts
There was a couple of Reds reading books by Trotsky
And coeds in stretch-pants who swore they did not ski
And everybody had a pretty good time

Well there were Peruvian beauties neglecting their duties
And Danes eating Danish, singing the blues
Israelis with ukuleles formed a dance band
And Watusis got up and danced the American
And everybody had a pretty good time

So if you go down to the U.N., be prepared to make a lot of new friends
It's such a happy community, everyone's got diplomatic immunity

You'll meet Incas and Aztecs out passing bad checks
And big Czechs with no necks talking nothing but sex
Wanna make a hit with that pretty Estonian
Bring that platter of cheese and bologna
And everyone will have a pretty good time

4. Last Day Of The Last Furlough
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

In the late afternoon the sky and a calm sea join
And fade into the dirty silver of an old coin
It's so still it could be morning but for the heat held in the sand

We have the beach to ourselves now
The brown eyed girl, the empty man
And she wants to make love, I want to drink
Drinking is what I do best

She rolls on to her side
Reaches cross the blanket for my cigarettes
She asks me if I've called my wife?
I tell her "No, not yet"
And she says "You can't stall forever, you've got to make that call sometime"
But I just don't want to hear a stranger's voice on that end of the line

And she wants to make love, I want to drink
Drinking is what I do best

Back at the motel, she takes a shower
I watch the last rounds of a fight
I pick up the phone and call the restaurant
Dinner for two, someplace new tonight
I try to picture my wife with her new love, but I just can't get it right
And I just want to do something, I do well tonight

5. Motels And Planes

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Here I am once again back in this bar
Home for the shooting and the falling stars
It's a good place to start, it's a hard place to end
I'm just passing through here tonight old friend

So tell me what's new, where is your guitar?
Never thought you'd be working that side of the bar
Hey pour me a tall one, pour one for you
You know I don't drink as much as they think I do

These days, my time it seems is spent in motels and planes
But these were once my dreams, I've got no right to complain

It's been quite a year, yes I've had me a ball
I've sung from the stage of Carnegie Hall
I've stayed on the road for months upon months
And found me an agent who was famous once

I pay this agent for his advice
And all that he tells me is play safe and nice
You've got motels and planes, not couches and Fords
And they'll pay through the nose for the same old three chords

These days my time it seems is spent in motels and planes
But these were once my dreams, I've got no right to complain

Who is that woman who walked in the door
You heard me and my wife ain't together no more
I don't know what happened or what I did wrong
But you know me I'll get it into a song

The road it gets lonesome, there's no turning back
You do meet the women, that's just a fact
Carry on laughing and drinking and such
And though I always did look, I never did touch

These days my time it seems is spent in motels and planes
But these were once my dreams, I've got no right to complain

6. Up On The CP Line

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I live up on the C.P. Line, everybody knows
Where the women smell of turpentine and that's the way it goes
Where the working runs from hard to worse, summer, spring and fall
For when Great Northern holds the purse, you get no pay at all

Well it's hard times up on the line, hard times
Hard times up on the C.P. Line

I took a wife named "Daisy" many years ago
Daisy went woods crazy on the very last spring snow
Now she walks around without her clothes, she yodels through the day
I'd take to the doctor, but I like her thataway

I got a .308 that'll drive a tack, listen to me sing
I spend my days in a timber-shack waiting for the spring
When I see the lights of Jackson, shining to the south
I can almost feel the whiskey, rolling 'round my mouth

Well it's hard times up on the line, hard times
Hard times up on the C.P. Line

Yeah, way up on the C.P. Line, Canadian Pacific
The women tell me I look fine and their taste is terrific
So drink a little whiskey, boys, drink a little beer
You can find your hard times anywhere, so we just stay right here

7. Summer Night

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

You've travelled the river, from end to end
Never found a true love, anywhere you've been
Never broke a heart that wouldn't mend
On such a lovely summer night

Hands in your pockets as the band begins
Stand by the window, a touch of locust in the wind
This might be just one more town you'll say you been in
On such a lovely summer night

You take your chances when you start to roam
Waitin' on the slow dances, then you ask to walk her home
And if she says, "Please stay," you'll say "I might"
It's such a lovely summer night

You hold her close, yeah, look her in the eye
You make her laugh, then sing that one song to make her cry
And maybe this is that time where there's no goodbye
On such a lovely summer night

8. She's That Kind Of Mystery

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

You can look into her eyes and live forever
She's as restless as the sea
She's as calm as a summer dawn
She's that kind of mystery

And you can write the song that wins her heart
A song will take you half the way
For you know, from the start
You'll never write the song to make her stay

Love comes, in the sound of a dream in the whisper of a prayer
And the promise in a sigh
Love comes from the corner of a smile, but it isn't meant for you
She'll only stay awhile

And she will fall asleep within your arms
And you will know the fear our love endures
For in the night, she'll pledge her heart
But she cannot give what is not hers

You can look into her eyes and live forever
She's as restless as the sea
She's as calm as a summer dawn
She's that kind of mystery

9. Girls Of Santa Fe

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Do the girls of Santa Fe stroll around the town?
Do they stop to pray when the evening sun goes down?
Do the girls of Terre Haute dream of Malibu?
Do they stay at home to keep the dreams alive and true?

Where are your dreams tonight? Where are your dreams tonight?
Did you smile once for me as your dreams faded from sight?

Do the girls of Ketchikan promise to be true?
When it comes down man-to-man, are you captain, are you crew?
Do the girls of Titusville hear the jets go by?
Do they remember still just how they said goodbye?

And do the angels up above, ask in a voice so clear
is there any room for love once the heart is filled with fear?
Where are your dreams tonight? Where are your dreams tonight?
Did you smile once for me as your dreams faded from sight?

10. The Driver's Song

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've got my lunch packed, I've got the darkness of a new moon
My truck is gassed tonight, I'll be leaving soon
Up the highway north, all across the state line
I love the feeling of this brand new truck of mine

I turn off the highway, and on to the back roads
The houses are set back and the lights disappear
I feel like the only man in this world
Everybody goes to sleep so early up here

I stop my truck in the middle of the road
The same stop each time on this familiar route
I open the side valve then climb back to the cab
And I drive these woods till that big tank empties out

I love these back roads of New Hampshire
They twist and wind like a rolling sea
I feel like a captain who knows no fear
Everybody goes to sleep so early up here

11. Car And Driver

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've got a Mercedes Benz with MD plates I have no trouble finding dates
I've got a 1980 Subaru, one more semester then I'm through
A Slant-6 Dodge is no big thrill but it's a car no atom bomb can kill
I make a lot of dough in a high-tech job, yeah sure you bet I drive a turbo Saab

I'll bet you a ten, even a fiver, you find the car and I'll find the driver
It really ain't no big deal to know who's inside that automobile

Well I've just airbrushed my Econo-line, "A friend of the devil is a Friend of Mine"
I've got a 1962 Biscayne it won't start if it looks like rain
A four wheel drive with extra chrome I keep it on the paved roads close to home
Cadillac the size of an Amtrak train when I drive I take two lanes

Now my Honda civic is a real go-getter, I look great in it in my crew neck sweater
And my BMW draws applause, I am not bound by traffic laws
I got a Ranger truck, I'm for import quotas, I won't park next to no Toyotas
My Volvo wagon will seat six, it'll run on diesel or trail mix

I'll bet you a ten, even a fiver, you find the car and I'll find the driver
It really ain't no big deal to know who's inside that automobile
Yes, who's inside that automobile

12. John Haber

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

John Haber died in the fire up above the IGA
All the other tenants made it out to safety
Back from work at seven he had some drinks and went to bed
The fireman said they found dead sometime after 9:30

The doctor said as the ambulance drove away
He died in his sleep there was no pain
The fire chief said they found him in bed
It was the smoke that killed him, not the flames

John Haber and I worked together in the card room
We used to share cigarettes by the open window on the sly
Stick your head into the fresh air, take a drag and watch the river
Sometimes that river moves so slow you couldn't see it passing by

And it was just two weeks ago John and I we were out drinking
Both of us sitting flush with plenty overtime on our checks
And just before he started slurring he said,
“I don't know how it happened, but it seems what I want
Has drifted so far from what I now expect”

13. She's Your Baby Now

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

You're the one who stole my baby, you took her with such ease
Now I feel just like Atlas saying, "So long Hercules"

She's your baby now
She's your baby now
I wouldn't try to steal her back even if I knew how
She's your baby now

If she needs a drink buy that girl a beer
If she starts talking mink, don't you drag her over here

She's your baby now
She's your baby now
You know I'm not too blue, there's nothing I can do
She's your baby now

If she needs a dollar, you know just what to do
If she needs attention just take that girl to the zoo

She's your baby now
She's your baby now
She'll be true to you till she finds someone new
She's your baby now

Take her for a walk, it's such a beautiful night
Take her down by the dock, hold her tight
Or she just might slip out on you tonight

14. These Cold Fingers

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Gina left town with the first snow of the year
He drove her to the airport in his Ford
And he tried to propose as he ordered one more beer
But the P.A. drowned his words, and it was time for her to board

So he walked her to the gate, he took his hat off as he kissed her
He needed one more drink to take the chill out of his soul
He said a quick good-bye then spent two hours in the bar
Finally paid his tab and kept a dollar for the toll

Everything slips through these cold fingers
Like trying to hold water, trying to hold sand
Close your eyes and make a wish and listen to the singer
One more round bartender; pour a double if you can

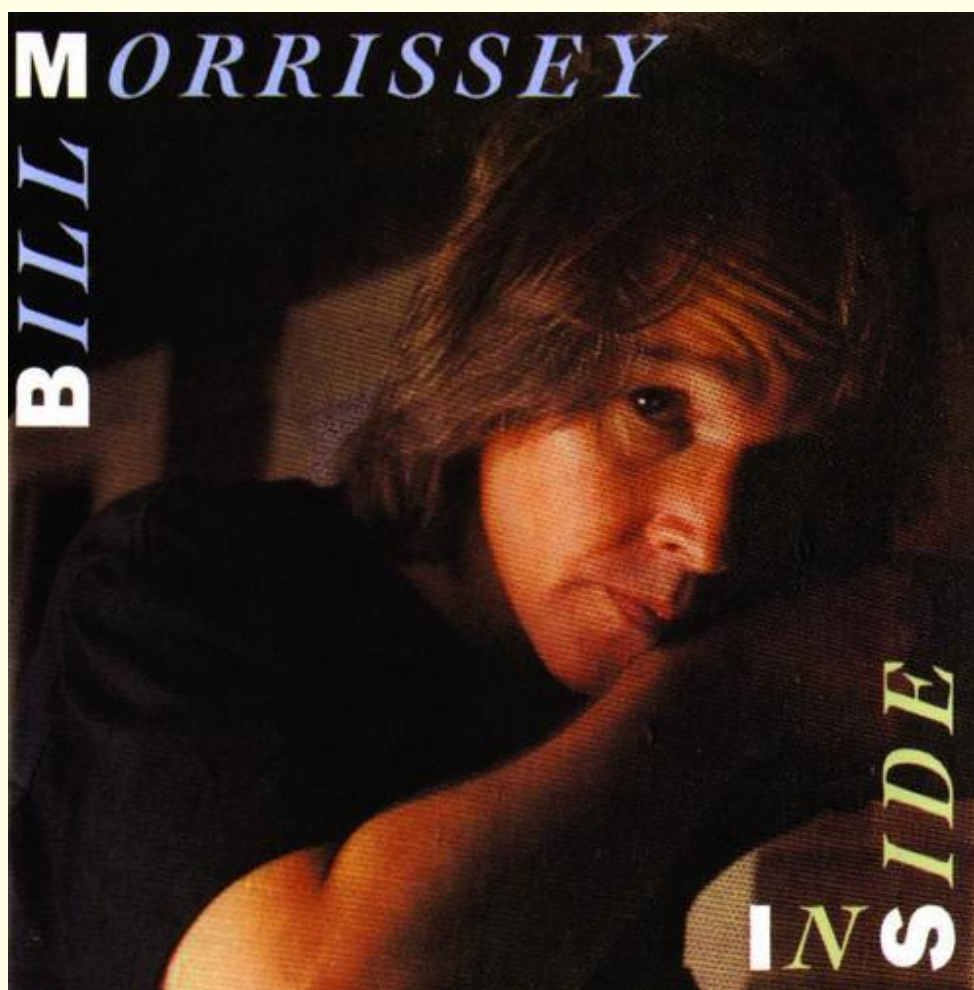
It's 4 o'clock and the sun's gone down the drain
It's still late winter, but they say it's early spring
Lewis reads the gas-pumps, Rossi counts the oils
But me, I'm done so punch the clock and "See you in the morning"

There's nothing back at home that ain't gone greasy from the stove
I never laughed so hard as when that old typewriter broke
Think I'll stop along the River Road for a half-pint and some beer
When everything would be okay if those old dreams would disappear

The dog can't move no more, surprised he made it till the spring
His pain won't go away and the pills don't do a thing
You've known that old hound longer than you've known any of your friends
And no matter how you let him down, he'll always take you back again

So it's one tall glass of whiskey, one last drink for old-times sake
The dog just lays in bed and watches every move you make
Wrap him in his blanket, hold him once more close to you
Lead him out behind the barn with a borrowed .22

INSIDE (1992)
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1. Inside

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This ain't Hollywood it never really gets that good
Call it love if you think you should, there's no need to explain

Tonight it's just you and me, a furnished room, black and white TV
The late movie runs till three, then it's just you and me again

There's no work, just a lot of talk, I quit drinking, now I watch the clock
I count the minutes in the dark, till the sun crawls up again

And you won't leave soon, because I know
You're just like me with no place to go
And there's a love still here no, nothing's died
It just got hurt and buried deep inside

No, this ain't Hollywood, it ain't Venice or Malibu
And it's not the life I promised you, when we set off years ago

You're waiting tables from one to nine, I fill out forms and stand in line
There's no work, just a waste of time, and every day's the same

You're home later each night I see, I fix dinner while you talk to me
And then we wait for the late movie to take us away again

No, this ain't Hollywood, it never really gets that good
Call it love if you think you should, there's no need to explain

2. Everybody Warned Me

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Well I can't turn around and I can't turn back
When the snows come down here in Cadillac
And it's so many miles up to Marquette
And the night is coming but it hasn't fallen yet
I know you need me but you just forget
I wish you loved me I wish you did
Everybody warned me, "Look out, kid"

Watch the waitress lean against the Frigidaire
The only past I've got is written down somewhere
She argues with the cook and I agree
I'm just sitting at the counter dreaming of Italy
And counting all the friends who claim they don't know me
Nothing lasts though I wish it did
Everybody warned me, "Look out, kid"

In the railroad flats they talk in tongues
And nobody breathes till his song is sung
You can look around but there's nothing here to steal
Take a look in the mirror and tell me how I feel
Coughing up blood in a Motel 6
Thinking this time it's for real
I wish you knew me like the desk clerk did
When he tried to warn me, "Look out, kid"

This morning got stolen by the paper boy as the wind blew in from Illinois
I just stayed in bed and waited for the chamber maid
Thinking maybe I could talk her into a trade
My job for hers as long as we both get paid
I wish you heard me I wish you did
When she tried to warn me, "Look out, kid"

In the rolling snow each town's the same
And I get called by a hundred names
And I ain't seen you since I can't remember when
But I've got a French postcard and a German pen
Finally send you all the words to "You Win Again"
So you can sing it just like Hank did
Hey, sign right here and look out, kid

3. Off-White

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

We'll invite our families and some of our friends
And maybe they'll even throw rice
And we'll have us a party, then get out of town
And not listen to any advice

We both feel so new, and this time we know
We'll never have any regrets
We'll hire us a band that won't play "Proud Mary"
No matter how late it gets

Yes, we'll hire us a band this time around
That plays nothing but our requests
Just me in my suit while I waltz you around
And you in your off-white dress

We both were married, we both were young
We both have made our mistakes
We know how it feels both when love is real
And when a heart truly breaks

So take care of the food and I'll find us that band
And together, we'll rent us a hall
Maybe you weren't my first the way I wasn't yours
But the last love is the sweetest of all

Yes, we'll hire us a band this time around
That plays nothing but our requests
Just me in my suit while I waltz you around
And you, in your off-white dress

4. Gambler's Blues

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The Jack of Diamonds slipped between two tens
He said, "Hide me, boys, till the season ends
I've been sharecropping for the Ace, King, Queen
And toward the end the game turned mean
The one game in town in town and I'm bound to lose
And I just can't shake these gambler's blues

Miss Downtown got her hair all wet
She got caught by the storm now she's so upset
She dries herself by the kitchen sink
As she quietly counts up everyone's drinks
And she can't control what she can't refuse
This one last shelter from the gambler's blues

Ah, the gambler's blues coming 'round the curve
Leave you with nothing but your broken nerve
You listen to the fire as you shovel in the coal
Stick your head out the window, see the drive wheels roll

St. Louis knows that he can't survive
With a broken horn and a Rico 5
Still he walks this bar with his head held high
And he honks and hollers till the well runs dry
And the Jack of Diamonds had to give him the news
There ain't no good notes in the gambler's blues

Then smoke fills the room 'cause the wood's too green
That's what you get when you buy from the Ace, King, Queen
And there's not much light and there's not much heat
But you learn to like how it smells so sweet
And when you count your change here, you count by twos
But you'll never buy off these gambler's blues

Jack of Diamond jumps out from the tens
He says, "We'll never know how this story ends
But you can tell old Bill when he gets home
That the Ace, King, Queen took Miss Downtown Home
Left him nothing but her old tattoos
And a roadmap of these gambler's blues

5. Long Gone

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've been long gone
From the stage to the highway to the night grille
And everywhere I went time just stood still
And in every town it all went down the same

I've been long gone
And in every dream was the dream that you'd still want me
In every motel room your brown eyes would just haunt me
And in every town I called out your name

I've been long gone
Set loose again to chase another payday
Knowing if I could just hold you I'd be okay
Tell me once again that you're still mine

There was nothing on the highway, there was nothing but the wind
And I couldn't look ahead; I could just see where I've been
From Hartford down to Tampa, Duluth to Malibu
I ran every trick, I told any lie just to get on home to you

I've been long gone
Now I'm standing in the doorway of your front hall
Ain't this better than a letter or a phone call?
Tell me once again that you're still mine

I've been long gone
Unpack my bags and throw away the suitcase
Let me know it's true, let me just touch your face
Tell me you still love me one more time

I've been long gone
And true love always comes as a surprise
Can you see your reflection in my eyes
Tell me you still love me one more time

I've been long gone
And those nights alone were almost too much to bear
Throw your arms around me and just keep them there
Tell me you still love me one more time

