

Every Story Tells A Song

A Compilation of Lyrics

From Singer-Songwriter

Nemo James

And the Stories Behind the Songs.

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Nemo James

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About the Author

Nemo James has been writing and playing music professionally since 1970. He has released twelve albums, three books and some language learning software.

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For Bobby Two Beers

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The Story Behind The Song

A Simple Love Song

I wanted to write a song for you
To tell you just how I feel
Cause now for the first time
It's not just a dream
This love that I have is real
I wanted to put these thoughts of you
Into the words of a special song
The feeling is there and the music flows
But the words just keep coming out wrong

Chorus

It's not easy writing love songs
Without words that you've used before
It's not easy writing love songs
When you finally know for sure
I've been sitting here for hours
Trying to think of something new
But three simple words keep coming back
I love you

I know there's no need to say a word
As I'm sure that by now you know
It's just that I have this need to say
The words that my feelings show
For thousands of years now
Poets have tried
To soar on the wings of a bird
But from all of the beauty
That flows from their pens
We come back to the same three words

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Special Days

I met my love at the old race track
We didn't look forward didn't look back
Our lives were instantly entwined
On that special day

I asked her what brought her to this place
Where the world once came to race
Now left behind by changing winds
No sign of horse nor hay

Chorus
Special days, those special days
In wind or rain or sun
They change our lives forever
And all those yet to come

I was looking through some photographs
When one brought me along this path
My father's father standing here
In this special place

A bookmaker was he by trade
A much-loved man who always paid
Laid to rest long before I grew
But there's something in his face

My father's father also came
Throughout this land he well knew fame
He rode his horses like the wind
His 1st place always sure

He often talked about this track
And when he talked his tears came back
He spoke of a friend he held so dear
Lost in that great war

And as we looked in disbelief
At the photo how our thoughts did weave
Our fathers' fathers standing there
In this special place

They seemed to come alive and say
Welcome to this your special day
Your roots are distantly entwined
And now's your time to race

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

Meet Me at Midnight

Meet me at midnight by the old schoolyard
We can walk by the river where the frost falls hard
I've waited and waited and walked many a mile
Please meet me at midnight and talk for a while

We were so close, for so many years
The words that you gave me was music to my ear
How I miss your ideas and the warmth of your smile
Meet me at midnight, so we can talk for a while

It was midnight when you first appeared
After laying low for so many years
But my friend where are you now
Please meet at the midnight hour

I'll never understand your mysterious ways
How you came from nowhere with the gifts that you gave
One day you're a jester, the next you're a king
A marionette maker then a bird with broken wing

We'll sing and we'll dance, we'll laugh and we'll cry
Meet me at midnight and we'll talk for a while

The Story Behind the Song

It's A Crazy World

There's a monkey on the line, there a goat up a tree
There's a dog in my way and he won't look at me
Is this my life, or is it a dream?
There's a woman in the water and no one in the boat
A man in the junkyard trying to find his vote
It's the damnest thing, I ever did see

Chorus

It's a crazy world, crazy world
It's a crazy world, crazy world

There's a bull in the corner trying to start a fight
There's an ostrich in the bar trying to argue black is white
Is this my life, or is it a dream?
There's a gravy powered train that no one can get off
An army of rejections queueing at the trough
It's the damnest thing, I ever did see

There's a lamb in the park, mourning for his wife
There's an eagle in the courtroom demanding all his rights
Is this my life, or is it a dream?
There's a fox in the casino with his fingers crossed
Keeping all his winnings and giving us what he's lost
It's the damnest thing, I ever did see

It's a crazy world, crazy world
Our enemies are innovative and resourceful
It's a crazy world, crazy world
And so are we
It's a crazy world, crazy world
They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people

It's a crazy world, crazy world
And neither do we
It's a crazy world, crazy world
And neither do we
And neither do we
And neither do we

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

The Days I Will Remember
Hey little girl who you gonna run to
When you've cut your knee and you cry and say
Daddy make this pain go away
I'll say to you some magic words
And take you in my arms
And you'll go running back to play

Hey little girl who you gonna sing with
When it's Christmas time and we're round the tree
And there's such sweet harmony
We play that game I made for you
Your laughter fills the room
You are everything to me

Chorus
These are the days I will remember all my life
These pure and happy days of childhood
The funny things you say the crazy thing you do
I'll always remember these precious times with you
I'd give the world and so much more to you, my little girl

Hey little girl who you gonna cry to
When you spend the night sitting on your own
Waiting by the telephone
But he doesn't call, I share your pain
My shoulders wet with tears
Gone forever those childhood years

Hey little girl, who you going to walk with
On that special day when you turn and smile
As we walk slowly down the aisle
You'll take his hand, eyes filled with love
A woman I can't deny
But you'll always be my little girl

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

The Minstrel

A minstrel steps into the hall
To see his king and queen
Sire, there is something I must say
The words no longer find their place
Nor music fill my ears
Looks like my age has finally won the day

Respectfully I bid your leave
Although my heart is sad
But before I walk this last lonely mile
I need to know that with my songs
Your spirits I have moved
For if they have my life has been worthwhile

Chorus

Do you like the songs I've sung to you
Do you like the times that we've been through
Do you like my music, do you like to sing along
Yes we like the songs that you have sung
And we like the friends that we've become
We like your music and the words of your songs

Thank you for those words so kind
But I still feel some concern
For what has been the purpose of my songs
The cruelties of this world remain
And though my words may warm the soul
They've not put right a single wrong
And a tired king makes softly his reply

You've sung to us of love and pain
Of sorrow and of joy
And we're touched that with us your soul you've shared
It's true your songs won't change the world
If only that they could
But they make our pain much easier to bear

A minstrel and a king unite in a tearful farewell
And for the rest of time, the world unites
Under the minstrel spell

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Dreamer on The Run

Once he dreamt he was an eagle
With wings of steel and heart of gold
Once he dreamt he was a dove
With velvet touch that heals the troubled soul

Once he dreamt he spoke to Jesus
Who promised him he'd show the way
Once he dreamt he heard a beggar
And stopped to listen to what he had to say

Chorus

So pick up the bottle, pour him a glass
He'll tell you his stories of what might have passed
He'll sit and tell you how it should be done
Then look at his children and look at his wife
And look at the way he's destroying their lives
He's just another dreamer on the run
Just another dreamer on the run

Once he dreamt he fought for justice
With special powers he'd been blessed
But then he woke one day to find
That he was just a man like all the rest

Now within a cloud he sits
Dreams sinking fast in a whisky haze
His family given up the battle
He's left alone to end his drinking days

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

A Song of Sixpence

My mobile phone just won't connect my laptop won't turn on
My house was made in china, my pension in Saigon
I'll sing a song of sixpence, from a time so long ago
With undercover listening to pirate radio
I'll sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of memories

My bank told me they cared so much, so I gave them a call
They put me through to India or maybe it was Nepal
I'll sing a song of sixpence, that magic silver coin
When life was oh so simple, and the smallest things gave joy
I'll sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of memories

I've got so many records that half are left unplayed
Heaven knows who made them or if they will be paid
I'll sing a song of sixpence, that came with every tooth
They said it was a fairy, who cared if it was true
I'll sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of memories

I've had to park my car and take a bus to where I am
I can't find what's important, cause it's lost amongst the spam
I'll sing a song of sixpence when letters came from friends
Not nasty looking red ones, from debt that never ends
I'll sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of memories

I have to look on Facebook to see where my kids have been
They insist on Gucci but say money is obscene
I'll sing a song of sixpence when money was still real
And cards were used for playing, we laughed with every deal
I'll sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of memories

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

Sing for Your Child

Chorus

Sing for your child, show that you care
There may be no tomorrow
Stay for a while, there's always time to show you care
So sing for your child, sing for your child, tonight

A little child with wondrous eyes
Looks up at her father
Daddy won't you sing to me a while
Sing me songs of magic
And strange enchanted forests
And magicians that cast spells with wicked smiles
My child, I'd dearly love to, but I just don't have the time
There's still so many mountains I must climb

A little child with eyes closed tight
Lies there like an angel
Watched on by her father's misty eyes
Please let her live, the father cries
I can't exist without her
And this is not the time to say goodbye
He feels so helpless and he her king
But then recalls how she loved to hear him sing

For seven days and seven nights
he sits down close beside her
Singing songs of magic in her ear
The mountains he once climbed
Now seemed so much smaller
As the crisis of her illness drew near
Then her eyes slowly open
She's come through the night
Don't worry daddy I'm going to be alright

Now every time he says goodbye
A thought goes through his mind
There may be no tomorrow
So today he must be kind.