6. Man From Out Of Town

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The house burned down on a stormy night and they never did find out why
I just stood alone beneath the silver maple trying to keep my cigarettes dry
Waiting for the firemen, I couldn't save a thing
And deep inside my home above the roar of the flame
I swore I heard the telephone ring
The rain let up and we worked till dawn, just me and the firemen
And when they cut the power and the lines went dead, I never got called again
The house was gone by the break of dawn, the air was cold and grey
I just set off down the road alone, but it's always gone that way

So young, so long ago I thought I heard that train
Calling out my name, at least it sounded like my name
Just a boy with no direction, I left my home behind
And the sky changed color once I crossed that town line
My good friends did the best they could to hold me down with them
But I took one look and I packed my bags and I slipped around the bend
The lessons came from left and right, the first night out I found
The laws were not meant to protect the man from out of town

There was a cold street on the sea coast I once tried to call home
Where the church steeples rose up above the town like broken bones
Drinking whiskey with the Catholic priest one night in the rectory hall
He just shook his head and said, "You never know when Jesus calls"
Then his eyes got wide and he looked around but he just could not explain
It was like he heard the sound of Jesus laugh the way I heard that train

Now the years and the faces blur, still I can remember some
There were women washing windows, there were salesgirls chewing gum
There were curses in the shapes of old men kneeling in the pews
There are things in this life a man just does not get to choose
So, finally I found a home in a tiny mountain town
Just a simple place to keep me dry when the rain came pouring down
A place to sleep, the rent was cheap, brick walls and a new slate roof
The landlord said, "You'll be safe here, this house is fireproof"

7. Rite Of Spring

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've got a girl, she's a beautiful girl
She puts my heart on pins and needles
She may be a little young for me
But she can still name all four Beatles

All four Beatles and the Dave Clark Five
This tired heart feels so alive
I love that girl and it ain't no jive
All four Beatles and the Dave Clark Five

She's as wild as William Cody
We took a trip out to Minnesotie
Then she called up Hinckley and told him I kissed Jodie
She's got her own kind of way of having fun

There is a love that always swings
And you gotta get lucky or you'll never know
And when I'm in love I can do anything
I'll play "The Rite of Spring" on a frailed banjo

I've been a Holy Roller and the King of Spain
I've been in jail but I can't explain
I've been around the world and back again
And I called her name everywhere I've been

Well, then one day the seeds got sown
I went and broke my ramblin' bone
Now she's mine and she's mine alone
Think I'll strum this tune 'til the cows come home

8. Robert Johnson

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

In the year of '36, in the town of San Antone
A young man in a hotel room stares down a microphone
He sang each song once, and sang it once again
And each song come from a hole inside where a soul once had been

Those records made the juke all throughout the southland
Pretty women wondered, was he charmed or was he damned?
Look over his shoulder, was there something there he feared?
Turn your back for just one second, the man disappeared

Word came through St. Louis, up to Chicago
All the way to New York City, where the blues just come and go
Someone took his picture once and an angel stopped and cried
In his eyes, it was there to see: he'd crossed the other side

In a bar on a warm spring night, was a man come through the door
He had a bottle with a broken label, Robert seen his face before
He said, "This is my very best; drink it down, drink it slow
'Cause when I call your name again, you just pack up and go"

Was it some kind of trick, or did he jump the price?
Or did he find a way in Hell to sell his own soul twice?
'Cause there's a cry in the wind tonight and only one man makes that sound
Baby, grab your hat and coat, Robert Johnson's back in town



9. Hang Me, Oh Hang Me
(trad., arranged by Bill Morrissey and Greg Brown)
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Hang me, oh hang me, and I'll be dead and gone
Hang me, oh hang me, and I'll be dead and gone
I wouldn't mind the hanging, just the laying in the grave so long
I've been all around the world

I've been all around Cape Girardeau and parts of Arkansas
All around Cape Girardeau, parts of Arkansas
Got so goddamn hungry I could hide behind a straw
I've been all around the world

I went up on the mountain and there I made my stand
Went up on the mountain, there I made my stand
With a rifle on my shoulder and a dagger in my hand
I've been all around the world

Put the rope around my neck, hang me up so high
Put the rope around my neck, hang me up so high
Last thing I heard him say, "It won't be long now 'til you die"
I've been all around the world

Hang me, oh hang me, and I'll be dead and gone
Hang me, oh hang me, and I'll be dead and gone
I wouldn't mind the hanging, just the laying in the grave so long
I've been all around the world

10. Chameleon Blues

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Hey, pretty baby, I see you're changing once again
I love the way it happens every time with every new boyfriend
One day you're with a cowboy and you've got the Stetson on your head
Next day you're with a downtown boy and you're all dressed up in red

When you dated the police chief, I know you packed a gun
When you dated the archbishop, I know what you done
There was the scuba diver and you looked so great in fins
And that time with the explorer, you could've passed for Gunga Din

There once was a time, it caught me by surprise
I was looking in your direction and you were making eyes
But there's one thing baby, and it's a natural fact
We've both heard me sing and the world just does not need two of that

Yes, this new boy you've been seeing, I've known him for so long
And I love the way you say he'll never do you wrong
Now you walk like him, slouch like him, talk like him; it's true
Ah, tell me, pretty baby: do you cheat on yourself, too?

So long, pretty baby, I'll see you down the line
Wonderful to see you, yes, the pleasure's always mine
There's just one thing you've got to promise me you'll do
You've got to have me over when you fall in love with someone just like you

11. Sister Jo

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Well, there she goes
Sister Jo walks down the avenue
With her tiny, well-armed retinue
And she sees everyone here but she wants you

I suppose
You can run and hide awhile
But they'll catch you and put you up on trial
Or you can just give up and go down in grand style

Watch her hands
They can give away the sun
They'll turn you into anyone
Then she'll laugh and say she's only just begun

The night will call you down the hall
To a room where you're just left to guess
And you'll hear your name after all
But the night's too hot, nothing rests
As she asks you to watch her undress

Sister Jo
Will ask you what her smile reveals
As she watches the shark play with the seals
Then she'll tell you the rewards for one who steals

Sister Jo
She counts on kings to shape her life
She's working hard to find you the right wife
And she's always so quiet like a knife

Sister Jo
Will draw you pictures of your sins
Then send you off to work the cotton gins
And tell you this is where your world begins

Sister Jo
Created you from nothing, we all know
And she's tracked you all the way from Statesboro
And you'll escape into nothing if you go

12. Casey, Illinois

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Feels like this motel might explode
I just can't sleep well on the road
The snow, it piles outside my door
And I just can't call you late at night anymore

I set off young to make my name
Now I'm not young in a young man's game
Could've had some wins if I'd kept score
And I just can't call you late at night anymore

Through the years each mile just added to the distance
Between us two
And somewhere on some road I crossed that line, I moved too far
And now there's nothing I can do

The river forks and the highway bends
The stories fade but they never end
I speak your name and I walk the floor
I just can't call you late at night anymore

We all do things we don't believe
Yes, it was me who chose to leave
Still don't know why or know what for
I just can't call you late at night anymore

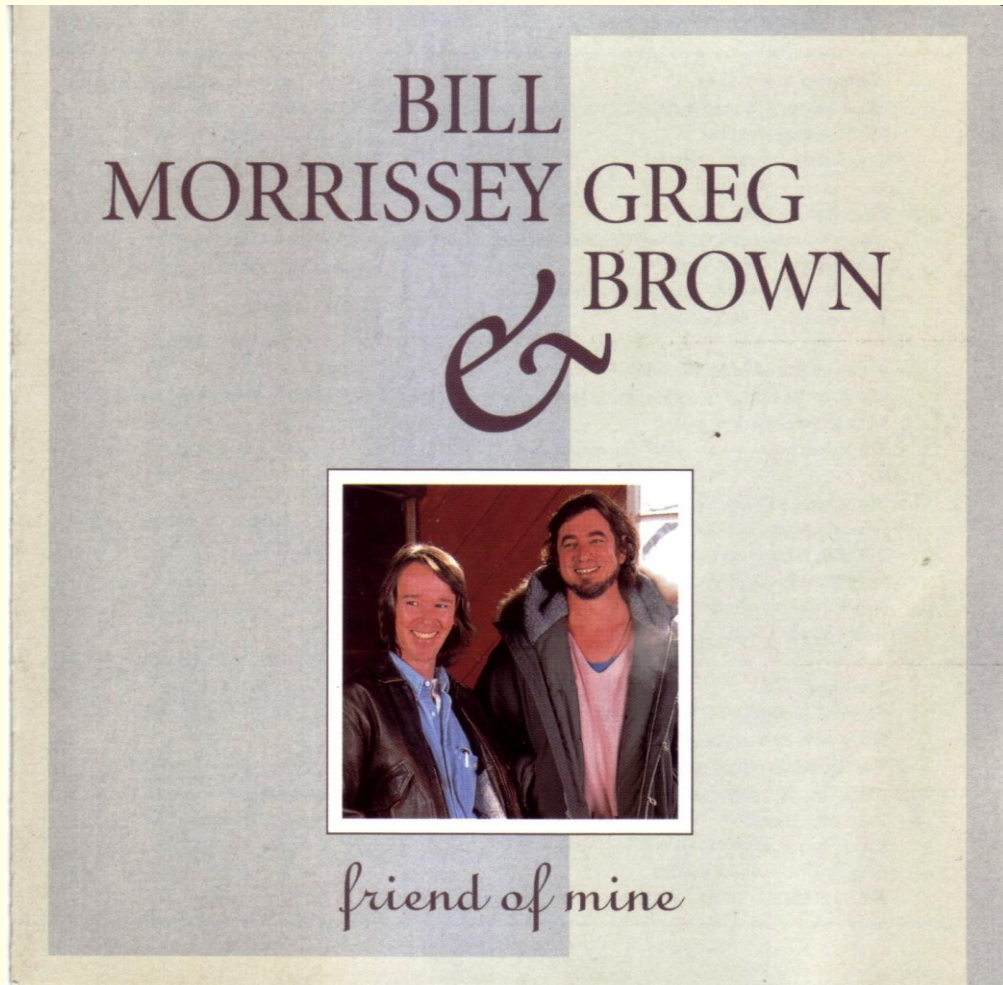
After midnight I have found
The hours slow and the clocks break down
Nothing moves like it did before
And I just can't call you late at night anymore



FRIEND OF MINE (WITH GREG BROWN) (1993)

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Due to copyright issues, some lyrics could not be reprinted



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1. Ain't Life A Brook (Ferron)
2. Little Red Rooster (Willie Dixon)
3. He Was A Friend Of Mine (trad.)
4. Memphis, Tennessee (Chuck Berry)
5. The Road (Danny O'Keefe)
6. You Can't Always Get What You Want (Mick Jagger & Keith Richards)
7. Duncan And Brady
8. Tom Dula (Frank Profitt)
9. Summer Wages (Ian Tyson)
10. I'll Never Get Out Of This World Alive (H. Williams & F. Rose)
11. Fishing With Bill (Greg Brown)
12. Baby, Please Don't Go

1. Ain't Life a Brook (Ferron)

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I watch you reading a book
I get to thinking our love's a polished stone
You give me a long drawn look
I know pretty soon you're gonna leave our home
And of course I mind, especially when I'm thinking from my heart
But life don't clickety-clack, down a straight-line track
It comes together and it comes apart, you say you hope I'm not the kind
To make you feel obliged to go ticking through your time
With a pained look in your eyes
You give me the furniture
Well divide the photographs
Go out to dinner one more time
Have ourselves a bottle of wine
And a couple of laughs

When first you left I stayed so sad I wouldn't sleep I know love's a gift
I thought yours was mine
And something that I could keep
Now I realize time is not the only compromise
A bird in the hand could be an all-night stand
Between a blazing fire and a pocket of skies
So I hope I'm not the kind
To make you feel obliged
To go ticking through your time
With a pained look in your eyes
I covered the furniture
I framed the photographs
Went out to dinner one more time
Had myself a bottle of wine
And a couple of laughs
Just the other day
I got your letter in the mail
I'm happy for you
It's been so long
You've been wanting
A cabin and a backwoods trail
And I think that's great
Me I seem to find myself in school
It's all okay
I just want to say
I'm so relieved

We didn't do it cruel
But ain't life a brook
Just when I get to
Feeling like a polished stone
I get me a long drawn look
It's kind of a drag
To find yourself alone
And sometimes I mind
Especially when I'm
Waiting on your heart
But life don't clickety-clack
Down a straight-line track
It comes together
And it comes apart
'Cause I know you're not the kind
To make me feel obliged
To go ticking through my time
With a pained look in my eyes
I sold the furniture
I put away the photographs
Went out to dinner one last time
Had myself a bottle of wine
And a couple of laughs
For wasn't it fine

2. Little Red Rooster (Willie Dixon)

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

© Hoochie Coochie Music, BMI

I have a little red rooster, too lazy to crow for day
I have a little red rooster, too lazy to crow for day
Keep everything in the barnyard, upset in every way

Oh the dogs begin to bark
And the hound begin to howl
Oh the dogs begin to bark, hound begin to howl
Ooh watch out strange kind people
Cause little red rooster is on the prowl

If you see my little red rooster, please drag him home
If you see my little red rooster, please drag him home
There ain't no peace in the barnyard
Since the little red rooster been gone



© Annie Provenzano

3. He Was A Friend Of Mine

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Trad. Arr. By G. Brown & B. Morrissey/Greg Brown Music, ASCAP & Dry Fly Music,
BMI, adm. By Bug Music

He was a friend of mine
He was a friend of mine
Every time I think about him now
Lord I just can't keep from cryin'
'Cause he was a friend of mine

He died on the road
He died on the road
He never had enough money
To pay his room or board
And he was a friend of mine

I stole away and cried
I stole away and cried
'Cause I never had too much money
And I never been quite satisfied
And he was a friend of mine

He never done no wrong
He never done no wrong
A thousand miles from home
And he never harmed no one
And he was a friend of mine

He was a friend of mine
He was a friend of mine
Every time I hear his name
Lord I just can't keep from cryin'
'Cause he was a friend of mine

4. Memphis Tennessee (Chuck Berry)

(www.chuckberry.com)

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B-Side of “Back in the USA” (Chess Records 1959)



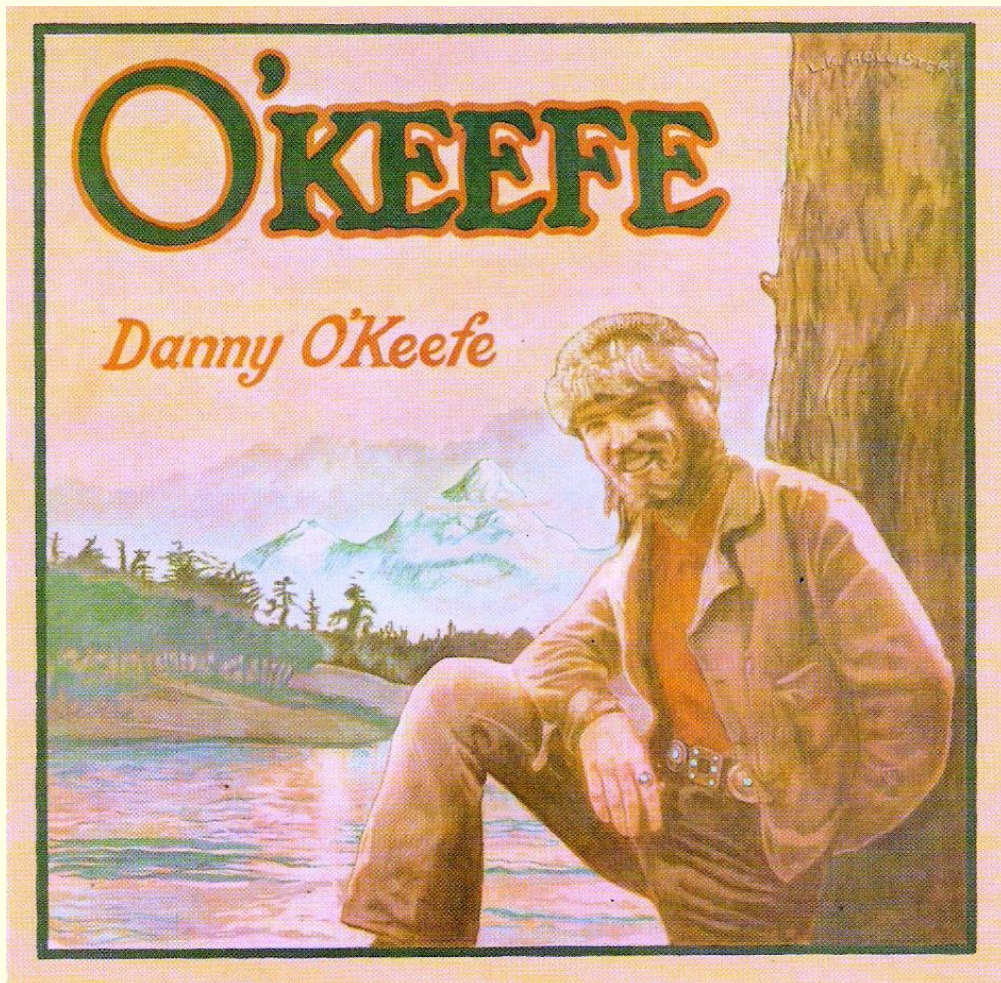
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5. The Road (Danny O'Keefe)

Due to copyright issues, lyrics could not be reprinted

([Back to album tracklist](#) — [Back to album list](#))

www.dannyokeefe.com



O'Keefe (Signpost Records/Atlantic 1972)

6. You Can't Always Get What You Want (Jagger/Richards)
Due to copyright issues, lyrics could not be reprinted

([Back to album tracklist](#) — [Back to album list](#))

www.rollingstones.com/release/let-it-bleed/



Let It Bleed (Decca Records 1969)

7. Duncan & Brady (Trad.)

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*Trad. Arr. By G. Brown & B. Morrissey/Greg Brown Music, ASCAP & Dry Fly Music,
BMI, adm. By Bug Music*

Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle little star
Up comes Brady in a 'lectric car
Got a mean look all 'round his eye
Gonna shoot somebody jus' to see them die

Duncan, Duncan was tending the bar
In walked Brady with a shining star
And Brady says, "Duncan you are under arrest
And Duncan shot a hole in Brady's breast

Brady, Brady carried a .45
Said it would shoot half a mile
Duncan had a .44
That what laid Mr. Brady so low

Brady fell down on the barroom floor
"Please, Mr. Duncan, don't shoot me no more"
Women all cryin' ain't it a shame
Shot King Brady, goin' shoot him again

"Brady, Brady, Brady, you know you done wrong
Walkin' in the room when the game was goin' on
Knockin' down windows, breakin' down the door
Now you lyin' dead on the barroom floor

Women all heard that Brady was dead
Goes back home and they dresses in red
Come a sniffin' and a sighin' down the street
In their big Mother Hubbards and their stockin' feet

8. Tom Dula (Frank Profitt)

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Additional lyrics by Bill Morrissey/ Dry Fly Music, adm. By Bug Music

Hand me down my banjo, I'll pick it on my knee
This time tomorrow, it won't be no use to me

I met her on the mountain and she swore she'd be my wife
T'was on that mountain, there I took her life

Hanging down your head Tom Dula, hang down your head and cry
You killed poor Laurie Foster, poor boy you're bound to die

All the pretty girls in Memphis, just waiting there on me
If it hadn't been for Grayson, I'd a-been in Tennessee

Hang your head, Tom Dula, hang your head and cry
You killed poor Laurie Foster, poor boy you're bound to die

The tree being oak, boys, the rope being strong
This time tomorrow, reckon I'll be gone

Hang down your head Tom Dula, hang down your head and cry
Hang down your head Tom Dula, poor boy you're bound to die

Hand me down my banjo, I'll pick it on my knee
If you'd have heard her laughing, you'd a-done the same as me

Hang down your head Tom Dula, hang down your head and cry
You killed poor Laurie Foster, poor boy you're bound to die

9. Summer Wages (Ian Tyson)

*Due to copyright issues, lyrics could not be reprinted
([Back to album tracklist](#) — [Back to album list](#))*

www.iantyson.com



Ian & Sylvia (Columbia 1971)



Ian Tyson, Cowboyography (Vanguard 1986)

10. I'll Never Get Out Of This World Alive (Hank Williams & F. Rose)

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

(Milene/Opryland Inc. — Intersong USA, Inc. ASCAP)

Now you're lookin' at a man that's gettin' kinda mad
I had lots of luck but it's all been bad
No matter how I struggle and strive
I'll never get out of this world alive

My fishin' pole's broke, the creek is full of sand
My woman run away with another man
No matter how I struggle and strive
I'll never get out of this world alive

A distant uncle passed away and left me quite a batch
And I was livin' high until that fatal day
A lawyer proved I wasn't born
I was only hatched

Ev'rything's agin' me and it's got me down
If I jumped in the river I would prob'ly drown
No matter how I struggle and strive
I'll never get out of this world alive

These shabby shoes I'm wearin' all the time
Are full of holes and nails
And brother if I stepped on a worn out dime
I bet a nickel I could tell you if it was heads or tails

I'm not gonna worry wrinkles in my brow
'Cause nothin's ever gonna be alright no how
No matter how I struggle and strive
I'll never get out of this world alive

11. Fishin' With Bill (Greg Brown)

(Greg Brown Music/Printed with permission)

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Man what a winter
Sorrow wide and deep
Is it just the media industry or the whole country
That is turning into sheep?
I wanna go to a good place
With a friend of mine
Cast our souls out in the river
And watch the whole deal shine
Some little crick in Massachusetts, just over the hill
Oh I, I'm goin' fishin' with Bill

Well, Bill, I bet he is a good fly caster
He grew up on these eastern brooks
Me, I grew up on the midwestern cricks
Casting crappie flies for chubs and such
But in my young imagination
I watched a Number 20 Coachman settle down
Sitting by the stove in that little library
Reading Roderick L. Haig-Brown
I never did fish in Vancouver I probably never will
I don't care I'm goin' fishin' with Bill

Well, it's a long and noble tradition
Catching trout on the fly
When you're done, with the setting of the sun
Gonna drink a little bourbon if you're dry
See some folks out on the river
Cool, scientific and clean
They look like everything just kinda stuck to them
The last time they walked through ol' L. L. Bean
My friend, Dave, says the good fishermen are the ones who have fun and we will
Oh I, I'm goin' fishin' with Bill

Sittin' in a bar in Brattleboro
Thinkin' about one of his songs
The rain was pourin' down, and I was pourin' it down
And all I could do was hum along
We've talked about goin' fishin' so often
At some party when the gig was done
Well, life slips by like a little dry fly
Sliding down a deep slick run
So let us stand steady like an old mill
Oh I, I'm goin' fishin' with Bill

Maybe Handsome Molly will pass by
As we cast away the hours
Somewhere on a river somewhere far away
From stupid people in positions of power
Someday when we ain't folk singers
Flyin' through the friendly skies
We won't be waiting for the big break
Or anything except the evening rise
On some spring creek in Wisconsin or maybe the Batten Kill
Oh I, I'm goin' fishin' with Bill
I'm goin' fishin' with Bill...um um um
I'm goin' fishin' with Bill...yes, I am
I'm goin' fishin' with Bill

G: Y'know, Bill?

B: Wha? Wha?

G: I think if we just tried a little, some kinda little streamer right
Over there; go ahead and cast over...

B: What d'ya got - a blasting cap?

G: See that clump of grass over there...

B: A Number 12 blasting cap...

G: ... on the other side over there?

B: Yeah, yeah I see that

G: I have a feelin' there's about a 5 1/2 pound rainbow under one of them...

B: Ah, 6...

G: ...just waitin' for someone to come along...and catch...

B: I'll catch the fish

G: We need to catch just one trout here, Bill...just one...

B: What? Ya hungry?

G: ...'cause I'm hungry, I don't know about you...

B: Well, I'll catch the fish

G: I know we're both catch and release guys. I know we believe in that
But if we caught just one trout, we could eat it, couldn't we, so we could
Sustain ourselves and the beautiful spirit of the trout would become part of
Us....and I'm hungry

B: Ah, ah...

G: Well, I'm not complainin' 'bout gettin' lost today

B: We, we weren't lost, Greg, ah...

G: We've seen a lot of parts of Massachusetts I've never seen before; it's
Not that, it's...

B: ...the map was broken

G: ...it's late and we need to catch one trout and put...

B: ...ok, ok, alright, I'll...

G: ...it on the grill if it's OK

B: Alright

Goin' fishin' with Bill

Goin' fishin' with Bill

12. Baby, Please Don't Go (Trad.)

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Baby, please don't go baby, please don't go
Baby, please don't go down to New Orleans
You know I love you so baby please don't go

Baby, your mind done gone well, your mind done gone
Well, your mind done gone left the county farm
You had the shackles on baby, please don't go

Before I be your dog before I be your dog
Before I be your dog to get you way down here
I make you walk alone baby, please don't go
Hey

Baby, please don't go baby, please don't go
Baby, please don't go down to New Orleans
You know I love you so baby, please don't go

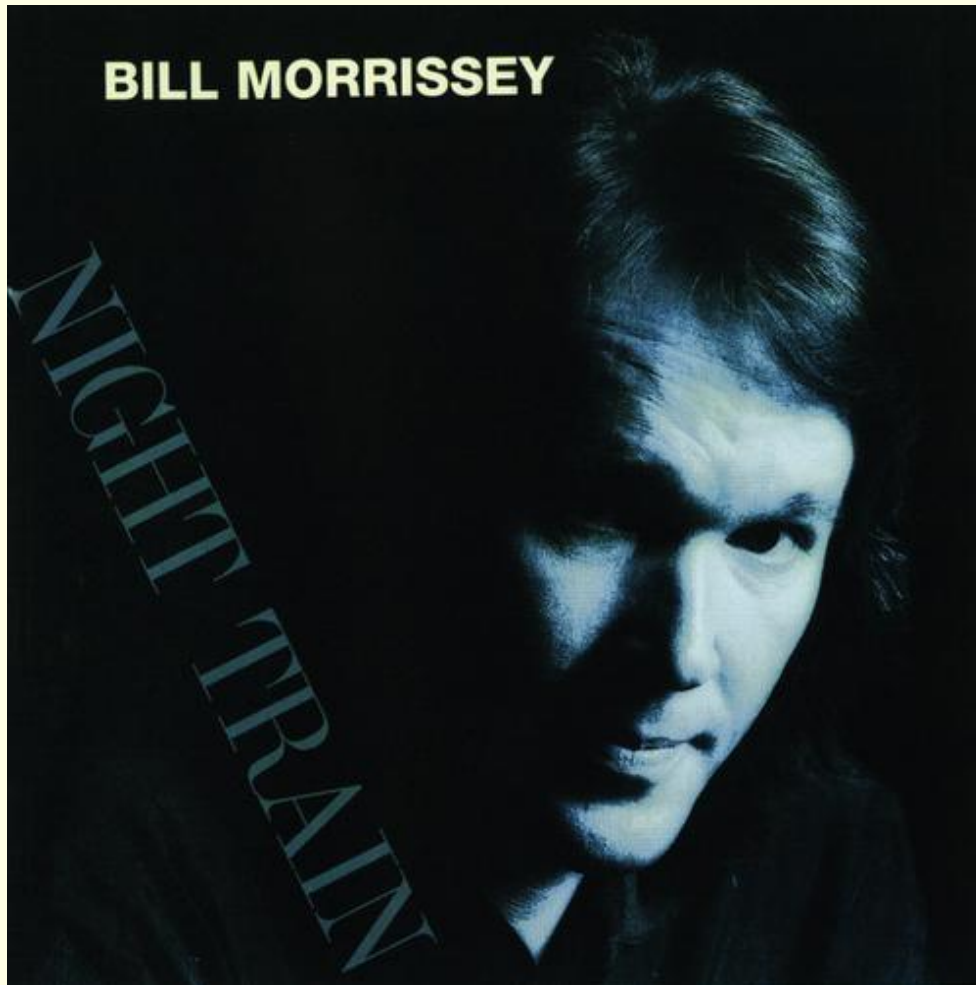
Before I be your dog before I be your dog
Before I be your dog git you way down here
Make you walk alone baby, please don't go

Know how I feel right now
My baby leavin', on that midnight train
And I'm cryin'

Baby, please don't go oh, baby please don't go
Baby, please don't go down to New Orleans
You know I love you so baby, please don't go
Let's go

Before I be your dog before I be your dog
Before I be your dog to git you way down here
I make you walk alone baby, please don't go, yeah

NIGHT TRAIN (1993)
(Back to album list)



© Tim Carter

1. Night Train
2. Sandy
3. Birches
4. Cold, Cold Night
5. Letter From Heaven
6. Ellen's Tune
7. So Many Things
8. Love Arrives
9. Blues In The Morning
10. Broken Waltz Time
11. Walk Down These Streets
12. Time To Go Home

1. Night Train

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've been hanging around this station
Long enough to know where the brakeman disappears when the whistle blows
And who's gonna make it out all right when the final night train shows
Ah, babe, it's true, I've seen a lot of women here waiting just like you

Hear the fireman start singing the same time every day
The same song about his life and his well planned getaway
And it's a shame to hear such a pretty voice with not one thing to say
Ah, babe, it's true, you would have loved him back in time if he'd only sung for you

Moonlight in the water tower always shines so cold
In the shadow of the pay phone the saints are getting bold
And it don't matter to them now if it's real or just fool's gold
Ah, babe, it's true, I heard all the saints tonight talking only of you

Listen deep into the night, girl Can you hear the whistle blow?
Looks like you're gonna make it out all right but there's one thing you must know:
The only ones who can help you now are the ones who must stay here when you go
Ah babe, it's true, I've seen a lot of women here smiling just like you

And there are some saints still in hiding by the river in the reeds
And they're turning down every train that don't feel the right speed
Sing them this song when you pass by; it'll be your last good deed
Ah babe, it's true, the saints are down every line waiting just for you

2. Sandy

((Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Sandy's going back to church
She's all the talk among her friends
Her world got too hard, too cruel
She's going to be a little girl again

Welcome her with open arms
When troubles just refuse to leave
Let the stained glass keep her from harm
It's not time to think but to believe

Now all the questions come with answers
And all the wishes can come true
There is such a comfort in the music
And knowing just what to do

I can tell by just one look
She wants me to come along
But the priest and I read the same book
And one of us must've got it wrong

Yes, once I knew that church so well
And I followed it like a shooting star
And I can take a drink or go to church
And no one hates me in a bar

Sandy's kneels down by the candles
She says a prayer for a lost friend
Sandy's going back to church
She's going to be a little girl again

3. Birches

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

They sat at each end of the couch and watched as the fire burned down
So quiet on this winter's night, not a house-light on for miles around
Then he said, "I think I'll fill the stove, it's getting time for bed"
She looked up, "I think I'll have some wine
How 'bout you?" she asked, and he declined

"Warren," she said, "Maybe just for tonight, let's fill the stove with birches
And watch as the fire burns bright
How long has it been? It's been quite a while
Pour yourself half a glass and stay with me a little while"

And Warren, he shook his head as if she'd made some kind of joke
"Birches? On a winter night? No, we'll fill the stove with oak
Oak will burn as long and hot as a July afternoon
Birch will burn itself out by the rising of the moon

And you hate a cold house same as me. Am I right or not?"
"All right, all right that's true," she said "It was just a thought"
Then she said, "Warren, you do look tired. Maybe you should go up to bed
I'll take care of the wood tonight." "Oak," he told her. "Oak," she said

She listened to his footsteps as he climbed up the stairs
Then she pulled a sweater on her and set her wine glass on a chair
She walked down cellar to the woodbox. It was cold as an ice chest
Then climbed back up with four logs, each as white as a wedding dress

And she filled the stove and poured the wine, then she sat down on the floor
She curled her legs beneath her, as the fire sprang to life once more
And it filled the room with its hungry light, and it cracked as it drew air
And the shadows danced a jittery waltz like no one else was there

She stood up in the heat, and she twirled around the room
And the shadows, they saw nothing but a young girl on her honeymoon
And she knew the time, it would be short soon the fire would start to fade
She thought of heat, she thought of time. She called it an even trade

Birches

Words and music by Bill Morrissey

The idea for "Birches," recorded on *Night Train*, came to Morrissey about ten years ago while he was hauling wood in northern Maine. "Birch and pine will start a fire real fast," Morrissey explains. "They burn hot but go out quickly. I was

carrying four birch logs, and it came to me: 'Four logs each white as a wedding dress.'" While writing songs for *Night Train*, the image finally bore fruit. "I thought, 'Now I know what to do with that image.'" He wrote the song in about 45 minutes.

Capo IV

Intro

G Bm Am C D

1. THEY

Verse

G 210034 Bm x13421

5 SAT AT EACH END OF THE COUCH AND WATCHED AS THE FIRE BURNED DOWN SO

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. See additional lyrics.

Am x02310 C x32010 D xx0132

7 QUI-ET ON THIS WIN-TER NIGHT NOT A HOUSE LIGHT ON FOR MILES A-ROUND THEN HE

G 210034 Bm x13421

9 SAID "I THINK I'LL FILL THE STOVE IT'S GET-TING TIME FOR BED"

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Am
x02310

11 SHE LOOKED UP "I THINK I'LL HAVE SOME WINE HOW 'BOUT

1, 2, 3. C x32010 D xx0132 To Coda after verse 7

12 YOU?" SHE ASKED AND HE DE-CLINED "OAK" HE TOLD HER "OAK" SHE

Coda

G 210034 D.S. al Coda

14 SAID

G 210034 TRADE

Bm x13421 Am x02310 C x32010 D xx0132 G 210034

1. THEY SAT AT EACH END OF THE COUCH
AND WATCHED AS THE FIRE BURNED DOWN
SO QUIET ON THIS WINTER NIGHT
NOT A HOUSE LIGHT ON FOR MILES AROUND
THEN HE SAID, "I THINK I'LL FILL THE STOVE
IT'S GETTING TIME FOR BED"
SHE LOOKED UP. "I THINK I'LL HAVE SOME WINE
HOW 'BOUT YOU?" SHE ASKED, AND HE DECLINED
2. AND "WARREN," SHE SAID
"MAYBE JUST FOR TONIGHT
LET'S FILL THE STOVE WITH BIRCHES
AND WATCH AS THE FIRE BURNS BRIGHT
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?
I KNOW IT'S QUITE A WHILE
POUR YOURSELF HALF A GLASS
AND STAY WITH ME A LITTLE WHILE"
3. AND WARREN, HE SHOOK HIS HEAD
AS IF SHE'D MADE SOME KIND OF JOKE
"BIRCHES ON A WINTER NIGHT?
NO, WE'LL FILL THE STOVE WITH OAK
OAK WILL BURN AS LONG AND HOT
AS A JULY AFTERNOON
AND BIRCH WILL BURN ITSELF OUT
BY THE RISING OF THE MOON
4. AND YOU HATE A COLD HOUSE SAME AS ME
AM I RIGHT OR NOT?"
"ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, THAT'S TRUE," SHE SAID
"IT WAS JUST A THOUGHT"

- THEN SHE SAID, "WARREN, YOU DO LOOK TIRED
MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO UP TO BED
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE WOOD TONIGHT"
"OAK," HE TOLD HER. "OAK," SHE SAID
5. SHE LISTENED TO HIS FOOTSTEPS
AS HE CLIMBED UP THE STAIRS
THEN SHE PULLED A SWEATER ON HER
AND SET HER WINE GLASS ON A CHAIR
SHE WALKED DOWN CELLAR TO THE WOOD BOX
IT WAS AS COLD AS AN ICE CHEST
THEN CLIMBED BACK UP WITH FOUR LOGS
EACH AS WHITE AS A WEDDING DRESS
6. AND SHE FILLED THE STOVE AND POURED THE WINE
THEN SHE SAT DOWN ON THE FLOOR
SHE CURLED HER LEGS BENEATH HER
AS THE FIRE SPRANG TO LIFE ONCE MORE
AND IT FILLED THE ROOM WITH ITS HUNGRY LIGHT
AND IT CRACKED AS IT DREW AIR
AND THE SHADOWS DANCED A JITTERY WALTZ
LIKE NO ONE ELSE WAS THERE
7. SHE STOOD UP IN THE HEAT
AND SHE TWIRLED AROUND THE ROOM
AND THE SHADOWS, THEY SAW NOTHING
BUT A YOUNG GIRL ON HER HONEYMOON
AND SHE KNEW THE TIME, IT WOULD BE SHORT
SOON THE FIRE WOULD START TO FADE
SHE THOUGHT OF HEAT, SHE THOUGHT OF TIME
AND SHE CALLED IT AN EVEN TRADE

4. Cold, Cold Night

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

She comes out of nowhere with nowhere to go
And it's like you were waiting but you just didn't, just didn't know
She might look away but she'll never treat you unkind
On a cold, cold night when the stars refuse to shine

Her voice is a prayer and it hides in the wind
'til the wind just forgets her and that's where all of her stories begin
She was not sent to guide you as that long road unwinds
On a cold, cold night when the stars refuse to shine

A maple branch clicks up above you
The mailbox leans in the snow
The light on her face from the grocery behind you
Tells you she's one you can never let go

Her eyes tell a secret you never can share
And it seems in a minute she has always been, always been there
It happens so quickly, nothing can go wrong this time
On a cold, cold night when the stars refuse to shine