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

The Gate

The road was long the day was cold
A story that's so often told
A lonely road with no end in sight
No shelter from the night
When there before a gate I stood
That lead to nothing but tangled woods
I was wondering what it once had been
When something seemed to call me in

Then I walked through the garden
Of waste and despair
I was stung by the nettles
and chilled by the cold air
I was just about to turn around
When there in the waste ground
Was a house as sad as it was old
But still a shelter from the cold

This stately home that had once stood proud
Now stood within its stately shroud
A dark sky laying where the roof had been
Such sadness I'd never seen
And as I walked from room to room
Searching for a way from gloom
I walked into a room so bright
That I was blinded by the light

And there in the corner
Over by the far end
A guitar gently weeping
Welcome back old friend
We sang and we made rhymes
And talked about old times
Sweet music filled the air
Such joy was everywhere

As we danced through the garden
Of waste and despair
The sun started shining
And pushed aside the cold air

I closed the gate behind me
And continued on my journey
The road reached far into the night
But in the distance there shone a light

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

The Workhouse Child

Behind the cold and tear-stained door
Sitting on the cold stone floor
A workhouse child lives alone
Where he comes from no one's sure
He commits the crime of being poor
And dreams of parents he's never known

He's just a child, six years old
Just a child, scared and cold
Punished for the sins of others
Forgotten by a distant mother
Who turns away the workhouse child

Here's fifty pounds of bones to crush
It seems that there's a sudden rush
When work is done, you will be fed
You shall not talk you shall not laugh
You shall not rest a minute's half
Your spirit's ours till you are dead

You're just a child, of little use
Just a child, that's no excuse
And should you disobey the rules
Created by the minds of fools
You'll suffer more, you workhouse child

I've heard it said that one day soon
Men will fly and touch the moon
And machines will live, yet shed no tears
But will you never understand
All we ask is to touch the hand
That reaches out from one who cares

He's just a child, his needs are small
Just a child, too weak to crawl
And you who for the stars compete
While crushing those beneath your feet
Don't forget the workhouse child
In the big house on the hill
Where riches seldom ever spill
The workhouse mother lives alone
She looks for lines upon her face

The idle rich lives in disgrace
With heart that long has turned to stone

Life's such a bore, she cries aloud
Then sews some more, the tiny shroud
This land of plenty, wild and free
Is cursed by those too blind to see
The horrors of the workhouse child

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

A Warm Night in May

Look at the river, it's starting to flow now
Where yesterday's river was still
Winding its way down from mountain to sea
The sight of it gives such a thrill
Winter is passing, and spring has begun
The summer play has been cast
Soon there'll be flowers that dance in the sun
And lovers that bathe in the grass

How well I remember the days of my youth
At this special time of the year
The sun and the laughter
The smile of a young girl
And the joy of holding her near
The journeys to places that I'd never been
A life full of time left to spend
The fun and the laughter just went on and on
I was sure it never would end

Now I'm alone at the end of my days
And every day passes the same
It all went so quickly, just slipped through my hands
And there's only myself I can blame
Why can't they see that inside I'm a child
That longs to go play in the sand
This passion inside me is still driving me wild
But there's no who'll take this old hand
My heart is still free, and my eyes still shine bright
But my body gets tireder each day
I'd give all I have for just one more night
To be young on a warm night in May

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Silly Old Man*

A Chair by the Window

There's a place in a chair by the window
Where a young girl sits
She patiently waits for her father
For her world to be lit
There's a knock on the door
It's the postman
A telegram is read
Your country regrets to inform you
That your father is dead

He's missing in action somewhere
In the first world war
It's important for you to know
Just what he died for
So we can be free
To live our lives
In freedom and safety
Peace must survive

There's a place in a chair by the window
Where a young woman sits
She patiently waits for her young man
For her world to be lit
There's a knock on the door
It's her young man
It's his love that she needs
He's the reason that she wants to live
She's the air that he breathes

They're going to get married someday
She's having his child
Theirs is a once in a lifetime love
A rose growing wild
They want to be free
To live their lives
In freedom and safety
Peace must survive

There's a place in a chair by the window
Where a young wife sits

She patiently waits for her husband
For her world to be lit
There's a knock on the door
It's the postman
A telegram is read
Your country regrets to inform you
That your husband is dead

He's missing in action somewhere
In the second world war
It's important for you to know
Just what he died for
So we can be free
To live our lives
In freedom and safety
Peace must survive

There's a place in a chair by the window
Where an old woman sits
She patiently waits for the morning
For the streets to be lit
There's a knock on the door
It's the postman
A letter is read
If you don't pay the money you owe us
You'll wish you were dead

She has a choice of food or heating
She's cold and alone
Nothing left except her memories
And an empty home
But she's still free
To live her life
In freedom and safety
Peace has survived

There's a place in a room by the window
Where a dead woman lay
She patiently waits for her funeral
It's the end of her days
There's a knock on the door
It's a tax man

He starts to yell
If you don't pay the money you owe us
You'll go to hell

She was killed for nothing more
Than the change in her purse
It's too late to tell her now
That things could be worse

So what was it all for
All the death and the pain
They built our shelters
Now they stand in the rain

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

A Woman Unknown

I see her walking in the street each day
Nothing to say, in a world of her own
Looking twice the years that she has had
Life is bad, for the woman unknown
Collecting bits in bags
Like diamonds in her hand
Just how much they mean to her
We'll never understand

Chorus

Were you a dancer or once a beauty queen
Were you a famous actress on the silver screen
Or maybe all you wanted were the simple things in life
A happy home and children and to be somebody's wife

Now leaves are falling and the summer's gone
Will you carry on, living day to day
Sleeping in shop windows where we buy and sell
And know too well, that you're the price we pay
Perhaps your only crime
Was to trust in someone bad
How I wish I could give to you
The life you never had

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

Cool Water

Sunrise over mountainside, small pebbles kissed by lazy tide
A sleepy village waits for another summer's long Croatian day
Boat started the mooring cast
Water rippling as the ducks go past
The sound of distant traffic as those who have to work, go on their way

The temperature is rising how hot it's going to be
But the breeze is gently soothing on my face
Fish are jumping, splashing to the sea
Was there ever such a wondrous place

Cool water, drifting by
Cool water, reflects the sky
Cool water, running through my hands
Cool water

Fresh fish on the barbecue, chilled wine for a glass or two
Good friends all around me reminding me of how good life can be
Cards played by the waterside, sunsets on the distant tide
Another day is passing in this tiny village paradise by the sea

The temperature is falling, the sea has turned to silk
The moon is shining brightly from afar
Another day is passing to treasured memories
As the sky fills with gently flickering stars

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

Forbidden Fruit

She looks out the window, it's starting to rain
She can't take another day passing the same way
She steps out the back door, looks around
Mustn't be seen, mustn't make a sound
Jumps into her shiny car, she knows she should turn back
But she's just a traveller on a one-way track

Chorus

Forbidden fruit tastes so sweet
Wants to knock you off your feet
You may be strong you may be kind
But it'll make you leave your senses behind

She thinks of her husband giving all he can
No matter how she treats him, he's a kind and forgiving man
She doesn't want to hurt him, it makes her feel so bad
But forbidden fruit's the sweetest thing that she's ever had
This must be the last time she can't go on this way
This will be the last time until the next day

What is it about him? She can't understand
He's not so good looking, there's nothing in his hand
But there's something in his eyes, something in his smile
That makes all the heartache so worthwhile
Their time for love is over, it hurts so much to part
She must return to her loved ones and hide her aching heart

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

I Am Love

I'm not a man, I'm not the sun
Not the moon or ancient tomb
I'm not a statue for whom to serve
Nor fearsome thunder, or virgin birth

I'm not a mountain, I'm not the sea
I'm not the reason for you to be
I am not an eagle, or a dove
What I am is simple, I am love

I don't want your gold, or robes of silk
Keep all your fine words, keep your guilt
It all comes to nothing when the mist is clear
If a child is hungry, or lives in fear

I don't want your wars, or your sacrifice
One needless death is too high a price
I gave you life so you could live
I gave a heart to forgive

I don't want your prayers, don't want your blame
Don't want your hatred, not in my name
Your love that's steeped in self-interest
With twisted words I never blessed

I gave you heaven, but you make it hell
The home I gave, you leave a shell
If you truly want all that's above
Don't pray to me, pray to love
Don't pray to me, pray to love

From the Album *Terasa*

In the Garden

With such sweetness I recall
The days when I'd come home from school
And watch her working quietly in the garden
With calloused hands that gently nursed
The flowers of the universe
She looked so happy working in her garden

A simple tune she whistled well
In chorus with the birds
She seemed to hold them in a spell
That never needed words

It may seem to you her life was tough
But she had more than enough
When she was working in her little garden
Though many years she's laid to rest
Her memory still is clear
And when I see a flower, I must confess
It seems that she is near

In summer and in winter still
She loved her land and worked it till
All was well in her little garden

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

1000 Acres

The birds are greeting, the start of day
The trees have come alive
The mist is clearing in its sleepy way
Floating to the sky
The door opens, he steps outside
Takes a look around
The signs are good, the day will be kind
But peace can't be found

Chorus

1000 acres is not that much
Compared to someone's life
One man's dream is another man's prison
One will live, and one will survive
1000 acres is not that much
When the heart lies elsewhere
But 1000 acres is just enough
To trap you in its lair