5. Letter From Heaven

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Mama Cass has dropped some weight and Charlie Parker's clean
Django's fingers have both gone straight
And they've got driving lessons for James Dean
Jimi's playing faster, sometimes we jam all day
And old Abe Lincoln is a happy boy 'cause he finally got to see the end of the play

It's a great life here in heaven
It's better than the Bible said
It's a great life here in heaven
It's a great life when you're dead

Ah, there ain't no egos anywhere and no one talks show biz
And Gabriel, he's got a great big smile He's taking lessons from Miles and Diz
Bing Crosby's on the green in one and he's singing when he putts
And Elvis really likes to visit earth just to drive you people nuts

And me, I couldn't be happier, the service here is fine
They've got dinner ready at half-past nine
And I'm going steady with Patsy Cline
And just last night in a bar room
I bought Robert Johnson a beer
Yeah, I know, everybody's always surprised to find him here

6. Ellen's Tune

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Well, I drink for ballast and I sing for fun,
And I love my baby when her hair's undone
And I love the way she call my name
Hey, I love the way she calls my name, crying hey, hey!
No one's ever called me quite the same

Got a yellow house on a northern shore
And my baby comes around about half-past four
And I love the way she knocks upon my door
Hey, I love the way she knocks upon my door, crying hey, hey
No one's ever knocked like that before

Nothing up my sleeves, no bag of tricks
Glad she goes for lyrics, not guitar licks
And I love the way she calls my name
Hey, I love the way she calls my name, crying hey hey
No one's ever called me quite the same

7. So Many Things

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Sleep came unexpectedly the way it sometimes does
And when I heard a voice beside me, I knew who it was
As I turned to face the streetlight, I saw you beckoning
Oh, I dreamed of you last night but I dream of so many things

The years just kept on moving pushing onward like the light
Of a star long since imploded and disappeared into the night
Like that gentle melody, to you I used to sing
Oh, I dreamed of you last night, but I dream of so many things

All the night the shades were drawn the sky was on the run
I waited for you until dawn, but the dawn wouldn't come
"This dream will just repeat itself," you said so casually
And then you never saw me smiling when you turned your back on me

The moon revolves around the earth, the earth around the sun
Not long ago they did believe that's not how it was done
Were we really all that close? Was it like winter into spring?
Oh, I dreamed of you last night, but I dream of so many things

I woke up in a motel but I could not name the town
Seems I never get to anyplace before the sun goes down
And I tried hard to get back to sleep to see what it would bring
Oh, I dreamed of you last night, but I dream of so many things

8. Love Arrives

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Love arrives in a big white Cadillac
Love slips in through a screen door in the back
It don't matter what you do
Ah, when love comes to call on you
It's a big world and you're just passing through

Love arrives with tickets to the ball
Love stands with his hat in his hands in your own front hall
You're not alone, it's true
When love made a fool of you
It's a big world and you're just passing through

Baby, now, you can't stop it, you can't shake it
You can't top it, and you can't fake it
It cannot be sold or bought
And it's coming after you now, ready or not

Love arrives with confidence and style
Love comes in slapping the dust off all the miles
So don't be sad and blue
Ah, tonight it's just me and you
In a big world and we're just passing through

Love arrives in a big white Cadillac
Love slips in through a screen door in the back
It don't matter what you do
When love comes to call on you
It's a big world and you're just passing through
It's a big world and we're just passing through

“Bill Morrissey’s songs touch my soul and ring true for me. His characters possess a bitter-sweet, life goes on quality. They seem to be saying “This is life — it wasn’t better yesterday and there probably won’t be any panacea tomorrow.” There is no truth but the truth we know.

It’s what I understand as the human condition, and Bill portrays it with the insight and craft of a truly great writer” — David Johansen

9. Blues In The Morning

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Blues in the morning and the summer rain
Falls on my porch roof soft as champagne
Scarecrow hides in a row of corn
It must've been raining the day I was born

A change in the weather just come this way
Sit on this back porch, hope it rains all day
Water drips down where the screen is torn
It must've been raining the day I was born

I can't stop the rain from falling
I won't even try
Let it all come down, there's no use stalling
I just never seen it rain from such a lonesome sky

Church bells ring down in the town
Church choir singing, such a fat and holy sound
I think I hear an angel with a golden horn
It must've been raining the day I was born

Well, she left a pair of shoes out on the lawn
I'll let them dry out and someday send them on
The tops are still shiny but the soles are worn
It must've been raining the day I was born

10. Broken Waltz Time

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

You can sing anything that you want
The evening is so far from through
And I've been learning this old labor tune
While we all waited for you

The new fiddler, he comes from Montreal
He won't talk 'cause he only speaks French
And before you sit down let me take his drink
Off of your piano bench

Everyone's tuned up and ready to play
There's no one that you've still got to meet
So you count it off, 'cause we love the way
No one here can follow that beat

Will you still meet me tonight
Out by the highway sign?
Or will you just play your regrets once again
In your crazy broken waltz time?

Your hair, it swirls like a fire in the snow
Your hands dance over the keys
And I can hear the soft voice of that piano
Saying, "Yes baby, yes baby, please"

Your eyes follow mine as I play my guitar
I find myself lost for a rhyme
To remember the way we made love that day
In nearly three-quarter time

The fiddler watches you wondering when
You're gonna slow down or speed up
Finally, he just shuts his eyes again
He turns around once and gives up

But me, I've been coming here for much too long
To fall out the first time it don't work
It may take awhile to catch up with your style
So you just give the rhythm a jerk

Because you and I, we've been playing for years
Don't you ever wonder why that is?
But even the fiddler, he understands
So watch out, the next chorus is his

11. Walk Down These Streets

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I can walk down these streets tonight and not feel a thing
Ah, the ghosts of this town can scream, I won't hear a thing
I can walk past your house and watch the wind blow across your lawn
And all the house lights are up, ah, but baby the soul is gone
I can walk down these streets tonight and not feel a thing

I can stop on that wooden bridge and wait for the train
Just to blow through this town one more time with its sad refrain
You can hear it blow through the still air of a town come to its end
And every whistle reminds this town someone else is gone again
I can walk down these streets and not feel a thing

Well, you stood on the curb in your robe and you cursed my name
I was already packed and alone so I took the blame
As I begged you one last time to come along
You cursed me again as you said you knew how the years would prove me wrong
But I can walk down these streets tonight and not feel a thing

Now, I don't need to see you, I've seen our old friends
Still watching the traffic go by from the 5 and 10
No, they never got out, never knew there was some place to go
Ah, but they scattered like trout at first sign of my shadow
And I can walk down these streets tonight and not feel a thing

I don't belong here but you know I never did
Even though I pledged my love to you once back when I was a kid
And for years this town and you haunted me down to the bone
But I can walk these streets tonight and it never felt so good to be alone
I can walk down these streets tonight and not feel a thing

12. Time To Go Home

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

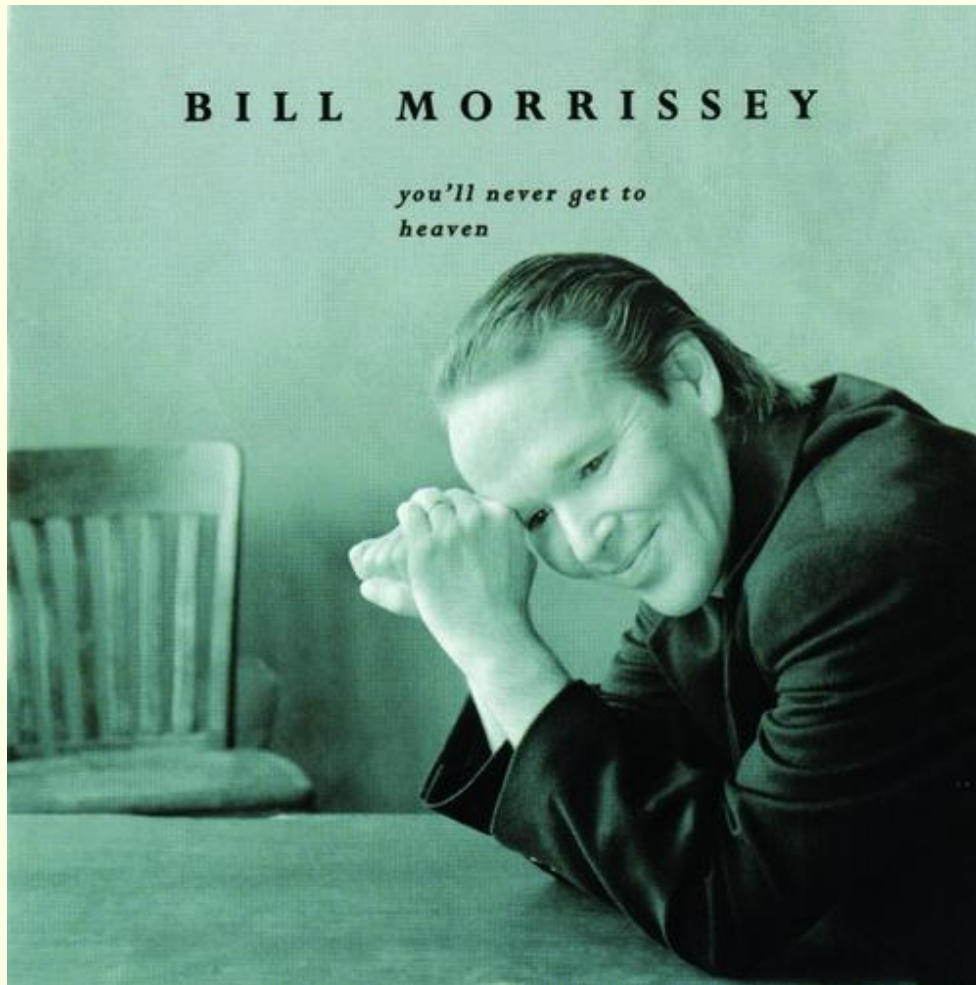
Well, she looked so small, she looked so frail
It was like the world forgot her as she stood outside the jail
They sit and stare, they rarely speak
She comes to see him the same time every week
And never wants to leave, but she knows she must
Then the Yellow Cab comes right on time
And scoops her up like a speck of dust

When it's time to go home
It's time to go home
Where the night stay too long
In a world that's just gone wrong
It's time to go home

How did one summer become 19 years?
The Alaskan winters took their toll and then they made it clear
The gillnets and seiners, the salmon and crab
The dull-eyed girls of Ketchikan that took all that I had
I could sell the boat, cash the whole thing down
And move back to the 48, just tell stories back in that small town

Well, your t-shirt's clean, like your dungarees
And in two days you will be on your way overseas
Sit on the bed with a warm six-pack
Ah, it's not like how they said
But it's too late now to take it back
So you make some calls, but no one's home
You nurse your beers and spend the long night by the telephone

YOU'LL NEVER GET TO HEAVEN (1996)
(Back to album list)



© Marion Ettlinger

1. When Summer's Ended
2. You'll Never Get To Heaven
3. Married For Money
4. As Long As The Sun
5. Ashes, Grain And Sand
6. Winter Laundry
7. Waiting For The Rain
8. Different Currency
9. Hills Of Tuscany
10. Closed-Down Mill
11. Turn And Spin
12. Big Leg Ida

1. When Summer's Ended

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

She comes to see you when the summer's ended
The scent of apples fills the air
She wants to know if your heart has mended
And if it has, then can you take her there?

Her dress is a willow in a spring breeze
Her eyes are too young to chase yours
And you know you'll never see just what she sees
And anything she sees will soon be hers

'cause she knows love goes only to return in a new heart
And this time I'm sure she knows that heart is inside her

She tells you how this dream has found her and all past loves fade as she speaks
She talks and time surrounds her it might be hours, it might be days, it might be weeks

She still has the summer deep in her heart
While you're left with autumn in your soul
And what love brings together it can pull apart
And what love believes in can never grow old

She comes to see you when the summer's ended
The scent of apples fills the air
She wants to know if your heart has mended
And if it has, then can you take her there?

2. You'll Never Get To Heaven

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

You'll never get to heaven if you don't stop talking
And it's just a waste of time when there's no one there
It's just a little fever, don't you worry
It'll keep you warm in the cool night air

You'll never get to heaven if that dog keeps howling
And it's not at a man or a cat or the moon
Save your breath and just keep walking
The sun'll be rising sometime soon

All your friends are down, or long gone out of town
You were the only one crazy enough to stay
Except for maybe me and that howling dog makes three
What you want to go to heaven for anyway?

You'll never get to heaven if you don't stop drinking
And it's a little too late to make that list
This time of night, nobody's laughing
And it gets so quiet, you can hear a kiss

You'll never get to heaven till the season's over
And nothing but the husk and the hull remain
When that fever breaks, you will get colder
Till you're the same temperature as the rain

3. Married For Money

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Everyone told her he was too much older but there was nothing in that town to hold her
Nothing but a trailer, nothing but a mill
If she'd have listened to them she'd be there still
But now she's out of the shadow of that mill's smoke stack
She married for money and she never looked back

She won't answer the phone when her friends try to call
She wonders if they ever were her friends at all
All they ever told her was, you're just like us
You don't drive to work, you only ride the bus
But now the world looks so pretty from her Cadillac
She married for money and she never looked back

Married for money, she ain't the first
She ain't the blessed and she ain't the cursed
Tell me, honey what would you say
If the very same chance came your way?

Gold always shines and loves always fades
And it don't matter much when you pull down the shades
Thinking of her trailer that the wind blew through
While she's lying in bed with a job to do
She pulls one more cigarette out from her pack
She married for money and she never looked back

It's not like she couldn't see where her life was heading
Or didn't know what she was giving up or getting
A choice gets made and something then occurs
Still it hurts a little less when that choice is yours
You don't complain if your train stays on the track
She married for money and she never looked back

4. As Long As The Sun

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Home from the road to a house on a lake
Thinking you'd be home That was my mistake
Away from the stage Away from the crowd
How could an empty house sound so awful loud?

As long as the sun gonna rise in the east
Trouble's gonna come when you expect it least
As long as the sun dries the morning dew
I'll be waiting here I'll be missing you

Get up at dawn and I launch my boat
I drift around the lake and I read your note
It says you could not stay It says it very plain
And I looked and looked but there was no tear stain

I drift all day till I can't drift no more
So I put that boat up on the shore
I walk inside and don't know what to do
But now I think I know something you know too



© Marion Ettlinger

5. Ashes, Grain And Sand

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Tonight the streets are filled with drifters with eyes that fall on you like rain
Looking for someone to tell them what went wrong
When not a soul in this town will explain

When I last saw your Sleeping Beauty
She was all decked out and dressed to lose
She could only speak to me of the way we used to be
Yeah, I know her well and she's just slow blues

You can take your gamble to the freight yard
You can draw more cards and call my bluff
You can watch the sun go down and take out half this town
But night here never falls early enough

When your Sleeping Beauty calls, you must remember
Her love is tattered but it's true
And all the words you hear are only said to draw you near
And I've heard every word before you

Feel that wind blow across the prairie
It carries ashes and grain and sand
Those winds blow in from states you've never been
Everything here comes in second hand

Where nothing hurts and nothing's promised
And no one stays out of the rain
The drifters pass through here at this time every year
Just like a long drawn-out refrain

6. Winter Laundry

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

A salt wind blows in from the north
She can almost feel the spray
And the waves are pounding anything that might get in their way
There are no secrets on this island from the church down to the cove
She has sweet breads waiting for him
She has coffee on the stove

She walks back from the mailbox and pushes in the kitchen door
The snow and wind follow her in like they still want something more
She hides the mail in a cupboard turns on the clock radio
She wants to rush, but there is no need
There's too much time to go

She spends an hour in the shower
She puts on her favorite dress
She fixes her hair and make-up until her age becomes a guess
He stops by twice a week for her, stays a while, then he goes
She can't expect much more than that, not when the island knows

And when she sees his wife downtown
She knows their eyes will never meet
She buys her groceries without a word and does not linger on the street

She speaks to no one now
Her intentions plainly known
She rather be damned for eternity than spend one more week alone
The wind howls across the yard
The bedroom's cold and dry

He twirls her long hair around his finger before he says good bye
He wraps his scarf around his neck slips a wool hat on his head
As he closes the door behind him
She gets up and strips the bed

She is hanging out the laundry and she hopes it does not freeze
Two bed sheets dance around her in the angry winter breeze
And now the sheets wave up to the sky like giant flags of truce
As the winter wind keeps blowing in she prays nothing pulls loose

7. Waiting For The Rain

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

In the middle of the summer in the middle of the day
They hear storm clouds rumble as they're headed their way
There was work to do that they both forgot
It was like the world's never been anything but hot
If he could find the words for her he could explain
But they just sit on the front porch waiting for the rain

It gets dark and quiet and it turns so still
She drinks and drinks but can't get her fill
She sets the water glass down on her thighs
And just stares at it with her crazy eyes
As the bottom of the glass makes a tiny, round stain
It's just a hot day in the country and they're waiting for the rain

The temperature rises and it will not fall
And she's so still she's not there at all
He leaves the porch for just one minute
Comes back and his hand's got a .410 in it
She smiles at him as he looks out on the plain
But there's nothing to shoot, he's just waiting for the rain

Nothing left to do nothing left to save
When the brown grass crumbles there ain't nobody brave
All things come to the patient man
But when they come too late nobody understands
And now the heat just wraps around him like a chain
He breaks the shotgun open as they're waiting for the rain

Then the wind returns as the sky goes black
She can feel the muscles in her jaw go slack
The wind blows so warm into her face
Ain't no reason now to ever leave this place
She thinks it's only heat it is not pain
As the lightning strikes the reaper they're just waiting for the rain

Smoke in the distance the color of the clouds
Thunder overhead breaks wild and loud
Fire from the reaper runs through the drought
The sky starts the fire let the sky out it out
He slips two shells in the gun and calls her name
And it's all about to happen they're just waiting for the rain

8. Different Currency

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

She took off her apron and joined him in the booth
This wasn't any time in her life to be held back the truth
He picked up his napkin, wiped it across his mouth
And she'd have done just about anything that night, to get that ride down south

He told his name and then she made up one
That didn't match her name tag and never realized what she'd done
He said "it's two days to Atlanta if I push it hard each day"
She said "I don't have much money"
He said "you won't have to pay"

And she knew strangers don't do favors
And nothing comes for free
You've got to pay for everything
It's just with a different currency

He asked "How soon can you leave?"
She said "I don't have much to pack"
He said "I'll meet you in my Chevrolet
I'm parked around the back"

Well the sidewalk was still glassy from the afternoon's ice storm
And it took her a second to shed her waitress uniform
She left it on the floor, packed her jewelry and some clothes
Always leave some things behind no matter where she goes
There was the car just like he said shining in the light
And she could see his silhouette behind the wheel
And everything looked all right

There's only so much snow and cold you can take, so many strangers' eyes
Til you have to get yourself back home and fill your family full of lies
He wasn't much to look at but she didn't really care
She was pretty sure his car was good enough to get her all the way down there
She leaned back in her seat just another bird on the wing
He said "you know this ride's a tradeoff"
She said yeah "Isn't everything"

9. Hills Of Tuscany

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The sun, it speaks no English in the valley of the Lord
There is music in the distance but you cannot place the chord
Were you all that surprised when they mistook you for me
We still laugh about it in these hills of Tuscany

They searched for you in New York but I'd heard you slipped away
When you crossed the border this time did you think they'd let you stay?
The sun has made us crazy here
The wine has turned us mean
We drink all day in this cafe till the air takes on a sheen

All your love, all your lies
They can track me on and on
You can knock on any door here and I'll always have just gone

Your letters came this morning
The waiter brought all three
I thanked him in a whisper as he handed them to me
I did not have to read a word to know just where you'll be
Somewhere in my footsteps outside of Tuscany

These gentlemen I drink with remember you quite well
And the way you held your rosary in that monastery cell
You thought you had disguised yourself when you knelt down to pray
But as you made the sign of the cross you gave yourself away

Yes, I know that we will meet again when I tire of this chase
But it will be me to surprise you when I chose the time and place
And though I've heard you've changed your name and even changed your face
I'll know you by your hollow eyes and the cold of your embrace

10. Closed Down Mill

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

There's a blues band on stage playing our song
I should've known by that there was something going wrong
You can't get a drink unless it comes from the waiter
But the waiter got a dance he calls the alligator
I try to love you but you won't stand still
I can't get no grinding at a closed down mill

I want to take you out cruising, want to sing till you swoon
But my car and my guitar are both out of tune
If they torched this bar and a couple other joints
It'd raise the IQ in this town by twenty seven points
I want to love you but you won't stand still
I can't get no grinding at a closed down mill

Take a look at the bouncer, his body's all bent
He ain't drawn a sober breath since Jimmy Carter was the president
He's talking to some girls into a double twist
How do we always end up in a bar like this?
I need to love you but you won't stand still
I can't get no grinding at a closed down mill

Perpetual motion must be going around
Now that summer has come to this hot beach town
Let's get out in the sun, eat an ice cream cone
Won't have any fun til I get you alone
I've got to love you but you won't stand still
I can't get no grinding at a closed down mill

So, listen here, darling, I ain't too proud to beg
Let's drink us a drink, let's shake us a leg
Tell me you love me, let me hear that sound
Cause I'm sticking with you until you settle down
I was born to love you but you won't stand still
I can't get no grinding at a closed down mill

11. Turn And Spin

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The sun drops behind the mountain as the night comes rushing in
It's like supper's almost ready and Mama's calling her children
The moon has come up on us, see it shine without a ring
Do you think if I'd been honest it would have changed a thing?
Come closer, little darling, and I'll sing you this song
This world will spin without us, we never did belong

I spent twenty years in prison 'cause I did not have a name
And by the time they let me go everyone was called the same
Well, I walked out as a scarecrow with a brand new suit of clothes
Now it seems everywhere I go the ball and chain still shows
Come closer, little darling, I'm longing for your touch
It's better for us here now where they don't expect so much

There's an orchard on this mountain where the whitetail come to feed
And the apples grow on every tree, how many do we need?
The cabin is not far from here if I remember right
Can you fill your satchel with enough to get us through the night?

I've traveled all my life by foot and car and train
And of all the things I learned there's only two I can explain
And that is heaven is the place the holy seeker goes
And hell is just a face with two eyes that cannot close
Come closer little darling There's autumn in the wind
And I'll sing you anything tonight if you will turn and spin

There are people on this mountain with their faces pale and drawn
And they'll know I have returned by our chimney smoke at dawn
And if they ask you anything of where we both have been
Tell them I've been around the world but now I'm back again
Come closer, little darling and let's not talk of sin
There's a moon without a ring tonight
Turn and spin, turn and spin

12. Big Leg Ida

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Trouble's coming with a round-back mandolin
Trouble's coming with a round-back mandolin
The streetlights are shot out so I can't tell where she's been
Trouble's coming with a round-back mandolin

Big Leg Ida could not do without
Big Leg Ida could not do without
Now she's on the chain gang singing with her teeth poked out
Big Leg Ida could not do without

No, you can't get more when there ain't no more around
No, you can't get more when there ain't no more around
Pack it up while you still can baby, move to higher ground
You can't get more when there ain't no more around

Big Leg Ida call me on the phone
Big Leg Ida call me on the phone
She put down the receiver and picked up her valve trombone
Big Leg Ida call me on the phone

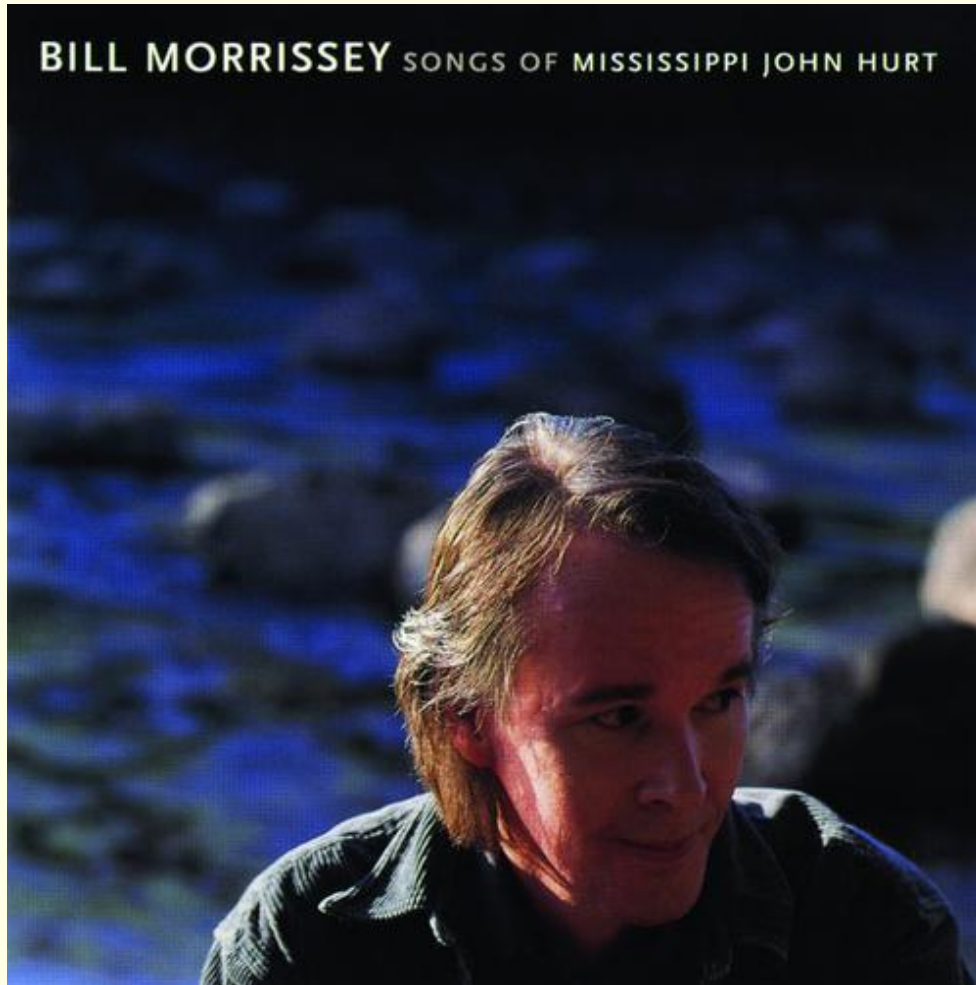
I say T-R-O-U-B-L-E
I say T-R-O-U-B-L-E
That's how I spell "Ida" and that's how she spells me
It's just T-R-O-U-B-L-E

So give me jug band music and a pint of Tennessee
Jug band music and a pint of Tennessee
Trouble's brought her mandolin; well, that gets her in for free
Give me jug band music and a pint of Tennessee

SONGS OF MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT (1999)

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Due to copyright issues, some lyrics could not be reprinted



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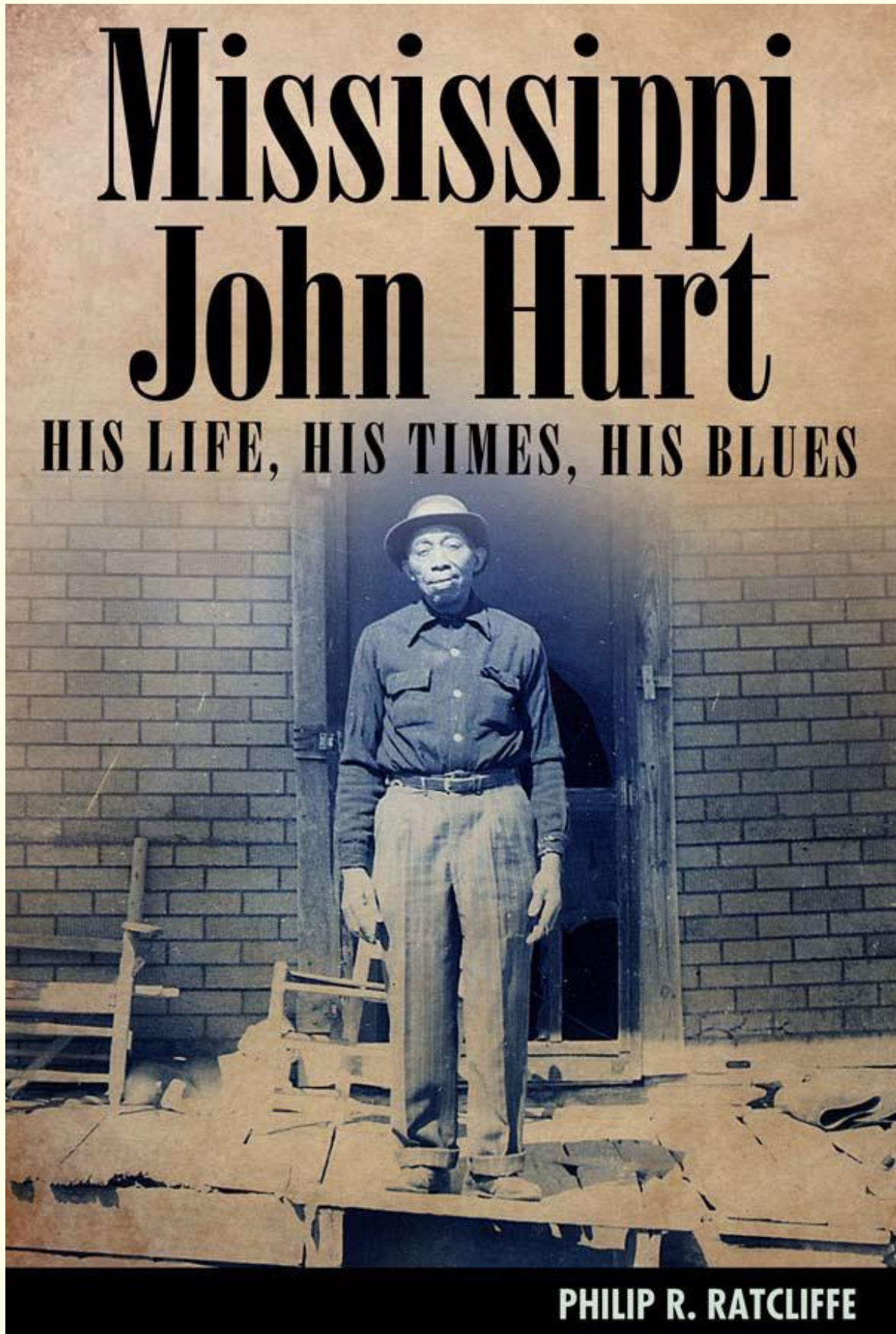
For Mississippi John Hurt's lyrics and guitar tabs, check out

www.msjohnhurtmuseum.com/music.html

1. If You Don't Want Me
2. Avalon Blues
3. Shake That Thing
4. Louis Collins
5. First Shot Missed Him
6. Big Leg Blues
7. Hey, Honey, Right Away
8. Joe Turner Blues
9. I'm Satisfied
10. Beulah Land
11. Funky Butt
12. Coffee Blues
13. Monday Morning Blues
14. Good Morning, Miss Carrie
15. Hot Times In The Old Town

1. If You Don't Want Me

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2. Avalon Blues

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3. Shake That Thing
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)



4. Louis Collins

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5. First Shot Missed Him
(*Back to album tracklist* — *Back to album list*)



6. Big Leg Blues
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)



7. Hey Honey, Right Away
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)



8. Joe Turner

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9. I'm Satisfied

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10. Beulah Land

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

(Traditional)

I got a mother in Beulah Land outshine the sun
I got a mother in Beulah Land outshine the sun
I got a mother in Beulah Land outshine the sun
Way beyond the sky

Oh come on and go over to Beulah Land outshine the sun
Come on and go to Beulah Land outshine the sun
Come on and go to Beulah Land outshine the sun
Way beyond the sky

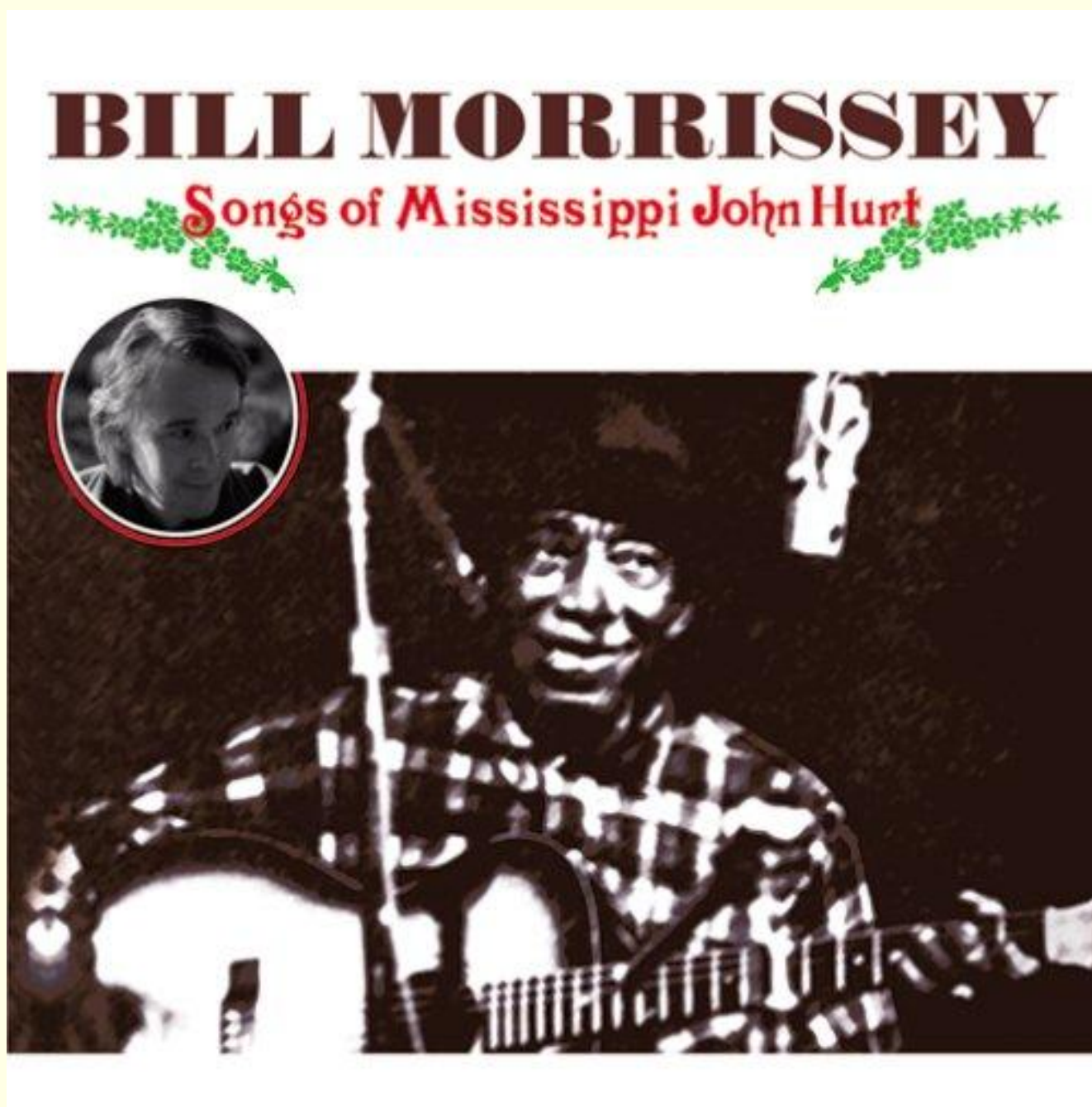
I got a father in Beulah Land outshine the sun
I got a father in Beulah Land outshine the sun
I got a father in Beulah Land outshine the sun
Way beyond the sky

I got a sister in Beulah Land outshine the sun
I got a sister in Beulah Land outshine the sun
I got a sister in Beulah Land outshine the sun
Way beyond the sky

Come and go to Beulah Land outshine the sun
Come and go to Beulah Land outshine the sun
Come and go to Beulah Land outshine the sun
Way beyond the sky

11. Funky Butt

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Japanese release

12. Coffee Blues

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13. Monday Morning Blues
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)



14. Good Morning Miss Carrie
(*Back to album tracklist* — *Back to album list*)



15. Hot Times In The Old Town Tonight
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)
(Traditional)

There's hot times in the old town, downtown tonight
Hot times in the old town tonight
There's hot times in the old town, downtown tonight
Hot times in the old town tonight