This field where once worked a hundred men
Now there's only one
The dreams of a father have been handed down
To a reluctant son
He climbs high into the monster machine
His heart left on the ground
Thinking of what he could have been
But for duty and family entwined

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

I Hated What I Found

I was standing on the platform waiting for the train to come
To take my hopes and all my dreams to the other side of town
To a side that's just as lonely as the one that I'd come from
I'd been changing sides for twenty years trying to find where I belong

It was just then that a train pulled in on the other side of the track
The sight of her hit me so hard it took my mind right back
To a time when we were married so many years ago
It was only then I realised how much I'd loved her so

Chorus

I said I had to leave her as tears fell from our eyes
And through the tears all I could see was me, myself and I
I said I had to find myself, it sounded so profound
At last I knew I'd found myself, but I hated what I'd found

I know she never saw me there and that gave me some relief
To see me as a broken man I knew would give her grief
She reached across and took his hand and held her children tight
There's nothing that I've ever seen as cruel as that sight

I've walked 1000 miles or more without going anywhere
found a thousand answers as to why nobody cares
there's none so blind that seek the truth in a sea of empty words
I spent my life looking at the stars instead of listening to the birds

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

I Thought I Heard You Crying

I thought I heard you crying
In the darkest hour of night
But it was just a long-forgotten scene
How it hurt to see you
While your body shook with fright
Till I told you it was just a silly dream
I did my best to comfort you
And wipe your tears away
And sing gently while you drifted off to sleep
Then all would be forgotten
At the start of every day
My love for you was as tiring as was deep

I thought I heard some clapping
In the darkest hour of night
But it was just a long-forgotten scene
You hit the ball for six
A perfect cover drive
A stroke as powerful as it was clean
I lived through you with bat in hand
A game I loved so much
But I was never good enough to play
How I longed to tell you
How proud of I was of you
But I was too embarrassed to ever say

I thought I heard you calling
In the darkest hour of night
But it was just a long-forgotten scene
Halfway through life's journey
Your business left in ruins
Your marriage passed into something that had been
We didn't have a lot to give
But we did what we could do
With us you knew you always had a home
We watched you get back on your feet
And go from strength to strength
And build a life where the sun has always shone

I thought I heard you playing
In the darkest hour of night
But it was just a long-forgotten scene
In the bar we'd sit at night from start until the end
Those Madeira nights for us did reign supreme
Though my ears were blocks of wood
And music lost on me
I was so deeply moved by your words
You sang with such conviction even I could see
You touched the hearts of all of those who heard

Now I can hear you crying
In the darkest hour of night
But this is not a long-forgotten scene
You're standing by my bedside
As I slowly waste away
At my final stop behind a sterile screen
How I wish I could say to you
That I hear your every word
And comfort you as I did right from the start
Through all the years before you
You will never be alone
I will always live inside your heart

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

I Used to Be

I used to be the driver
Of a distant steaming train
A might beast at my command
That laughed at wind and rain
I used to be a footballer
With FA cup in hand
But then the dream was over
And the real world came along

I used to be a rock star
With screaming axe in hand
My fans would queue for hours
To watch me with my band
I used to be a businessman
When I could do no wrong
But then the dream was over
And the real world came along

Chorus

Dreams are what you make them
They are at your command
But luck is still your master
And will laugh at all your plans

I used to be a writer
Selling scripts to Hollywood
Complete with score and leading part
That Oscar sure felt good
I used to be a rock star
The second time around
But then the dream was over
And a new one quickly found

Now the days are shorter
And my hair once used to be
I know too well just how kind
Fate has been to me
I never could have dreamt so well
And it's only now I see
This life I lead in paradise
Is what I never used to be

This life I lead in paradise
Is what I never used to be

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

It Really Doesn't Matter

He told her he was leaving, she said well that's ok
He said with some deflation is that all you've got to say
It's been ten years since first we met but you don't seem to care
That now our time has ended, and you don't shed a single tear
She said

It really doesn't matter, doesn't matter all
Life goes on, I'll carry on I'll stumble, but I won't fall
Don't get me wrong, I love you as much as any woman can
But I won't be a slave to a heartache not for you or any man

She told him that his job was gone, he said well that's ok
She said with some relief, is that all you've got to say
I'm sure you know at your time of life that work is hard to find
He said I know but if it's time to go I'll look ahead and not behind
He said

It really doesn't matter, doesn't matter all
Life goes on, I'll carry on I'll stumble but I won't fall
Don't get me wrong I love this work and feel a heavy sense of loss
But I won't be a slave to the dice that are played not for you or any boss
And I say

It really doesn't matter, doesn't matter all
Life goes on, we carry on
We stumble but don't have to fall
Don't get me wrong, I know it's hard
When all we have is built on sand
But don't be a slave to the paths that are laid
Just do the best you can
No don't be a slave to the paths that are laid
Just do the best you can

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Listening Ears

Is there room for me my friend
A man who needs to play
I know the train left long ago
But I'm afraid I lost my way

I've got these songs inside my head
That won't leave me alone
For countless years they fell on ears
My songs have never known

Chorus

I'm not asking for the moon and stars
For mansions and for fancy cars
They have never meant a thing to me
All I ask for is listening ears
And a heart that's not afraid of tears
And eyes that look beyond celebrity

Fate has been unkind to me
There's no one I can blame
When I was young, I tried so hard
But the songs just never came

But now the words and music flow
And my guitar I command
Obscurity has destined me
As just another grain of sand

Little Tin Box

There's no more money in my little tin box
And five more bills to pay
No more songs in my repertoire
And ten minutes left to play
My girlfriend's packed her bags and gone
Says she don't want to sleep on the floor
The fridge is empty; the cupboards are bare
So the cat's gone to live next door

Chorus

Higher the bills go higher
Down down down, my spirits go
Round and round the wheel keeps turning
Where it's gonna stop, no one knows

No more money in my little tin box
And six more bills to pay
If you think it's funny I got no money
Then turn and walk away
There's bills to the left of me, bills to the right
Into the valley of debt I go
I've got seeds by the million
But nowhere they can grow

No more money in my little tin box
And seven more bills to pay
I've walked a thousand miles roads to salvation
And I'm still looking for another way
No more money in my little tin box
And ten more bills to pay
But I got hope and I ain't no dope
And tomorrow ain't far away

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Living on the Street

Living on the street, with too tired feet
Looking for a place to live
Living my life one day at a time
Please give what you can give
That cardboard box is mine for the night
Fair and square I won it in a fight
No up one down, no tax no rent
Depreciation, none per cent

Living on the street with too restless feet
Morning's come at last
I've packed my thing one dull old ring
From someone in my past
I'd like to try some delicate food
But half a steak still sure sounds good
Cold or colder, grilled or fried
With something yellow on the side

The road is long
The nights are longer still
Maybe one day
I'll meet you on this hill

Living on the street with too wet feet
Can't see my shoes for holes
I'd like to sit but I just don't fit
Alongside with these lost souls
You can take your nose down from the air
Say what you want I just don't care
This is the way I choose to be
I know it ain't much but at least it's me

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Special Days*

Looking for You

I'll meet you in a small cafe
On a warm Parisian night
We'll watch the people passing
Silently from sight
Our touching hands will shadow
From the flickering candlelight
I'll look into your sparkling eyes
And shiver with delight

Chorus

I've been looking for you everywhere
Through endless lonely nights
Wondering what you look like
And what are your delights
The moment that we meet
We'll know everything's alright
I'm looking for you
Looking for you

I'll meet you on the golden sands
Of a warm Caribbean night
Our hearts will ache as we watch the sun
Fall silently from sight
Our love will beat in time
To the rhythm of the waves
We'll discover mysteries
From ancient moonlit caves

I'll meet you in a forest
Beneath the falling leaves
We'll watch the sun weave silver rays
Through gently swaying trees
Our caresses will be gentle
Our passion will be strong
Our love will haunt that forest
Long after we have gone

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Silly Old Man*

Love in Your Heart

There's a place of darkness in the heart of everyone
A distant echo of a song that once was sung
Memories may torment and tear your soul apart
But you've got to keep love in your heart

There's a lesson forgotten for every lesson learned
A child that goes hungry for every candle burned
No one knows the ending, but we all know where to start
We've got to keep love in our hearts

Chorus

How do you feel at the end of the day
When you're sitting on your own
Does it comfort you to know that you were right
It's easy to laugh in the safety of friends
At those who stand alone
But so much braver to open your heart

There's a flower that lies dormant in the cruellest of men
Left to himself he does all that he can
Sometimes we must fight him, but we do so in the dark
So we've got to keep love in our heart

There's a life that begins for everyone that ends
To each and every child there's one message we must send
We all stand together, so we all must do our part
We've got to keep love in our heart

If you're looking for an answer
Here's where you've got to start
You've got to keep love
You've got to keep love
Yes you've got to keep love
In your heart

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Rosemary and Time

Chorus

There was a time when she thought life was forever
A time when she thought youth wouldn't fade
And a time when the hours passed so slowly
But for Rosemary and time, the years soon slipped away

There's a child in the garden, with nothing to do
She wants to be older and be just like you
Everyone laughs and envies her youth
Don't be in such a hurry