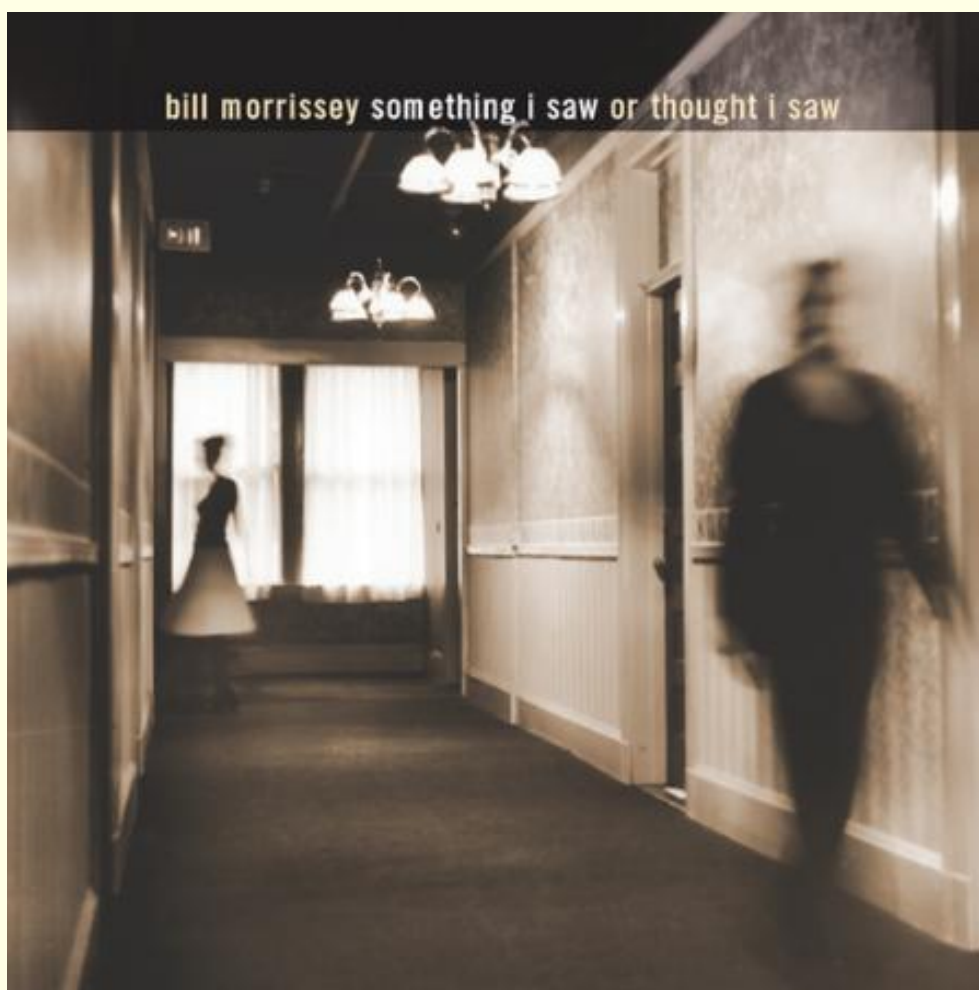
Oh, come and go with me down to old town tonight
It's hot times in the old town tonight
Yes, come and go with me down to old town tonight
It's hot times in the old town tonight

Rubber tired buggy, rubber tired hack
I'm going down to bring my baby back
It's hot times in the old town, downtown tonight
Hot times in old town tonight

Well I'm goin' down Laredo with my axe in my hand
I'm going down there looking for that man
There's hot times in the old town, down town tonight
Hot times in old town tonight

Yes rubber tired buggy, rubber tired hack
Going down to bring my baby back
There's hot times in the old town, down town tonight
Hot times in the old town tonight

SOMETHING I SAW OR THOUGHT I SAW (2001)
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© Tonce Harbert

1. 23rd Street
2. Harry's Last Call
3. Just Before We Lost The War
4. Winter Song
5. Moving Day
6. Buddy Bolden's Blues
7. St. Valentine's Day
8. Traveling By Cab
9. Fix Your Hair The Way You Used To
10. Judgment Day
11. Mobile
12. Will You Be My Rose?

1. 23rd Street

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

This moonlight in New York will not go away
I sit in this hotel and tonight I'm just too drunk to pray
She said that she'd always love me but that she might not always stay

Have a seat
Have a seat
And we can look at the world through this window on 23rd Street

I came a long way to see her one more time
There was a subway to take me uptown
There was an address she gave me last Christmas where she said she could always be found
I listened as she said she loved me
I'll always remember that sound

If you look closely down to the sidewalk you can see yourself as a ghost
We would walk 'round the block with no reason to talk
Back then we were younger than most
It's a love that you never will see
Hey, buddy, I don't mean to boast

Well, there's some folks bring love to a hotel and some just bring their own quiet end
My story is not one hard to tell and I just want to tell it again
She said that she'd always love me
All I need is to find her again

2. Harry's Last Call

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

"Harry called while you were out," she said
He asked, "Was he drunk?"
She said, "No, but he'd been drinking
I could tell "
"What'd he want this time?"
"He wants to talk to you," she said
"All I know is he's somewhere in Nebraska, hole up in some motel"

He handed her the groceries and opened up a beer
He slapped the cold off his sleeve and said, "I'm glad I wasn't here"
"But he's your best friend," she said
He took a drink and said, "He was"
She said, "He's calling back, you know"
And he told her, "He always does"

Old friends blown away by the wind
Never to return again till they round that final bend
Old friends driving through the rain
From Sacramento to Fort Wayne just like we all did then

"So, what're you gonna tell now when he calls back again?"
He just shrugged and said
"I'm not gonna say a thing"
"But it's Harry," she told him
"Yeah," he said. "It's Harry once again
And Harry only calls when he's drunk or when he needs something"

"But you bummed the world together
It was always just you two
"Yeah, we were young and we had some times till the day that I met you
And he just kept on moving once I made my choice to stay
And now he's still out on the road, but it's like he never goes away"

When the kitchen phone rang once more, he threw his arms around her waist
"Let me go," she said. "It's Harry
If I want to get the phone I will"
But he just pulled her tighter and he didn't say a thing
And he held her until the ringing stopped and all the house was still

3. Just Before We Lost The War

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The July wind blew from the mountain and threw a chill on the lake shore
The whitecaps danced around us like they never have before
There ain't no room in this little town
No one to settle up the score
So we must live with what we both put down just before we lost the war

My love for you has gone unspoken
Still you knew the words I'd say
Yet we stand here with both hearts broken on this windy summer day
I can't find relief in the lies I told but they came right from my core
I still believe one of us ran cold just before we lost the war

I used to think that time was plenty and time was all I knew
But it gets cut short for so many
It could be me; it could be you
There ain't no wind that can blow the truth back to where it stood before
And I couldn't change it in a cold phone booth just before we lost the war

So say goodbye and fare-thee-well
Tell everyone I'm doing fine
For as far as I can tell
I'm just ten years down the line
What we give we can't get back and we always ask for more
We could not retreat; we could not attack just before we lost the war

4. Winter Song

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Smoke 'em if you got 'em
You're not too far from the bottom and it's still so early in the day
She told me what she taught 'em
We're just halfway into autumn
But when winter comes, it's here to stay

The snow falls pretty and it covers up the ground
And it hides what will not go away
Down in the city she buys clothes by the pound
Just to fool me into thinking her way

Come sing a winter tune a winter tune so gay
It's too bad the check had to come so soon and I hear it's your turn to pay

Well, her eyes were blue and her eyes were green
And you never knew which ones you'd see
They would stare through a film of cosmoline
And they were always trained right on me

She said he went insane in a Ford Fairlane parked beside a stand of hemlock trees
They were safe out of the rain when he finally made his claim
And he didn't ask and didn't say please

There weren't nobody on that mountain road when you slide off deep into the snow
Now the night is getting cold and has a very good hold with no reason to ever let go
Your own Mother Earth wants to call you home and protect you from all harm
She's so lonely in the night and if you only held her tight there'll be no need for alarm

You never travel steerage when you're in a Boston marriage
No matter what the people may say
You found yourself a lover
Drag her underneath the cover and show her where the hound dogs bay

An after dinner cigarette another shot of anisette
Adjust the seat in the Fairlane
You gave them what they want in the finest restaurant
And you didn't cry or didn't name names

5. Moving Day

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Lock the door and say goodbye
There's new folks moving in
Leave the key in the mailbox now and kiss me once again
Kiss me for the ones who say all love comes to an end
Though we never let it go that way we start alone again

Our years they ran in circles
It was a long and stormy ride
No pot of gold for the happy groom
No brass ring for the bride
Nothing but the two of us and the promises we made
Love disappeared in a summer wind so soft she could've stayed

Two stars hanging in the sky behind a drifting cloud
And when two hearts must say goodbye love cannot be proud
Love cannot take sides or take a stand or answer why
Sometimes two hearts must fall away no matter how they try

Moving day is over now
This house is just a shell
Say goodbye to the sights and sounds we came to know so well
Your car is loaded to the roof
It's just the same as mine
There's no room for the dreams we had
I guess they stay behind

6. Buddy Bolden's Blues

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I've been to Germany, I've been to Spain
Walked down Beale Street and turned up Main
When I put her on that last mail train there was nothing left to lose

I listened to the engine whine
And when she set off this one last time she didn't leave a single thing behind
Just like Buddy Bolden's Blues

There's nothing uptown, no money down
Buy the high-tension whiskey just to pass around
Faces in the window, but I'm standing on the ground and I'm down to twos and fews

The rhythm section is one seat short
And you can't get on board without your passport
You knew she took so you'd come up short
Just one more gig you must refuse

In this town you can't let down your guard
The boys play trumpet, but they blow too hard
In the final hand you get no wild card just the Buddy Bolden blues
The morning sun on a brown suitcase
And soon you too will have to leave this place
Just one more gone without a trace singing Buddy Bolden's blues

Her eyes were closed when she said goodbye
She couldn't see me and she didn't try
Still she kissed me and I don't know why but she was never one to leaves clues

Trains come to town only to leave
The band plays loud to let the mourners grieve
The heart stays hidden in a rolled up sleeve
Empty pockets pay no dues

The sun don't rise in a greasy sky
The rails may call, but the roads just sigh
Believe I'll give New Orleans one more try with a spit shine on my walking shoes

Stand on the corner, trying to catch a break
But good luck these days is too hard to fake
And there's nothing left of her but what talk we make
Just like Buddy Bolden's blues

7. St. Valentine's Day

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The church was cold and darkness at the early morning Mass
Till the sun brought its own colors to the figures in the stained glass
And they shown from a light that came from so far away
It was a miracle to my young eyes on St. Valentine's Day

The streets, they were bog iron, the air was cruel and thin
I could wrap my scarf around my neck but something always found its way in
Like I wrap myself around you now when there's nothing left to say
And I hold you like the miracle of St. Valentine's Day

Just to hold you before the sunrise when the world is just a darkened heart
And that heart is full of lies
'Cause I told you it ain't ever gonna go away
This miracle I feel in your arms on St. Valentine's Day

Walk me out on the frozen lake
Put an end to all my fears
I can stand here if you can too
I can stand right here for years
With your arms around me like it was always meant to be this way
When the miracle comes back one last time on St. Valentine's Day

8. Traveling By Cab

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

He was too old for that bar but it was the only one around
And he needed a beer
So that's where he was found
He took an empty stool amid the jocks and punks
He could take them all to school when it came to being drunks

Miles from home again
He was overdrawn on luck
Hoping that tomorrow they'd find that part for his truck
So he drank a beer, then two as a rock band hit the stage
When all he wanted to do was have a drink with folks his age

Then the beer it turned to whiskey, the barmaid ran a tab
You can hit freefall until last call when you're traveling by cab

There were young girls in the mirror with no trouble on their minds
As the picture became clearer he stared ahead just to look behind
Then the band kicked off their first set
They wore their guitars well
There was anger, light and speed, every whistle, every bell

They had smoke bombs, they had lasers
The singer banged his tambourine
But it's hard to play the music when you're a pinball machine
Then the drummer took a lighter and set fire to his sticks
As the barmaid squealed with laughter and said, "That's one of my favorite tricks"

As the whiskey took the driver's seat he touched his wedding ring
He kept thinking of Chuck Berry, Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King
Then the band it took a break and it was possible to talk
As the barmaid poured a free one she said, "Don't they really rock?"

At first he had no words so he drank his whiskey down
Then he slid off his barstool and stood on shaky ground
He said, "That ain't rock'n'roll
That's just Vaudeville plugging in"
And she looked up and said
"Ain't that the way it's always been?"

The beer will turn to whiskey, the barmaid runs a tab
The years spin by in a free fall, till you're traveling by cab

9. Fix Your Hair The Way You Used To
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Fix your hair the way you used to
Pull it back and let me know
That you're the same girl I met on that warm night back in Tupelo
There ain't no wind in this town
There's no one around that we might know
Fix your hair the way you used to one last time before you go

Well, dreams come running up so fast and they always leave so slow
I feel from present down to past with you
How it happened I don't know
I'm not pleading or complaining
I'm just wondering if you're leaving friend or foe
Fix your hair the way you used to one last time before you go

Hey, we had us a ride but all rides come to an end
And I never question why or say because
And you can say goodbye and I'll say once again
Just let me see my world the way it was

I've called down to the front desk and they've held a cab for you
And I've just got this last request
It's such an easy thing to do
I just want to see the girl who once gave me her heart and let it show
Fix your hair the way you used to one last time before you go

10. Judgment Day

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I was born just out of town and I never could get in
So I turned to traveling 'round where the nights fade and the days begin
They called me a hobo but I never took that name
And they called me a pilgrim but I was not to blame
As I wandered through the tall pines and the clay
Trying to put a hurry-up on Judgment Day

They jailed me in St. Louis 'cause I was easy prey
And everyone was happy to go home early that day
Till it was just me and my cellmate staring eye to eye
And then he started laughing, saying
"Let me guess, you're not the guy"
He offered me a cigarette
As I reached he pulled away
Saying, "You never get a last request until it's Judgment Day"

Her eyes they were flawed diamonds
She said, "That's the price of fame
Where all the girls are beautiful
All the women look the same
And all the men come courting me because I'm the final one
And they give their names so quietly just like you might've done
And names are just the final thing a man must give away
And you'll pass yours on so willingly when it comes Judgment Day"

Well, I heard her sing a melody from a window in the jail
And I knew the day I broke out she'd cover up my trail
Expecting nothing more than the name I tried to toss
Staring into my heart with the eyes of St. John of the Cross
Wondering if I'd return again but it don't work out that way
Once you've turned your back and the rope goes slack around Judgment Day

It was long out on the Great Plains with nowhere left to go
The road was full of nothing and the sky was full of snow
I've seen this road before in the sun and rain and wind
But I don't need it anymore
Let that be my only sin
For whatever the next motel costs
I'll be glad to pay
And I'll hide out till I hear that song that calls me Judgment Day

11. Mobile

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The road was the color of the road and the sky was the color of the sky
And the heat was the breath of your kiss when you waited far too long to sigh
Your stories were just stories, your love not even that
Though you knew of my past glories when I could win a heart when I tipped my hat
Your beauty was just beauty though many men were spared
And like the others you saw through me
But I always came prepared

There were drops of white on a southern dawn that made the cotton look so real
But there was nothing upon nothing on that long road to Mobile

You held me close on your back porch but I've been held before
Where rich girls knew what silence was and what a kiss was for
You promised me undying love as the sun broke through the trees
You promised me the stars above as you fell to your knees
Well, a promise is a promise when you cannot fake the lie
When you give your heart in the morning light there's no Sunday goodbye

But the world always begins anew when the summer church bells peal
And there was nothing upon nothing on that long road to Mobile

Jesus lived and Jesus died and it was just to make you sweet
And they nailed him down and Mary cried
"All love is incomplete"
Still I believe the soldier who gambled big that day
Who traded clothes for a crown of thorns to guide him on his way
"A crown of thorns," his wife scoffed
"That's all you've brought today
You've just returned with a crown of thorns and you call it a day's pay?"

A crown is just a crown and a deal is just a deal
And there was nothing upon nothing on that long road to Mobile

Alabama turns it back when the air's too thick to breathe
And there was no air in that shotgun shack when I knew I should leave
I'll leave alone the way I came as the maid undoes your stays
I had a race I thought was run but now I see it goes two ways
A destination holds no gold it's all in the journey
So leaving and returning now
It's all the same to me

When the sun burns every seed you plant
You cannot sell the yield
And there was nothing upon nothing on that long road to Mobile

12. Will You Be My Rose?

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Will you be my rose?
Will you take my hand?
Will you keep me there when it's time for me to make a stand?

Will you be my rose in the morning true
When the nighttime fails and the world begins anew?

Will you be my rose when I'm gone away
In the sweet repose at the end of the day?

When I'm all alone and a cold wind blows
Will you see my face?
Will you be my rose?

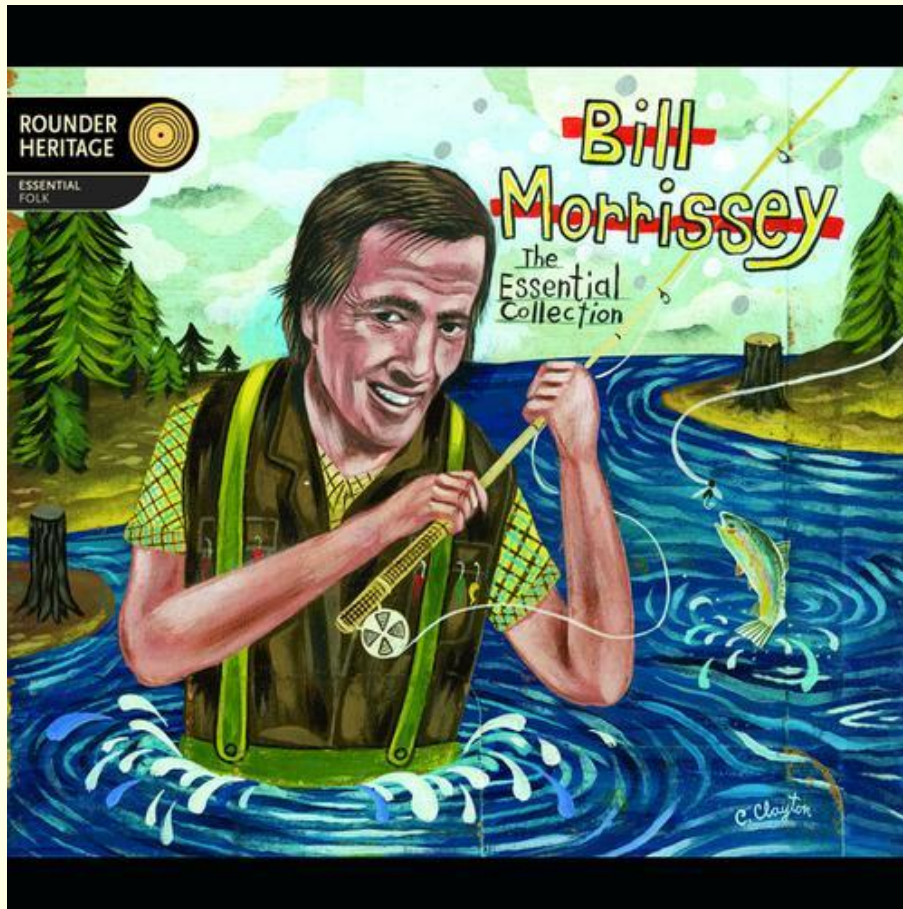
A rose in the snow so fresh and clean
A rose that's the brightest red
I have ever seen
A rose that can show me when all goes wrong
You found a place for me a place I belong

I've search my whole life to find you from sunrise to sunrise
I never gave up, I always knew someday
I'd look right up into your eyes

Will you be my rose?
Will you hear my song?
When I ask forever will you touch my cheek, will you come along?