There's a young girl in love for the very first time
She wants to make love, but she's told it's a crime
Everyone laughs, your elders know best
Don't be in such a hurry

There's a girl dressed in white she'll soon be a wife
To have and to hold for the rest of her life
She's not sure of her feelings but he's all that she needs
And love will grow in time

There's a wife in the bedroom, she feels so alone
Longing for love that she's never known
She knows she should leave him but everyone says
Don't be in such a hurry

There's a mother in the garden, going through hell
At last she's found love but with somebody else
It must not continue for the sake of her child
And the pain will pass in time

There's a woman alone now, afraid to grow old
Who dreams of her lost love and the times she's been told
Don't be in such a hurry, the time is not right
But there never was a right time

Now the time for wasting time is over
And she finally knows what life's about
But the sands of her life are loosely scattered
And they've nearly all run out

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Over You

Sometimes I look back at those days long ago
When we walked through the grass and laughed in the snow
We had something so special, but I never knew
Now I can't, I just can't get over you

In that time between childhood and the building of walls
There's a place where we wait for the dice as it rolls
Now all that's behind me and nothing is new
I can't, I just can't get over you

I had to have all that I had, not knowing what the cost
Forgotten just as soon as tides had changed
Now I can't see what's in front of me, only see what I have lost
The victim of an ever-shrinking stage

Sometimes it's so hard on those leftover days
To think of our places and your special ways
I know that I did what I had to do
Still I can't, no I can't get over you

Success is such a fragile thing, like a butterfly in your hand
Hold too tight, it will crumble into dust
I spent my life looking at the moon when I should have looked within
Maybe it's only love that you can trust

I know that time can play tricks on the mind
Can tell us of things just not true
Maybe it's not you but my youth that I miss
Still I can't, no I can't get over you

Are you out there somewhere looking up
At that same old moon
Saying I can't, I can't get over you
I can't, no I can't get over you

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

Moj Prijatelj (My Friend)

I've watched you through the passing years
Seen your joy, felt your tears
Watched your children come and go
Seen the sunset on those you know
Shared with you each distant thought
Moj prijatelj

Upon these rocks I've passed the time
I'd watch the sea, you'd cast a line
Patiently I'd wait for you
To share your fish, a crust or two
Your kindness means more than you know
Moj prijatelj

Chorus

And with these wings I soar the sky
But we're are not so different you and I
We share the joy this world can bring
And give thanks for every blessed thing

The tides they come the boats they go
This simple life is all we know
A loving family waiting by
The sun rising in the sky
No need to reason how or why
Moj prijatelj

But time for me is running fast
My young to you I must now pass
Our hearts are small, but we feel the same
We share a love for this our land
We're proud to have you as a friend
Moj prijatelj

The Story Behind the Song

www.nemojames.com/my-friend

The Analyst

I've come to you today to ask for your advice
Please won't you help me if you can
There is no meaning in my life no place to rest my soul
I leave my future deep within your hands

Please come in and take a chair, fill in all these forms
Stack them up and put them in the rack
At the moment we've an offer two solutions the price of one
Guaranteed success or your problems back

Your trouble is quite common we get it all the time
It's due to childhood fears of the dark
Just do some mental exercise deep thinking and the like
And put everything you've got into your work

A month has now gone by since I came for your advice
Please won't you help me if you can
There's still no meaning in my life no place to rest my soul
I leave my future deep within your hands

Please excuse me if you would I must just look this up
The answer lies within the laws of Zen
It's the upward inward movement
Of a rhubarb when it flies and how quickly you can count from A to ten

I'll try and make it simpler so you will understand
As you seem confused with everything I've said
Just tell yourself you're wonderful, three times a day at meals
And one more time before you go to bed

A month has now gone by since I came for your advice
Please won't you help me if you can
There's still no meaning in my life no place to rest my soul
I leave my future deep within your hands

Listen Mr. Analyst I know that you mean well
But my problem is my loneliness you see
And I've seen you go home every night to an empty house
And you don't seem any happier than me

But I've seen the way you look at me your eyes give you away
Your head is stone but your heart is made of glass
Now if we could go out walking and act as lovers do
I'm sure that both our problems would be past

A month has now gone by since I gave you my advice
Please won't you help us if you can
There's still no meaning in our lives no place to rest our souls
I leave our futures deep within your hands

It's true I have these feelings of that I can't deny
But I must detach myself for logic's sake
Love may be the answer and a simple one it's true
But simplicity does not a theory make

But facts are always cold in bed that is also true
Where warmth and love are radiant in your eyes
So let us go out walking and act as lovers do
And leave our futures deep within the sky

A year has now gone by since she went for his advice
And it really didn't matter what he said
For now there's meaning in their lives a place to rest their souls
And their future lies within their marriage bed

The Story Behind the Song

The Dancer

Look at the dancer, alone at the bar
Her toes to the floor and her eyes to the stars
A prodigy moves with such beauty and grace
And the world stands back to admire

Since she could remember, dance was her life
All else was forsaken, she would never be a wife
Moving her body to the limits of pain
That's what her perfection requires

Chorus

Dance with me till the end
Dance with me my friend
This night will soon be over
Dance with me my friend

The lights of the stage leave the wisest eyes blind
The child becomes a star and leaves the woman behind
No time to be happy no time to be ill
No time for love or for life

But deep down inside, a woman's heart aches
While perfection demands more than her body can take
Caught up in a whirlpool of public demand
Not knowing the price she must pay

The years have slipped by now, as fast as her fame
Her body is broken and a child's heart remains
The child falls in love too much and too late
Now each day must serve as her last

Their love becomes stronger with each day that goes by
Art is your servant when love is let fly
But art is a master so distant and cruel
And it calls now to claim it's due

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

They Won't Come Round Again

He still remembers the sixties
Like they were just yesterday
Those long hot summer evenings
In the gardens where he played
He never knew a day as good
As those he knew back then
And it hurts to think
They won't come round again

He still recalls his first love
To the sound of the fabulous four
Their love would last forever
No one ever was so sure
Now he still can see her face
In someone else's now and then
But she's lost forever
And won't be found again

Chorus

They won't come round again you know
They won't come round again
Those days of love and freedom
In the heart of a tired old van
For all those things he thought were free
He must now pay the price
And the highest price
Is they won't come round again

Now his life is like a waterfall
That flows the wrong way round
His roots are strong and orderly
But they never reached the ground
He tells himself the answer lies
Blowing in the wind
But it don't change the fact
That they won't come round again.

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

I Wish I Was A Has-Been

Chorus

I wish I was a has been with the world once at my feet
With tales of drunk and disorderly and broken hotel suites
I wish I was a has-been, that would be so cool
Cause it's better to be a has-been than a never was at all

My obscurity is legendary in that I can't be beat
To be so unsuccessful is really quite a feat
The door is often closed to a has-been, that's for sure
But when you are a never was there simply ain't no door

If they ever made a pop chart on how it should not be done
There ain't no doubt about it, I'd be number one
They say if you work hard enough it'll finally come to pass
But I am here to tell you now they're talking through their arse

Bobby Two Beers

Chorus

Bobby two beers he's a hell of a man
He can drink more beer than a watering can can
If you ever find yourself up Norway way
Ask anyone and here's what they'll say
Bobby two beers he's the man
Get his autograph while you can

My pal Bob came around one day
Just to hear me pick a few tunes
There was Siv banging gently on an old tin can
And Bobby grooving nicely on spoons
I consider myself a real good host
There was plenty of beer and wine
But I couldn't keep up with Bob as he drank
So I had to serve two at a time

For Bob, every day is a bad hair day
But that don't matter of course
Cause his heart's as big as a big elephant's
And they say that he's hung like a horse
He once fought an alligator in a fair fight
Bounced a bear around the walls
He sang Bob Dylan's *Blowing in the wind*
While he held a tiger by the balls

The Story Behind the Song

The World is Full of Heroes

Chorus

The world is full of heroes, though few of them are know
There's some that stand in battlefields and some that stand at home
There's a million debts of bravery, that will never be repaid
The world is full of heroes and here lies one today

A young man shelters in a field, each day could be his last
Death hides around every corner and rains with every blast
He spends a lifetime thinking of the man who saved his life
The unknown fallen hero, left an unknown child and wife

And when the war is over, there's still no place to hide
So he bravely soldiers on each day for his family to provide
Through guilty years he can't accept that better men lay dead
For years, his sleep is broken, by the screaming in his head

A young girl shelters in a storm, hungry and afraid
While buildings rocked by angry bombs, demand a price be paid
From dusty ruins she builds a life, fighting every day
To keep her children safe and warm and help them find their way

Laying down her life each day for those she holds so dear
Asking nothing in return hiding every tear
Look around at what you have and all you hope to be
We owe it all to sacrifice from those who kept us free

The Story Behind the Song

These Walls

We welcome you to this our land
To every nation near and far
Throughout this world so full of wonder
We stand beneath a shining star

We have no need of gold or riches
All that we ask is what you see
The sun to sparkle on the water
And sit beside our family