To another town
To another day
Will you be my rose down the lost highway?

BILL MORRISSEY: THE ESSENTIAL COLLECTION (2004)
(Back to album list)



© Christian Clayton

1. Barstow
2. Inside
3. Robert Johnson
4. Fifty*
5. These Cold Fingers
6. Ice Fishing
7. Just Before We Lost The War
8. Avalon Blues
9. Letter From Heaven
10. Handsome Molly
11. Different Currency
12. Cold, Cold Night
13. Small Town On The River
14. You'll Never Get To Heaven
15. Birches
16. Long Gone
17. 23rd Street
18. Joe Turner Blues
19. Just Today*
20. Boston Eyes*

Liner notes, by Scott Alarik

"I think everybody agrees he's one of the best ever to do it in our genre, one of the best songwriters we've ever had."

–Ellis Paul

"I always liked him, thought he was the real thing."

–Suzanne Vega

"Hearts hold secrets and hearts hold lies/ Hearts always hold one more surprise"

–Bill Morrissey

From "Boston Eyes," 2003

There is something odd about the idea of an "Essential Bill Morrissey" collection. Being essential has always been his best punch, after all; every song chiseled and chiseled and chiseled with such care you'd think it was the only song he was ever planning to write.

"He's not a casual artist," says fellow New England songwriter Ellis Paul. "He was the closest thing to Van Gogh that was in the neighborhood. He was that into it, that tortured by it, obviously somebody who took songwriting that seriously – it was not just sort of an expensive hobby."

Odd or not, there are remarkable things to glean from this best-of collection, things the old boy is still teaching us about how closely craft and art must dance together, about the value of knowing one's tools and, most essentially, that the difference between timeless and temporal is often just a matter of telling the truth.

"First of all," Suzanne Vega says of Morrissey's songwriting, "the craft is there. He knows how to write a song, how to make it rhyme, make it catchy, how to write a chorus – and to put it all together so it sings.

"Beyond that, there's the world he writes about. His characters are blue-collar, small-town people, well-drawn and always believable so you feel like you know them. His women characters are as believable as his male characters, so it's not always first-person, 'let-me-tell-you-this-about-my-life.' I mean, you're right there with him; you feel like you've been there. He's a songwriter who's got an eye like a fiction writer."

Indeed, the praise he's received over his 20-year national career is unlike that of nearly any other folk songwriter. He has been compared as often to Raymond Carver as to Woody Guthrie. The *Boston Phoenix* praised his "reporter's eye for details," and *Rolling Stone* sounded like the *Utne Reader* when it raved about his "absolute economy and focused fire."

It's easy to see why here. His images are so vivid and useful to the song, they often come on like countermelodies. He describes midnight freight yards that sound "like a drunk in a metalshop." He wistfully watches "young girls in their first heels step like colts across the square." When he describes a winter night where "A maple branch clicks above you/The mailbox leans in the snow," you know it is not the still-cheery days of early winter, but dead January or February, long after the snow has stopped smiling.

Especially since Morrissey's quiet little ballad of a novel, *Edson*, was published in 1996, his admirers are as likely to be novelists as songwriters.

If book editors can be superstars, Gary Fisketjon, who edited *Edson*, surely qualifies. He has worked with Cormac McCarthy, Tom McGuane, and Jay McInerney, and knows for certain that novelists Richard Russo, Richard Ford, Greg Barron, Andre Dubus, Steve Yarborough, and Robert Olmstead are fans of Morrissey's lean balladry.

Asked why so many good fiction writers appreciate Morrissey's music, Fisketjon says, "He's telling good stories from very effective points of view, which is the main thing for any writer.

Whenever any kind of writing works, it's not that one part particularly stands out as opposed to the separate parts. There's a lot of good songs in which some parts will be much better than others; that's not a problem Bill has. His songs are strong and of a piece."

Few modern folk songwriters can boast as impressive a repertoire as Morrissey unrolls here; and perhaps none can boast such constancy of voice and vision, both artistically and stylistically. Someone unfamiliar with the New Hampshire writer could easily conclude this is a single album, recorded over weeks rather than decades. It is astonishing testimony to the difference between writing a bunch of songs and creating a body of work.

In the early '80s, along with producer Darleen Wilson and the late Scottish fiddler Johnny Cunningham, Morrissey designed a template for recording lyric-driven modern folk music that was so widely imitated better-known songwriters often got the credit for inventing it. One simple instrumental statement is used, but so intelligently the results feel much more fat and embellishing than they really are.

Cunningham's repeating fiddle lines on "Inside" and "Handsome Molly" are each so carefully considered they feel not only like organic pieces of the melody, but of the lyric. And listen to Vega's beautifully disheveled harmony on "Inside," how exquisitely it suits the drab, frayed lives in the song. On "Handsome Molly," her harmony is such a delayed whisper it feels more like the memory of a harmony, a haunting underscore to Morrissey's lonesome, defeated reflections.

But Fisketjon is right. The meat on Morrissey's table are the stories he tells, and how honestly he tells them. It might be tempting to say there are no second acts in his songs, but it's more accurate to say there are only second acts. We are usually brought into the story after the hammer has come down on these decidedly unremarkable lives. We learn little about how his characters got into the mess they're in, and how – or if – they're going to get out. The fateful choices or cold winds of circumstance have already done their damage; we are asked only to contemplate the wreckage and feel what it's like to be trapped in lives like that.

He does not sing of heroes; at best, they are survivors. Often, he defies us to like them. In "Barstow," his character whines, "If you take me back this time/Baby, I promise you I'll stay," stripping any sympathy we might feel from the preceding line, "I can't believe I pissed my 20s away."

"I quit drinking; now I watch the clock," he sings in "Inside." There are no fairytale endings, no tidy tying-up of the loose ends that flog his characters so painfully and heedlessly. Redemption, if it is glimpsed at all, comes through quiet acceptance of life's shortcomings and minor blessings.

This may not sound like an artist endeared for his high, good humor, but Morrissey is a perennially popular live performer because his best counter-punch is a sage, undistilled, and deliciously tart wit.

"You get a lot of good songwriters on the scene, but not all of them can perform as well as Bill does," says Vega. "I still remember him on stage telling us that he was trying to get the spark back in his marriage, so he'd bought a crotchless down vest from L.L. Bean. It was just hysterical. Most people want to be taken really seriously, so they're very intense and sincere. He's all those things, too, but it's so refreshing to find that wit beyond it."

It is crucial to understanding how Morrissey views his career that he began it in the mid-70s, when folk was as close to dead in the water as it ever got. To his generation of songwriters, the idea of going into folk music with venal ambitions was laughable. As another '70s circuit-rider, Utah Phillips, says, "The only way to wind up with a million bucks in folk music is to start out with two."

That bracing highball of radical devotion to noncommercial art and cynicism about the bleak rewards it offers left Morrissey with a hard-leather charisma and confident command of the

stage. He trimmed his first sails at brawling working-class bars that hired folk musicians only because they were cheaper – and more expendable – than bands; dives like the Chit-Chat Lounge in Haverhill, where success was measured by getting home with a little money and all your teeth.

Before headlining in front of thousands at the vaunted Philadelphia Folk Festival, he was asked if he was nervous. “No,” he answered quietly. “They’re probably not armed.”

If there was a moment when Morrissey officially became a star, it was 1985, at the newly revived Newport Folk Festival. Up till his set, every act had meekly ignored the incongruity of the many yachts eavesdropping in the harbor. But Morrissey is made of crisper stuff: “Look at all those yachts out there,” he snarled, and they all proudly tooted their shiny little horns. “All that money, and they’re too f---ing cheap to buy a ticket to a folk festival.” The little horns fell silent, the audience flew to its feet and cheered and cheered. Morrissey had arrived.

Flashes of that humor are glimpsed here. In his bratty dream of heaven, Elvis Presley reveals he “likes to visit Earth just to drive you people nuts.” In the new “Fifty,” he shows proper surprise at being both 50 and alive, but his greatest glee is that he now can never be drafted.

It is the whole package Morrissey presents of a songwriter’s job that most profoundly influences young artists following the trails he helped blaze. He generously revealed exactly how much he stole from his primary influence in the Grammy-nominated treasure, *The Songs of Mississippi John Hurt*. Its loving, gracious heart merely focused public attention on what his musical compadres always knew about him. Though fiercely ambitious, he just as fiercely sees folk music as a community, not a track meet. He relishes the role of mentor, considering it both a duty and pleasure to pass along what was passed along to him.

“Bill was really willing to teach me stuff,” says Ellis Paul, who claims Morrissey as a seminal influence. “He’s not somebody who feels like he’s guarding trade secrets. He loves what he does, really loves the process of writing and loves talking about it. He’s willing to listen carefully and tell it like it is.”

That last sentence is a fair summary of Morrissey’s whole approach to art, career, and life. Every song he’s written, every verse from every song, and every line from every verse, could rightly be called “The Essential Bill Morrissey.” But if this collection encourages a reappraisal of his work – as it should – his stock will rise considerably. The old boy still has some good punches left in him.

Scott Alarik

Cambridge, Massachusetts

February, 2004

Compilation produced by Scott Billington, Bill Morrissey, Ellen Karas and Marian Leighton-Levy.

4. Fifty

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I turned fifty on an autumn day
The grass was brown and the sky was gray
But I never felt so strong
I turned fifty
So, come on world, bring it on

I can't round the bases like I could
But I'm still in the game, so knock on wood
I get the jump on the pitch and I catch one more
I turned fifty
I quit keeping score

Hey you kids, this ain't no jive
But I've seen the Beatles perform live
My new guitar is all hand crafted
I turned fifty
Best of all, I can't get drafted

I don't get carded in a bar
I own my house and I own my car
I can't believe I made it this far
I turned fifty
And I still wish upon a star

Once life was a race and I had to run it
Now I know what not to do because I've done it
Well there's too much anger and too much crap
I turned fifty
I think I'll take a nap

Sometimes I think about the days back then
But there's no return to the way back then
I loved them all but those days are gone
I turned fifty
So, come on world, bring it on

19. Just Today

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Stand on the corner
Wonder where all the years went
Waiting for the light to change on a life ill spent
Oh, but the sun's still gold and the sky's still blue
And just today, just today, just today, just today
I was thinking of you

I tried to write a song but I could not sing your name
I tried to right a wrong but it was always me to blame
But the memory and the dream stay true
And just today, just today, just today, just today
I was thinking of you

I couldn't hold on and I could not let go
I couldn't stay long here in the land of snow
But there was a time when I tried to see it through
And just today, just today, just today, just today
I was thinking of you

You burst like lightning and just as quickly disappeared
But I remember the night
When our two hearts touched as the storm clouds cleared
You were holding my hand as I said a prayer for you
And just today, just today, just today, just today
I was thinking of you

20. Boston Eyes

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Your Boston eyes, they look right through me and take me so far away
Your Boston eyes, they hold a secret I can understand, but I cannot say

And I would walk around the world for you
I would walk around the world for you
Just to lie you down 'neath the summer skies
Just to wake and see your Boston eyes

Autumn comes and leaves get scattered
Then they are just blown away
Years roll by and nothing matters
You rise each morn and face the day

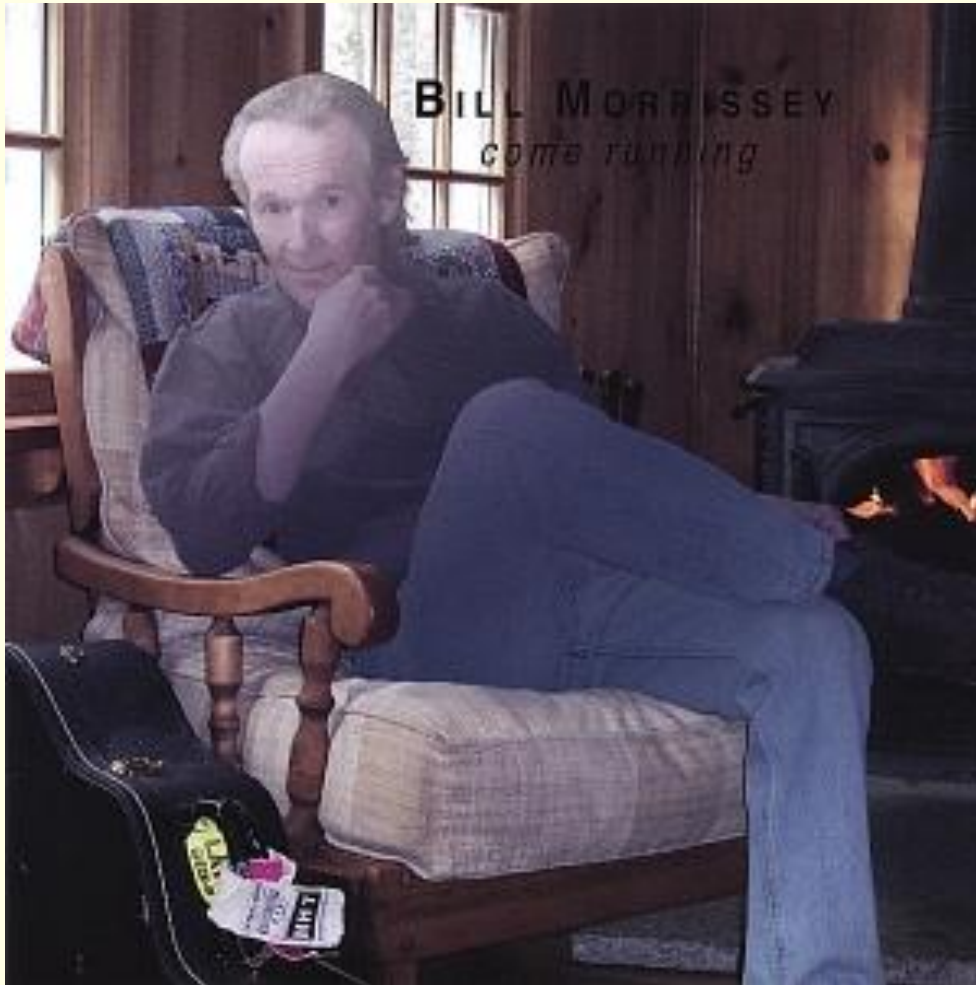
And I would walk around the world for you
I would walk around the world for you
Just to lie you down 'neath the summer skies
Just to wake and see your Boston eyes

Hearts hold secrets and hearts tell lies
Hearts always hide one more surprise
I lost your heart in the northern light
And just came around to claim it back tonight

Your Boston eyes they shine a history
Of little girl playing on the street
Your Boston eyes, they are a melody
I can sing just once and not repeat

And I would walk around the world for you
I would walk around the world for you
Just to lie you down 'neath the summer skies
Just to wake and see your Boston eyes

COME RUNNING (2007)
(Back to album list)



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1. I Ain't Walking
2. Thirty Years
3. Dangerous Way
4. Holden's Blues
5. He's Not From Kansas City
6. Summer's Jumped All Over Me
7. By The Grave Of Baudelaire
8. Canal Street
9. I Was A Fool
10. Death Letter
11. Victory At Sea
12. New Walking Blues
13. Johnny's Tune

1. I Ain't Walking 2:46
2. Thirty Years 4:14
3. Dangerous Way 4:59
4. Holden's Blues 3:21
5. He's Not from Kansas City 2:33
6. Summer Jumped All Over Me 2:55
7. By the Grave of Baudelaire 3:59
8. Canal St. 5:02
9. I Was a Fool 3:11
10. Death Letter 2:54
11. Victory at Sea 2:47
12. New Walking Blues 4:32
13. Johnny's Tune 2:52

1. I Ain't Walking

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Don't hold on my coattails, baby
My heart won't budge
I ain't got time to do the nudge

I ain't walking
I'm a-flying down the line
I'm going back to Priceford
Just to see that gal of mine

Ain't no Mickey's Monkey singing "Um Um Um Um"
Major Lance calling but I ain't gonna come

Well, my baby called and said I've been away much too long
I said I know every single word to that song
Long on the highway, but my road days are done
They've opened up the speedway and I'm second to none

I put wings on my Mustang
Got the radio on
Cops don't look twice
Cause I'm already gone

"Just spent two days in the studio with Dave Alvin. Oh my God, that man can play. This was one of my smart moves" (March 12, 2006)



© Annie Provenzano

2. Thirty Years

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Two in the morning and the bus is late
Gotta get some sleep, gotta gig to make
It's fourteen hours to the next town
But I've got a bottle in my bag and I learned to sleep while sitting down

Thirty years going down by degrees
Thirty years of thank you and please
Till all you get is the smokers' cough and the alcohol disease
Little children, sing this song

She said she'd meet me, but she never showed
And now it's just me and another stretch of road
It's true, nothing comes free and you pay for all your crimes
Once you give you heart away one too many times

You've gotta keep moving so you don't fall down
You've got to sing your song, you've got to buy the round
It all starts as just a dream of traveling and shows
Till you get out on the road and find all the exits closed

3. Dangerous Way

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I missed the last train back to St. Paul
Returned to my hotel just in time to miss your call
I found a game and came out on a deuce and trey
And I just got lucky in a dangerous way

Well, you came to me when the moon was full
and I could not figure out what you were trying to pull
It was not my name you wanted just a place to stay
And sometimes you get lucky in a dangerous way

Danger on the river, danger on the shore
If you didn't want the action, what'd you come here for
Little girl, was it a surprise to finally find the danger in your momma's eyes?