Chorus

These walls are more than what you see
More than the stone that kept us free
They are the heart that beats within
A country proud where all is king
These walls that stand so proud and strong
Have inspired a thousand songs
A thousand stories they can tell
And hold you in their mystic spell

If I could have but just one wish
It would be that all could come
To share with us all that we love
And sit beneath our setting sun

When your time with us has ended
And you are sitting far away
Remember this our time together
And in your hearts, we hope we'll stay

The Story Behind the Song

www.nemojames.com/these-walls

Jenny at The Front Door

Jenny, standing by the front door
Waiting for the post to come
It's seven weeks since last she had
A letter from her son
He said he'd never leave her
Said he never was that kind
But now he's found a better life
And left a million miles behind

Jenny, standing by the front door
Ten years she's stood alone
He, too busy to write a word
She, too poor to phone
It's not he doesn't love her
Of that he will insist
It's just that every day or so
He forgets that she exists

Chorus

Jenny, Jenny, you're wasting your life away
You've lived your life for others watching how they play
Jenny, Jenny, just memories on your shelves
Will you never realise that you are nothing
But yourself

Jenny, standing by the front door
Remembering what her mother said
A woman's place is by a man
Please get that in your head
Well, her husband left for another love
And her son for another life
And all they left behind them
Was a mother and a wife

You said I had to find a man
Well mother I found two
But now I stand alone
Tell me what am I to do?

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *McDonald's Farm*
But For Now

Time passes by, the wheel quickly turns
Each day for you brings something new to learn
One minute confusion the next there is joy
Decisions no harder than the playing of which toy

Chorus

But for now, you must sleep, tell the world it can wait
Lost in simple dreams, there's no early or late
This time I know, will too quickly pass
But my love for you, forever will last

How my heart aches with love, as I sit by your side
Your simplest achievements have me bursting with pride
Your every new word lights up the room
The dance you invented always ends far too soon

The Story Behind the Song

Vanity Fair

It was late at night in the kitchen
At the end of a long and cruel day
She sits all alone in the darkness
because her candle has just burned away

And she's told that she can't have another
because her master is going through hard times
Yet her hands are still sore and bleeding
from the silver and gold she must shine

She knows that she should go to bed now
tomorrow is just four hours away
But for seven days a week, all she has
Are these hours at the end of the day

When her mind is left free to wander
Through a life that she can call her own
Not chained to the whims of a master
Who tries to get blood from a stone

Chorus

Vanity fair, you have more than your share
Much more than you ever could need
When you stand in your church
While your soul you do search
Don't you think he's aware of your greed

Vanity fair, how can you bear
To look in the mirror each day
While you're wasting the lives
Of your servants who strive
To keep you in the luxury
You never worked for
It's your hands in the fire
But theirs that get burned

There's just one thing in her life that is good
The young man she rushes to see
On her afternoon off by the river
When the world is so happy and free

Where they dream of a life together
In a place that they can call their own
But they know in their hearts it can't happen
They are two birds that never have flown

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

Walk On

It was in winter, many years ago
Outside her front door, our tears melt the snow
I held her tightly it hurt so much inside
And when I walked away, I remember how we cried

We were too young, that's what her parents said
Hearts are blind, love should come from the head
Maybe I was blind but now I see it just the same
Our love was perfect when she cast it to the flame
And she said

Chorus

Walk on, don't ever look behind you
Walk on, with your eyes open wide
Trust your heart but don't ever let it blind you
Walk on, with my memory by your side

Well I walked on, I did just like she said
Twenty years have passed, and I still feel just as dead
I searched for so long, God knows I tried to find
Just the smallest spark of the love we'd left behind

I can see you, while I stand in the dark
You walking children, slowly through the park
Tears in your eyes, old before your day
A cruel man beside you, who drains your life away
And I remember what you said

Walk on, don't ever look behind you
Walk on, with your eyes open wide
Trust your heart but don't ever let it blind you
Walk on, with my memory by your side

The Poet

He walks alone, stumbling through the darkness
Soul on fire, his heart cries out in pain
He grasps at words that fly forever round him
And sometimes fall
Who is he that lingers in the forest
Tortured by the loneliness within
And yet embraced by wonders that surround him
And soothe him still

Chorus

He's a poet, a dreamer
Creator of the world
His words will take you anywhere
His tears will make you cry
He's a lover, discover
The gift he longs to give to you
But don't forget the man inside
He stands alone

So many times, he dreamt of perfect love
Between the fire, it surely must exist
And there above the flames that serve to blind us
Our God will stand
Through the years, reality has scourged him
But compromise will never block his path
Though only death will ever end his dreams
His words survive

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

The Tree

Up in the hills
There's an old man who works on his land
With a tough leathered face
And a lifetime of work on his hands
He never asked more than to be left alone
With the wind and the rain in his hair
His family at the table at the end of the day
And the freedom to love and to care

“Now I ask you old man
There is something that's puzzling me
Each day when you work
You stop by the side of that tree
Then you look to the sky with a tear in your eye
And a sorrow that I can almost hear
How can it be, that the sight of a tree
Can cost your tranquillity so terribly dear.”

He looked up and spoke
With a voice that still haunts me this day
“And why do ask, do you really care what I say?
Who are you with the left or the right
The centre, the up or the down
They all say the same, it's the other to blame
And all that ever changes, is who wears the crown.”

“Each time they came
Demanding to set me free
But from what? I would ask
For I am all that I'll ever want to be
But whatever their name, they took just the same
Everything I could ever grow
The only freedom I wanted was to be left alone
From being liberated, from what? I don't know”

“So I worked and they took
And not once did you hear me say no
For my children were my life
A poor man's riches you know
But then they filled up the heads

Of my sons with their dreams
And they proudly marched them to war
Now they lie there with me at the roots of this tree
Yet their leaders return and still ask for more”

The reds fight the blues, the blacks fight the whites
But the ending is always the same
No system is wrong, they all sing the same song
When you're pointing your finger, it's greed you must blame

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

The Wheels Go Round

The fields pass by, the rivers flow
What town that was, I'll never know
We gently sway, to the rhythm of the track
Some people stop and take a look
From gardens just like picture books
Sometimes they wave, and I wave back

Chorus

The wheels go round, the engine turns
The miles pass quickly the fuel gets burned
The wheels go round, time passes by
Some say hello, some say goodbye

He's trying hard to keep awake
She's wondering what next to bake
They're holding hands despite their years
I'm trying hard to read this book
But feel the need to stop and look
At the world outside so far but yet so near

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Minstrel*

Two Eyes Are Not Enough

On a ship bound for sunshine
I started to unwind
And turned my mind to all the things
That I'd gladly left behind
The woman I'd left crying
Asking where she'd gone wrong
Perhaps I'd loved her, I don't know
But it was time that I was gone

Then she sat beside me
A woman old and grey
Her eyes were filled with sadness
Her mind was far away
She took me by surprise
When she reached and took my hand
And said to me the words that I remember to this day

Chorus

Son, life's a gamble but death you know for sure
And it's only then you'll realise
If you were rich or you were poor
You think that you're an island, but I have to say to you
There are things you see with four eyes
That you'll never see with two

We worked so hard for many years
So much we went without
We thought retirement and this cruise
Was what life was all about
All the wondrous sights there are to see
This cruise is sure to bring
But without him standing by my side
They just don't mean a thing

One day he was part of me
The next day he was gone
Though his heart was like a child's
It just couldn't carry on
I know you think you've got it all
With your gold and fancy stuff
But with all the money in the world
Two eyes are not enough

Old lady I still think of you, and the gift you gave to me
The other pair of eyes I have so now at last I see

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Silly Old Man*

Fire in the Desert

Chorus

Take me away, far away from this place
Take me back home so I can embrace
The love of my family, that's where I belong
My heart is so heavy, I've been away far too long

There's fire in the desert, there's laughter in the sand
There's blood on the sword that haunts my troubled hand
There's doubt in the words that led us to this place
I made his wife a widow, yet never saw his face

July 4th comes round again, a victory parade
But here we stand with heavy hearts, blistering in the shade
I'm proud of my country, I've done what must be done
But let this be the last time, or else we've just begun

Now there's peace in the desert, there's blood upon the sand
There are reasons for killing, but none I understand
So listen now you leaders who sit in peace at home
Don't tell a man lay down your life until you lay your own

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

A Bachelor's Lament

I go where I want to, do as I please
Follow the sunshine, sail with the breeze
No need to argue, or make a scene
Don't have to say where I have been

I sleep the whole night with the sheets on my back
Pack all my belongings into one sack
Don't hear complaining, I get no tears
Don't have to count the cans of beer

Chorus

Love I know can be so unkind
It will crush your heart and rob you blind
I know it only brings you pain
But I wish I was in love again

Don't have to sit through hours of ballet
Can sit by the T.V. and eat from a tray
Don't have to visit people I can't stand
Can keep my head buried firmly in the sand

I get no complaints about nothing to wear
Can through the day on a song and a prayer
Don't have to come home after a flirt
Worrying about the lipstick on my shirt

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

Strange Happenings

Strange happenings at number 23
There's a man thinks he's a teapot
With a wife that don't like tea
All day long they argue, in silence and in vain
But she says she wouldn't trade him
For all the tea in Spain

Strange happenings at number 24
There's a man who thought he was himself
But now he's not so sure
He's spent so long pretending to be who he was not
That now the things that mean the most
Are the things that he forgot

Strange happenings at number 25
There's a woman sings like Dylan
Like she's sitting on a knife
You'd think she was being murdered
But sadly no such luck
She knows too well it bothers us
But she don't give a damn

Strange happenings at number 26
There's a man who talks to onions
And tries to teach them tricks
The lack of a reaction
Doesn't bother him
Now he's thinking seriously of
Teaching them to swim

Strange happenings at number 27
There's a man who thinks he's Elvis
On a direct line to heaven
He knows that they're all laughing
But doesn't really care
All he ever asks from life
Is to be your teddy bear

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Special Days*

Suzie Likes Caviar

Chorus

Suzie likes caviar, Jamie likes mousse
Simon's very fond of a nice fresh goose
Wash it all down with a glass of champagne
Start the next day with the same again

They earn a lot of money, there's no other way
They're going to start saving for a mortgage one day
Two weeks to go and the money's all gone
But no need to worry cause there's always mum

They're all independent in a needy kind of way
Always insist that it's their turn to pay
Never ask for money except when they're broke
Two glasses of wine and one glass of hope

Dad took out a loan to pay her credit card
He's got his own dreams, but times are hard
He'd like to say no but he's told that's not cool
If you want to be loved, then you've got to play ball

She's got a new iPhone and shoes to match
A card to satisfy every possible scratch
If your life is passing by with nothing to show
The bank of mum and dad is the place to go

The Eagle and the Dove

There's a full moon in a distant land
A young girl walks across the sand
Dreaming of a love she's never known
Not far away a young man walks
Escaping from the troubled thoughts
Of another year spent alone

The night is finally over, it's time to head for home
They jump onto a bus, and look around
Their eyes meet for the first time, their lives begin again
Everything is said without a sound

Chorus

This day is perfect, it was always meant to be
Since time began a path was laid to this your destiny
This love is magic we can see it in your eyes
The eagle and the dove, fly off into the sky

When there's someone special in your heart
It's hard to be so far apart
But destiny was always on your side
Now through the hard times you have come
Another chapter has begun
Together and with those whose lives you've tied

Take a look around you, at those you hold so dear
We wish you every happiness and more
If fate was so determined to bring you here today
We know this love will last forevermore

The Story Behind the Song

www.nemojames.com/the-eagle-and-the-dove

Going to the Factory

I know that you don't want to hear this son
I know that you've heard it before
But it tears me up to see you this like this
So I'm going to have to say it once more
It's not so long since I sat there
Watching that damn TV
Till the end of the night
When you turn out the light
and darkness is all you see

It never would happen to me I said
A thousand times or more
Now each day passes just the same
As the thousand gone before

Chorus

Now I'm going to the factory, the same thing every day
Working in the factory, is eating my soul away
Working in the factory, is more than I can bear
But I'm going to the factory and no one out there cares

They filled our heads with dreams my son
They told us of our rights
But they never told us just how tough
Are those crushing factory nights
But there's only one thing that's certain son
When the speeches are all through
There's only one man you can ever trust
And he's there inside of you

You think that time is on your side
And tomorrow's another day
But if you don't start now, it won't be long
Before you've thrown your life away

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

I Could Have Been

He sits at his desk in the heat of the day
His hands on the keys, his mind far away
He looks out the window at the world passing by
And wonders how it ever came to this

He remembers a young man just out of school
In love with his music, didn't he know it all
Those days in the band were the best of his life
Why did they ever have to change?

Chorus

I could have been a star, I could have been the best
I could have held the hearts of the world to my chest
I could have been that person up there on that screen
But now I sit in my office, so sterile and clean
Passing each day just saying
I could have been

He's still got the cutting from the local gazette
That said that his playing was up with the best
And he's still got the scarf from that young girl in Bath
And at times he can still hear her laugh

He looks at his watch now it's time to go home
There's a big new car waiting that one day he may own
His wife will complain that he's home late again
Just like he ever had a choice

From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

A Happy Man

If dreams were gold, I would be a rich man
If truth be told that's what I'd like to be
With intentions realised I would be a good man
But memory fades quickly when there's nothing to see

If my thoughts were chosen, I would be a wise man
But standing alone, they just come and go
If not for ambition I would be a free man
Living each moment as destiny chose

If I could see what's before me, I would be a grateful man
But vision is blurred with your head in the sand
Though none of these things I am a happy man
And each day I have left, I will do what I can

From the Album *Weave*

Running

She's running from the future, running from the past
Standing in the present trying to make it last
She's always running but never going anywhere
Never asking questions, never needs to lie
All she ever seems to need is there before her eyes
She's always running and never seems to care

Chorus

She has a simple heart that she'll share with anyone
Ten minutes spent beside her, will pass as only one
When life is pressing heavily with no time to hear the birds
Stop and look around you, for a heart that's just like hers

Running from the office, running to the train
Running to the future, then running back again
You're always running but never going anywhere
Looking for promotion, that illusionary trend
Finding only faces when you really need a friend
You're always running, and no one really cares

From the Album *Special Days*

I Met Her on the M25

I was driving down the freeway
The one you call M25
When all of a sudden everything stopped
Just around junction five
Nothing moved for over an hour
We were just lined up there in rows
What is it about a stationary car
That makes you want to pick your nose?

Half a day had quickly passed
Before we finally made a move
I tuned myself to the radio
I was getting in the groove
But just as I passed by junction six
I couldn't believe my eyes
A million cars came to halt
Man I was cursing that M25

Five hours passed and we hadn't moved
So I thought I'd get out and take a stroll
When my ears were drawn like magnets
To the sounds of some rock and roll
And there she sat in this fancy car
I thought I'd take a chance I said
"Hey honey, don't just sit there
Get out that car, let's dance!"

We started to dance, and it wasn't long
'Fore we're surrounded by a crowd
I was rocking and rolling with this beautiful chick
It was like dancing on a cloud
Some folks passed some beers around
And some folks smoked some grass
It's just as well those cars couldn't move
Cause I couldn't have moved my ass

I know you won't believe me
But I'm telling you it's true
Me and this chick had fallen in love
Now what was we to do

Cause rumours were going around
That we'd be there for at least another day
So what the hell, we passed the time
By rolling in some hay

Well I'm telling you no word of a lie
This chick was something else
I thought I'd hit the jackpot
Cause she sure rang all my bells
I said in these last few hours with you
I ain't never felt so alive
Let's you and I get married
And she accepted on the M25

We walked along this line of cars
Looking for a priest
When lord above we found one
Who was drunk, to say the least
I said, listen here my man of God
Marry us here and now
He then pronounced us man and wife
As we took those sacred vows

I know it all sounds crazy
But that's the kind of guy I am
You can either take life by the balls
Or you can piss it down the pan
I told her my life had been kinda tough
But I was sure things would improve
And I was right cause the road was clearing
We were finally on the move

We arranged to meet at junction twelve
Where she'd take me to meet her mom
And we'd tell her about the M25
Where our life together had begun
I put my foot down and my head back
I was happy to be cruising again
But then I screamed out every cuss I knew
When we stopped at junction ten

Well I sat there in a line of cars

As far as you could see
When I got out to see if I could find my wife
So at least I'd have some company
It wasn't long before I found her
By the side of a big sedan
There was my wife of only half a day
In the arms of another man

She looked up at me with her innocent face
And said with a tear in her eye
I'm sorry babe it was fun while it lasted
But I'm afraid this is goodbye
I met this guy an hour ago
And I love him more than life
And as soon as our divorce comes through
I'm going to be his wife

Boy meets girl, boy loses girl
It often comes to pass
Maybe it wasn't the longest romance
But hell, it was a blast
So the next time you're on the M25
Cursing that traffic jam
Get out the car and have some fun
Show the world you don't give a damn

The Story Behind the Song

What's So Good About Your Town

She never flew in an aeroplane
Never sailed across the sea
Never yearned to be in another place
Never wanted to be set free
Never wanted more than a happy home
And the work that she adored
Tomorrow was a gift to her
And she never asked for more

We fell in love on that island
A garden in the sea
A simple girl and a traveller
Who'd seen all you can see
I said I must show you the world
Trying to sound wise
But what she said as she held my hand
Took me by surprise

Chorus

What's so good about your town
That you want me to see
Does the sun shine almost every day
Are the people there more free
What's so good about your town
That I'll see when I arrive
Can a woman walk the streets at night
Without fearing for her life

I told her not to talk that way
That everything has a price
And if she wanted progress
She must take my advice
Travel opens up the mind
There's so much we have to see
Then she kissed me sweetly on the lips
And said that's all I'll ever need

Don't you want to improve your mind
Why why why
Aren't you curious what you might find
Why why why
Don't you want to see the Queen
Why why why
Why why why why

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Silly Old Man*

Ski With Me Tonight

Do you know where the cold wind blows
Where silence rains and the people flow
And icy crystal running beneath your feet
Yes, my friend, I know too well
That magic place of which you tell
Where the air is pure, and life is oh so sweet

The chair glides slowly to the top
Round in circles, doesn't stop
We'll jump off and bravely face the wind
I'll be following close behind
Until the end we are entwined
And when we're down, we'll go back up again

Chorus

Feel that wind, blowing in your face
With all your worries trailing far behind
See that snow, filling every space
The moon will be our light
Won't you ski with me tonight

Swaying gently side to side, lovers of the mountainside
The speed is flowing gently through our veins
The café's waiting there for us
With hot wine served in plastic cups
And a taste that will never be the same again.