It might've been a crime of honor
No one around could say
It might've been just a mistake. Things will happen that way
Both men agreed it must be settled at the break of day
Then they drank a round together in a dangerous way

Ah, the duel was set for dawn, but the sun it never rose
And it felt like such a waste to get dressed in mourning clothes
Still I saw one man smiling as they led him away
I guess he knew you can get lucky in a dangerous way

Down here love is waiting; it just up to you to chose it
And the leaves they don't change color; they just give it up or lose it
And me, I never needed love until the break of day
That's when it gets exciting in a dangerous way

But you can get homesick in Paradise and the treasure it brings forth
These rivers all run south when you're trying to get north
And these visions dance around you but they never come to stay
And even Jesus, he can smile in a dangerous way

We lay in bed in the winter afternoon
The birds flew overhead, I knew spring would be here soon
I was thinking of a dual I saw that never came to play
Thinking seasons can change in a dangerous way

And nothing changed at all in St. Paul in the time I was gone
I was whistling a little tune I learned from Spider John
You asked me if I loved you but I had no words to say
So I just kept whistling in a dangerous way

4. Holden's Blues

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

A man goes for a lonesome walk when he's got a heavy load
Just to find there's too much talk and far too little road

One step forward, one step back from daylight into dark
It doesn't matter which bird sings the nightingale or lark

When this world set sail I had my passage booked
Now I can say I found true love, but I can say I looked

The carnival it comes to town
The midway lights all burn
How could I keep from spinning 'round
A pretty girl everywhere you turn

But summer days pack and move down south just to make room for the fall
They come running through the wheat and rye and you cannot catch them all

Around the world and back again I've seen the best and worst
Where madness was a blessed thing and mercy was a curse

So dig my grave with a silver spade
Make this song my epitaph
And just make sure the digger, he gets paid
And I get the last laugh

5. He's Not From Kansas City

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

He comes a-knocking right upon your door
Got to keep moving to the straight 4/4
He's wearing shoes they don't make no more
Don't need to read the music cause he knows the score
Pick up his horn, the people say
"He's not from Kansas City; he just blows that way"

Look at the women that he come here with
That man can get a dozen just by flatting a fifth
You can have a party till the band begins
And you can't have a band till the tenor man grins
Pick up his horn, the people say
"He's not from Kansas City; he just blows that way"

So hand me my Selmer, Elmer
Soak me a reed
I've got to join the band
This ain't no time to impede
The tenor plays high for the "K.C. Moan"
But I've got the bass covered with my baritone

He's jumping on the highway leaves the notes all bent
This party's going my way
No more worries about the rent

This ain't no night for trouble
So trouble never comes
We've got the police on the trumpet and the landlord on the drums
Pick up his horn, the people say
He's not from Kansas City; he just blows that way

6. Summer's Jumped All Over Me

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Winter comes, autumn goes
and summer just keeps laughing
Where the spring is hiding nobody knows
Summer's jumped all over me

I cast my line to a cagey trout
When you fall in love this time of year, there ain't no room for doubt
My season has arrived
Help me stretch it out
Summer's jumped all over me

A sleeping dog, a singing bird
I wrote this song that you haven't heard
But I'll sing it if you only give the word
Summer's jumped all over me

I've got no money but I've got no chains
I'm on a runaway horse and I throwed away the reins
If I'm going down tonight, I'm going down in flames
Summer's jumped all over me

Hold the phone.
Wait a minute
Hear that mill wheel hum and, baby, I ain't in it
No, I'm at the wheel of chance
Won't you help me spin it
Summer's jumped all over me

I don't mind the winter; I don't know the fall
I didn't even notice if spring every showed at all
It's just the beat of your heart, that all I call recall
Summer's jumped all over me

7. By The Grave Of Baudelaire
(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

The rain it broke but would not leave
The clouds hung too low in the air
I walked the lane of Montparnasse
Found a pen by the grave of Baudelaire

I walked home and I wondered
How each day alone can feel the same
I took out the pen I stole
And the first word I wrote was your name

But I had no letter in me and
I had no words to spare
Without a thought I reached out
And remembered again you're not there

But I don't need words tonight
Or dreams that can't come true
Tonight I need your loving eyes
I need to sing this song for you

The sun will rise tomorrow
And Paris, it will shine
The bells will ring at Notre Dame
And I'll write your name one more time

"Grave of Baudelaire"

16 April 2005 / Paris

1. On an ~~over~~ afternoon in Paris
The clouds they hung too low in the air
I walked the lanes of ~~St. Parnasse~~ Montparnasse
and found this pen by the grave of Baudelaire
I walked home & wondered
how each day alone ^{can} feels the same
Took out the pen I stole, ~~sat myself down~~
and the first word I wrote was your name
2. But I had no letter in me
I had no words to spare
All I had was the miles between us
and this pen I found by the grave of Baudelaire
But I don't need words tonight
or dreams that can't come true
I need your loving eyes
I need to sing this song for/to you
3. The sun will rise tomorrow
and Paris, it will shine
The bells will ring at Notre Dame
And I'll write yr name one more time

For Hank & Jelene
Bill Morrison

8. Canal Street

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

Well, if you're down on Canal Street you can hear the whistle blow
And if you're down on Canal Street you've got nowhere to go
Nobody comes down here without a string of alibis
Except that Hoopi Shoopi girl with Springfield in her eyes

Down here the sun sets earlier than anywhere in town
And the red bricks from the woolen mill just draw the cold up from the ground
Well, it's always winter here; summer's just a word you memorize
While you watch that Hoopi Shoopi girl with Springfield in her eyes

She's got a laugh like a memory
She's got a smile like a bruise
And it's not like she would talk to me
It's not like she would refuse
And the office girls scream angrily
She's only the disguise of a Hoopi Shoopi girl with Springfield in her eyes

I've seen her play accordion at the early morning Mass
And no one can say where she has been or how long on this street she might last
Still she walks with asylum underneath these darkened skies
Just a Hoopi Shoopi girl with Springfield in her eyes

So I'll punch out as the snow falls
Let the seconds shift begin
And I'll go back to my four walls
Lie down and take my rest again
And when the fever comes upon me
It's never a surprise to see that Hoopi Shoopi girl with Springfield in her eyes

9. I Was A Fool

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I was a fool to think you'd look my way
I was a fool to think I'd hear you say

I want you, I need you
I'll love you for all time
I was a fool to think you could be mine

Love don't come down like falling rain
It slips around
It whispers in vain

I can't stop my heart around you
And I know this dream cannot come true
Still I can't turn away
So a fool I'll stay

The heart is strong, still it can't chose
The love you win, the love you must refuse

10. Death Letter

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

She came from Knoxville in a party dress
Stepped off the bus, well you know the rest
Me, I was thinking I had nothing to lose
Till she started singing the "Death Letter Blues"

She tried to fall in love but not with me
She tried a trick or two she brought from Tennessee (sp?)
I was just looking for sleep but I was refused
As she kept me up all night with the "Death Letter Blues"

It was like Son House calling my name from the grave
Saying neither your heart nor your soul can ever be saved

Weren't not rhyme nor reason, no sugar or spice
There was a call to arms and I answered twice
She held too tightly just to give me the news
There's another kind of evil in the "Death Letter Blues"

Did I love her? My heart can never say
Love knows the answer; love don't give it away

Her name it was Pearline, but only to me
Everyone called her Miss Destiny
You spend your life dreaming, you're gonna wind up confused
And never know the rhythm of the "Death Letter Blues"

11. Victory At Sea

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

He had a couple stories about the war
But that was all, like it was gone and didn't matter anymore
The years he gave up to the navy were visited on him not on me

A couple souvenirs of what he'd done
A Chinese doll, a silk flag on the rising sun
That was all he ever let me see till we watched Victory at Sea

He'd pour a ginger ale in a highball glass
before Sunday dinner and after Sunday Mass
We'd watch it all on a black and white TV
The show called Victory at Sea

A ship of heroes without names
Another Zero down to the sea in flames
I saw him smile at the Higgins' boat and the LST
As we watched Victory at Sea

I thought it was just a TV show
But he'd watch each week as if to see some face that he might know
As if each week someone brought in one more home movie
The show called Victory at Sea

These days I'll find it now and then
And I'll watch a while just to feel the way it was back then
It took so long to learn he saw things I'll never see
He saw victory at sea

12. New Walking Blues

(Back to album tracklist — Back to album list)

I went walking down that long road as the rain began to fall
I kept knocking on that big door but no one seemed to know my name at all

I've seen the sun come rising as I tried to take my rest
Well, it shone like a word heard only in a dream only said in jest

Where're you gonna run to in a world so cold?
Your heart keeps beating on while it's being bought and sold
Where're you gonna run to in a world on fire?
When your search for pure love leads to the end of desire

Come to me softly, whisper my name
Take me to the place where the day and night are talked of as the same

I cannot ford this river till the water starts to clear
The love that I once knew is only hiding now
It did not disappear

Rain kept a-falling, no shelter could I find
I kept knocking on that big door but no one seemed to pay me any mind

13. Johnny's Tune

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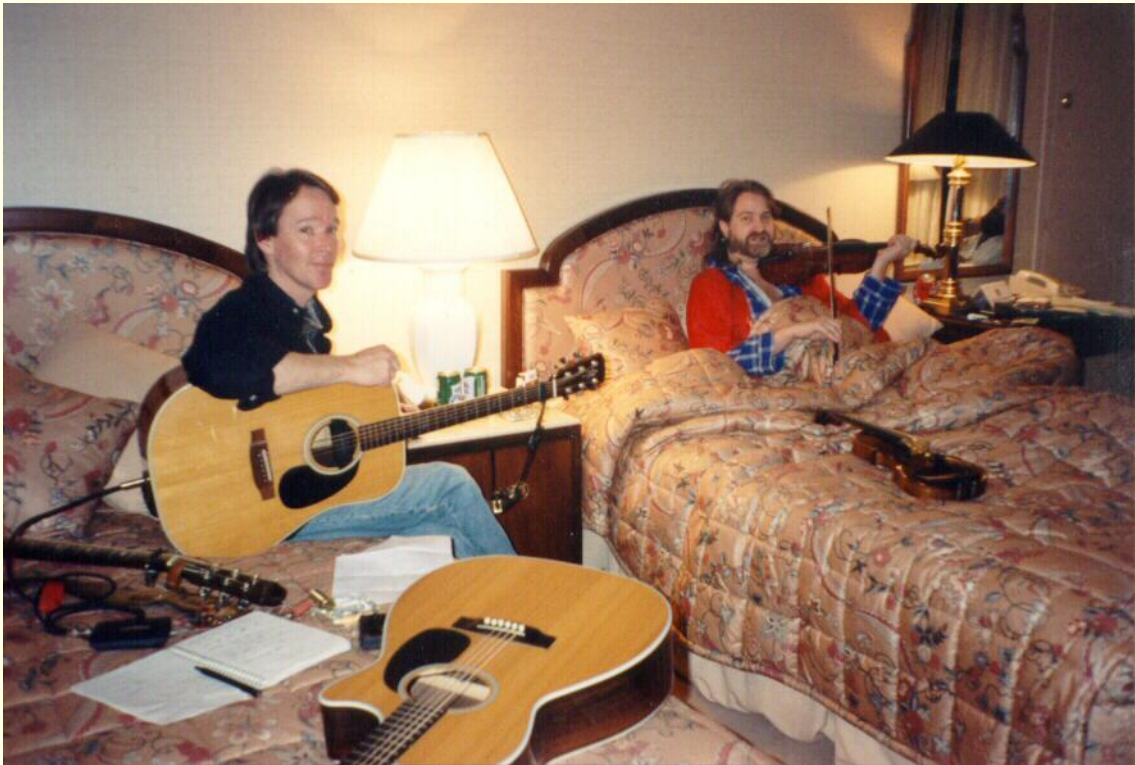
Born to the traveling life
That is what we do
We use the whiskey and the wit and the luck to pull us through

You look up to the gray sky and tell yourself it's blue
You look for the familiar when you have to face the new

And these days the sun don't rise as much as it goes down
And things look a little different now that Johnny has left town

The air get still before the snow
The street lights stand in place
And just once more I'd like to feel a warm wind in my face
Before the winter settles in and this town gets locked away
I want to break this quiet I want to hear the fiddle play

Tonight I'll song my songs for you
Stand up here alone
And then I'll make my way back to some motel I'll call home
And wind down just a little bit with my guitar in that room
But every night I still hear the harmony to every tune

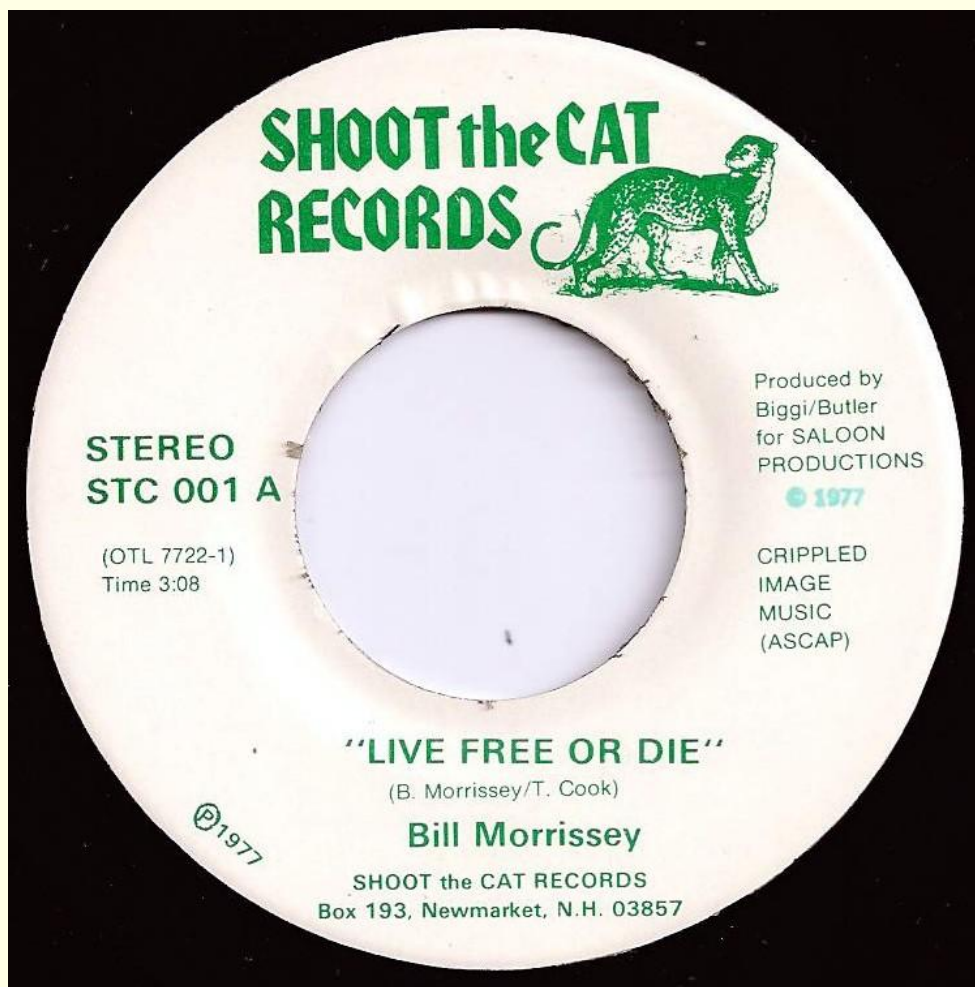


With Johnny Cunningham

© Ellen Karas

Bonus tracks
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1. Little Bit Of Whiskey
2. Live Free Or Die (Bill Morrissey & Trigger Cook)
3. Amnesia (Bill Morrissey & Nick Klaus)
4. Marigold Hall (Bill Morrissey & Cormac McCarthy)
5. Picnic
6. The Trailer Park
7. Pay Day (Mississippi John Hurt)



4. Marigold Hall

(Cormac McCarthy & Bill Morrissey)

Picture Gallery Blues (1996)

(Back to Bonus tracks — Back to album list)

Tonight we'll go dancing at the Marigold Hall
It's mostly a good time, there's rarely a brawl
Tonight we'll go dancing at the Marigold Hall
Dancing and dancing till we hit the wall

Aunt Sue is so sweet, she's so big and round
She floats like a feather from her ankles on down
Her husband likes dancing but she likes it more
She drags him around like she's sweeping the floor

Young Reverend Henry sits by the band
His hat in his lap and his heart in his hand
He watches the school nurse dance around with the mayor
And with every twirl he whispers a prayer

I always see her when she comes through the door
We used to be lovers, but not anymore
I loved her kisses, they gave me a wrench
They taste like wine, they were so cheap and French

There in the corner a figure appears
He's put on some weight and gone gray with the years
He jokes with his friends as he sings with the band
Nobody says much it's just Elvis again

Now, the wrestling coach slips a five to the combo
They play "Purple Haze" as a lysergic mambo
He knots his shirt round his waist, sticks a rose in his ear
Does an interpretive dance with a bottle of beer

The chief of police, now, there's a man with a plan
Sits by the punch bowl away from the band
He spikes the punch as he sits there alone
Then he pops all the drunks as they try to sneak home

Tonight we'll go dancing at the Marigold Hall
It's mostly a good time, there's rarely a brawl
Tonight we'll go dancing at the Marigold Hall
Dancing and dancing till we hit the wall

5. Picnic

The Silverwolf Homeless Project (1995) Silverwolf / SWCD-1002

(Back to Bonus tracks — (Back to album list)

Mama brought a blanket and the picnic basket
And she led us kids out on the grass
She brought Coca-Colas and cold fried chicken
If you wanted anything you just had to ask

The sun was shining on me and my brothers
We couldn't have felt better if we tried
I remember Mama's words as we broke the bread and fed the birds
Everything tastes a little bit better when you eat outside

San Francisco, in eighty two
Me and my bride sat out on the patio
The waiter brought a white wine for the newlyweds
Who couldn't dream of a better place to go

A gentle breeze blew as she moved close
She kissed me on the lips and I replied
I guess my Mama was right when she told me one night
Everything tastes a little bit better when you eat outside

It was the summer in Maine, in ninety one
I'd just been laid-off, but the neighbors never knew
I cooked them up the swordfish, the steaks and the chicken
Just about anything you could barbecue

That was just a week before my wife packed her things
And took the kids back to her folks in Telluride
But, man, you know those steaks were good, that night back in ninety one
Everything tastes a little bit better when you eat outside

Well that's my story, it ain't a long one
Every bum on this street has got one to tell
Now it's just you and me waiting for this restaurant to close
And man, I've come to know this dumpster well

Yeah, it's starting to rain now and you better stay low
Because these cops'll get ya' if they catch you on the slide
It's like camping out but really, there's just no place else to go
Everything tastes a little bit better when you eat outside
You'll see, everything tastes a little bit better when you eat outside

6. The Trailer Park

B-side of "Live Free or Die" single (1977)

Shoot the Cat Records / STC 001

(Back to Bonus tracks — (Back to album list)

Well you say you love me
Oh honey what am I supposed to do
We both know sometimes you need someone
Just to say I love you too

And you speak so softly
Everything turns at your command
Well I can't stand to face your firing line
And take the loss time after time
Don't try to play me now with someone else's hand

And don't the nights pass so slowly
You sit in your chair across the room
With your ladies magazines
Me I'm wrapped up in the TV on my second pint of beer

Now you get up without me
Turn off the lights without a word as you go to bed
You can't see me I'm just as tired my eyes are just as red

So here's one drink now for romance
And maybe one more for the young men who never take the chance
And maybe just one more for those barroom girls
Who know how to dance so right
Get the old men buying them drinks while their young men stay out of sight
Oh they keep their young men out of sight



7. Pay Day

(Mississippi John Hurt)

Due to copyright issues, lyrics could not be reprinted

Avalon Blues: A Tribute to the Music of Mississippi John Hurt

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