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

McDonald's Farm

There's an old man who lives in the country
Trying to find his way back home
Rolling in and out of the meadow
Banging away on a drum
Oh oh, what a story

There's an old black dog there beside him
Who seems to be extremely pissed off
His masters got no money for bones
Cause he's spent it all in the pub
Oh oh, he's feeling ruff now

Chorus

Nik nak paddy wak
His dog has gone and won't go back
He's gone to find McDonald's farm
Nik nak paddy wak
Where the ducks go moo and the cows go quack
And they're raving it up in the barn
Nik nak paddy wak
He's heading down a one-way track
He's going to have a real good time
Howling away in the moonlight
Leaving all his troubles behind

The dog walks into McDonald's farmhouse
Taken back by what he saw
There's an empty whisky bottle on the table
And McDonald's passed out on the floor
Oh oh, what a story

So he walks out into the farmyard
Hoping to find some news
But the animals are out of their skulls
Cause they've also been at booze
Oh oh, pass the bottle

From the Album *McDonald's Farm*

Pride (Duet)

The streets are all empty now
As the comfort of darkness falls
The ghost of a thousand cars
Pass along curb stoned halls
There's that place where we used to meet
By the shade of that tree
From a time so long ago
A time of you and me

The house is so empty now
A monument to broken dreams
The ghost of a thousand laughs
The threads of a thousand seams
I tried so hard to start again but never found a way
One stupid act of madness
And forever I must pay

Chorus

I have my pride
Your foolish pride
That's all I have, I know
But I have this pain
And so do I
And I don't think it will go

Do you think of me now and then
When you gaze upon empty streets
Standing beside yourself, hoping one day we'll meet
I'm sorry that I hurt you, what more can I say
If only you'd have forgiven me, we could have found a way

How I wish you were with me now
As I start on this long walk home
Passing through memories
So hard when you're on your own
I know that it meant nothing, I know that your love was real
This pain will never leave me
This wound will never heal

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *The Minstrel*

The Song You'll Never Play

I met her on a train
She was sitting all alone
I asked her where she was going
She said she was going home
There was something there between us
We both felt it right away
Two aching hearts reaching out
On a cold and misty day

Chorus

Don't you sometimes wonder
Don't you sometimes feel afraid
That the song that was written for you
Is the song that you'll never play

I asked her where her home was
And I listened with surprise
She was heading in the wrong direction
And you could see it in her eyes

She had got on to the wrong train
But was staying for the ride
As she felt safe where she was sitting
And scared of the world outside

I know that we are strangers
But that's all we ever are
Together we can leave this train
We can travel far

She said I'm sorry my dear stranger
I'm sure that you are right
But I'm not strong enough to leave this train
And face the misty night

I hear that she's still riding
On that same old train
But the doors won't close, and the roof now leaks
And lets in the mist and rain

So before you get onto a train
On a bright and sunny day
Remember it's so hard to leave
And it only goes one way

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

Married but Living Alone

She shuts the door, turns out the light
He said he'd be home late tonight
She likes to cook but not for one
She sits down by the fire

He'll get home tired, they'll hardly talk
He works so hard it's not his fault
But that doesn't help how she feels inside
There must be something more

How well she can recall the time
When they used to have such fun
When money was no substitute
For a day spent in the sun

Chorus

She's married but living alone
With a man who is never at home
Even when he's there, she just can't bear
To think of what he's become
She knows that she still loves him
She just wishes that he'd change
To the man he was when they were young
He's given her all he wanted, all she never asked for
She's got it all, she's married
But living alone

The day is done he's fast asleep
She's trying hard not to weep
So many times, they've talked it through
But nothing seems to change

She wants so much to run away
But she'll leave it for another day
What could she do, where could she go
No answer ever comes

The thought of being by herself
Makes her feel so scared
Security will keep her there
And precious moments that they once shared

From the Album *The Gate*

Silly Old Man

I'm a silly old man walking in the rain
And I'll keep on walking till I'm young again
Tapping on your windows banging on your doors
I'm a rich young silly old man

I'm a rich old man, as silly as can be
But I can afford eccentricity
You know your only crazy
When you haven't got a bean
I'm a rich young happy old man

Chorus

Oh oh, you don't need to worry
Oh oh, when you're as silly as me

I'm a young old man playing in the snow
Laughing with children, slipping to and fro
If you got the time now
Come and join the fun
With a rich young funny old man

I'm a tired old man though I don't even know
When I fall asleep, all my tiredness will go
If I wake up in the morning, I'll start my day again
As a happy old silly young man

I'm a simple old man not a care in the world
Exquisitely implicit with my hair done up in curls
I'm a skateboard papa getting on down
I'm a happy old silly free man

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Silly Old Man*

Like Crystal

It was just an ordinary day
Like most that pass that way
But it only takes one second to change the world
Two strangers in a park
Some words to light the spark
Just an ordinary boy and a girl

But then they had found
A crystal picked from the ground
And held tight within the hands of prayer
And who can understand
The power of a love so grand
And why should such a crystal be so rare?

Chorus

Like crystal, like crystal,
Their love was such a precious thing
A mysterious and many-sided gem
Like crystal, like crystal
A song that only two can sing
A wonder that never will die

A lifetime passes by
No need to reason why
With perfect love there is no fear
Now she sits alone
Their time has come and gone
Old woman, who never shed a tear

She talks inside her head
For there alone, he is not dead
But patiently awaits their time resumed
Their crystal will not die
Will hold the earth, reflect the sky
And embrace that wondrous power entombed

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Silly Old Man*

Fighting on the Wall

There's glass on the floor, storm clouds fill the air
Food on the table but no one on the chair
A head full of words that just can't be unsaid
Silence is deafening when there's no space on the bed

Won't you go back, won't you go back
Won't you go back and talk
Won't you go back, won't you go back
No matter who's at fault

Chorus

Stop fighting on the wall, it ain't no use at all
Stop fighting on the wall, you're both going to fall
There's no place for love, with anger in your heart
Stop fighting on the wall, that's a good place to start

Get back on the floor, that's a good place to begin
When you're fighting on the wall, no one's gonna win
When nothing is left, there's nothing left to gain
Winner or loser, both sides get the same

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Special Days*

Marie (Where Are You Now)

Many years have now passed by
From the time of which I speak
When the world was such a wondrous place
And the strong seemed not so weak
She came into my life one day
When all around was dark
We danced around the heavens
And strolled the summer park

When we made love, it seemed as if
The sea for us would part
And angels cried with happiness
As they soothed our aching heart
If love comes but once a lifetime
This was surely mine
We'd have been together forever
If fate had not been so unkind

Chorus

She haunts my days, haunts my nights
The time we spent just seemed so right
I see her face in every star
The memory of her burns so bright
I know the time has passed into eternity
If I could see her one more time
Marie, where are you now

I held her hand, touched her heart
And begged her not to speak
And felt the pain of wasted love
As tears fell down her cheek
The moment that we parted
Will haunt me all my life
But our love was cursed forever
For I already had a wife

And now that time has left me
Deserted and afraid
It's only now I realise
The path my loyalty laid
For Le Grande Amour that I had found
That was from deception born
Was blessed by God but scorned by man
And lay on a bed of thorns

From the Album *The Minstrel*

The Moonbeam

Come child and sit down beside me
Sit by the warmth of the fire
The glow of moonlight on this cold winter's night
Reminds me of a time of desire

I'll tell you a tale of a young girl
Whose presence would light up any room
Her voice filled the air, with a music so rare
And her eyes shone like the moon

Chorus

Don't try to capture a moonbeam
It's like trying to touch the sun
It will shine in your heart then quickly depart
Into daylight or clouds it will run

Oh how I fell for that young girl
As she sang and she shone through the crowd
Though times were hard, she kept us from the cold
Like the sun when it shines through a cloud

She told me she loved and adored me
And that we would live in such style
She lay in my bed when I asked her to wed
And she sang through the eyes of a child

Don't try to capture a moonbeam
It's like trying to touch the sun
It will shine in your heart then quickly depart
Into daylight or clouds it will run

But still I married my moonbeam
And she did try so hard to shine
But she cried for a stage from the bars of her cage
And I knew she would never stay mine

So I let go of my moonbeam
And with a tear, she flew off with the night
But I know in her way she still loves me this day
And I still feel the warmth of her light

So child one day when you meet her
I beg you don't turn her away
We are all we can be as you're all to me
And we're only alive for this day

Sometimes at night I can see now
Your eyes shine like hers did then
Though I love you so, I won't want you to go
But when it's time I will sing once again

Don't try to capture a moonbeam
It's like trying to touch the sun
It will shine in your heart then quickly depart
Into daylight or clouds it will run

Remember This Day

Remember this day, over clear Croatian skies
When you held a world of love in your eyes
On a boat bound for nowhere, on a crystal-clear sea
And a union that's destined, forever to be
With family and friends, from near and from far
Gathered around you, like light from a star
We all stand together, and together we say
For the rest of your lives, you must remember this day

Chorus

So hold tight your hands and remember with pride
The joy that you brought, and the lives that you tied
Though times may get tough and the sky sometimes grey
You'll always get through, if you remember this day

Love's not just a word, or this moment we see
It's the heart of the family, the root of its tree
It's the thoughts left unspoken, the time that will pass
The future unplanned and the lines that we cast

When you're far away, never think you're alone
For when you know love, you are always at home
From those that all around you and those up above
We share in your joy, we share in your love

When the candles flickers, at the end of the play
Remember with sweetness, how you're feeling this day

The Story Behind the Song

A Good Man

He didn't want to set the world on fire
Never wanted his own empire
He was happy just to get along
From day to day on a prayer and a song

Didn't have to lie, never had to cheat
Never knew the feeling of just being beat
He played the game with a laugh and a smile
A simple man with a majestic style

Chorus

He was a good man, strong and kind
You can see it in the love that he left behind
Ah ah, ah ah, he was a good man
He was a good man, and I miss him so
And I'm here to tell you I was proud to know
Ah ah, ah ah, a good man

Though life had dealt him a troubled hand
It was never more than his shoulders could stand
No matter how hard the rain fell from above
He never lost his faith in the power of love

There's no reason why I wrote this song
No one was killed, no star was born
I just hoped that you'd be happy to hear
Of a good man who I still hold dear

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

Who is She

She knocks on, the door he lets her in
She sits down, he pours some gin
The hotel room is cold and stark
His nameless face blends with the dark
That's fifty pounds is all she says
And doesn't move until he pays
He complies with her demand
Puts the money in her icy hand
Now he's paid the price
She'll do anything he asks
He leads her to the bed
Nothing must be said

Before we start, I must confess
He said while slowly she undressed
I'm not proud of what I do
And neither I assume are you
because of this, I must insist
The lights stay out, and you resist
The urge to know the man behind
This shadowed face that leaves you blind
For you and I are strangers
And that's how it must remain
He steps into the cage
The actress takes the stage

Chorus

Who is she, this stranger?
She is all one could ask for from sensuality
Who is she, this stranger?
She'll do anything that you desire
Pay the price, and you can light her fire

The tide goes out to leave behind
The battered driftwood none shall find
She had played her part so well
In sounds of love, she does excel
She was the best he'd ever known
His passion rose with every moan
If only they had met before

She took the life of a whore
He feels the need to talk to her
And she the need to hear
Of what he'd left behind
That haunts his troubled mind

There was only one love in his life
The woman who was once his wife
But she had been so dull in bed
While erotic dreams had filled his head
It's seven years since they had part
When he had left her broken heart
To seek excitement where he could
In hotel rooms and shaded woods
And now this stranger by his side
Had made him love with strength and pride
A shadowed face he'll never know
She'll dress and quickly go

She kissed him softly on the cheek
And leaves him while he soundly sleeps
Her tears at last allowed to fall
She hurries through the silent hall
How could he have been so blind
When darkness can't obscure the mind
This stranger walking from his life
Had in fact once been his wife

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *McDonalds Farm*

Did Anybody See Her

Just as the birds began to sing to start another day
I was opening the front door trying to think of what to say
So many times I'd used the lines that only those in love believe
It was so much easier to fool herself than pack her bags to leave

I was feeling so complacent, as I climbed the creaking stairs
Praying that the perfume no longer filled the air
But as I pushed the door wide open I could see something was wrong
Our bed had not been slept in and all her clothes were gone

Chorus

Has anybody seen her
Does anybody know
Where she may be living
Where she might have gone
Has anybody seen her
I've looked everywhere
All I want to do is tell her
Just much I care

I'd always played around you know just like it was a game
Once in a while I'd feel some guilt, but continued just the same
But through all that time there she was a woman so kind and true
And it hurts me now to realise what she was going through

Waiting patiently at home at night in her quiet agony
With a heart so full of love and trust for a man too blind to see
But now she's gone without a warning and no letter did she leave
Only her parents know now where she is and say she's better off without me

From the Album *McDonalds Farm*

Give Me a Smile

The train was running late, I gave a big sigh
Then I saw this pretty thing from the corner of my eye
I sat down beside her trying to act cool
Whistling like a budgie and feeling like a fool

I wonder if she likes me, what's in her mind
I wonder if she's sexy, I wonder if she's kind
Come on little lady, won't you give me a sign
Then we can get together and spend some time

Chorus

Give me a smile if you want me to talk
Just one little smile then we can go for a walk
We'll get to know each other and then make a date
Please give me a smile girl, before it's too late

Shall I offer her a mint, shall I compliment her clothes
Shall I tell her there's a bogie on the end of her nose
Why is it so hard for me to say a damn thing?
When I know it wouldn't kill me and what joy it could bring

My train pulls in, and I step right up
I closed the door behind me, and I turned to look back
Then when it pulled away and there was no more hope
She gave the kind of smile that says "I wish you'd have spoke"

I'll remember that smile till the end of my days
When I think of what I missed 'cause of my cowardly ways

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

Africa

When he was young, he used to have a doll
Nothing grand just something he could hold
He called it Africa, Africa by name
A lonely child from day start till the end
But in that doll, he always had a friend
He called it Africa, from Africa he came

Chorus

Africa was all he had
It was more than enough for him
A secret world that they shared
They'd fight through thick and thin
To distant lands where heroines
Were trapped by wicked men
The day was saved by Africa
And Africa's best friend

As time passed by his world remained the same
Friends came and went then came around again
But always Africa, Africa was there
What wondrous stories they could tell
But he told them only to himself
Just he and Africa, for only Africa he cared

It was just a name, just a word and nothing more
No deeper meaning, no mysterious door
He knew that doll had something more than life
A lake where they could bathe, where stories came alive

The Story Behind the Song
From the album *Field of Dreams*

Cat Attack

There's a full moon rising, the dogs are howling
On the dark side of town, there's something going down
A storm is brewing, resentment stewing
You better watch out
Someone's gonna get hurt
Someone's gonna eat dirt
There's gonna be a cat attack.

It's been a long time coming, those cats are cunning
They strike like lightning, very frightening
The dogs are fierce, but they come off worse
They better watch out
It's time for a showdown
Let's all go down
To the cat attack

There's Cookie on the right side, Django on the left side
Jutko from behind, with trouble on his mind
The dogs are surrounded, they're gonna get pounded
They better watch out
Sadie takes the first hit
But lucky gets the worst of it
It's a cat attack

The show is over, that's the end of Rover
He put up a good fight, but the claw beats the bite
Dogs should stay at home, by the fireside with a bone
They need to watch out
If at home they stay, they live to fight another day
In a cat attack...

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

Flora's Holiday

Stop your labour come this way
For this is Flora's holiday
The sheep in the meadow are hard at play
This day will be yours

If you ask me of now of then
The words have changed, but the song's the same
A heart will beat or fade away
Laughter has never changed
The poet must still rearrange
While lovers dream, this is their day

Rise you children come this way
For this is Flora's holiday
Time to laugh and time to play
For music and dance

If you ask me why don't we now
Stare as long as sheep or cow
Or see the world as once we thought it was
I will tell you to close your eyes
It's only then you'll realise
The answer's not in why or because

Sleep you children where you lay
That was Flora's holiday

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

Nonsense

Looking for a place to do the fandango
Looking for a mountain I can climb
Hoping to find that perfect mango
Hoping to solve that perfect crime
I wanna be a hero just like Robin
I wanna have a beard like Desperate Dan
Looking for a wave to ride my toboggan
I wanna build a castle in the sand

Chorus

The Jabberwock's in town tonight
You better watch out and know how to fight
He'll gyre and gimble claw and bite
And snatch your band from out of sight
Stop your nonsense back to work
Or I'll tie you up in a very straight shirt
That looking glass ain't what it seems
It's nothing more than a mad hatter's dream

I wanna write songs that ain't got no message
And tell a story that never ends
I wanna be the diamond in the wreckage
And be the knight that slays all trends

I wanna make sense of all this nonsense
I wanna write a book in wonderland
I wanna turn plastic into incense
And hold a free bird in my hand

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

Second Thoughts

The day was uneventful, like the many gone before
We laughed and joked, and shared the daily chores
We talked about the holidays and where we'd go that year
Our future was set in stone, or that's how that it appeared

We kissed goodnight as always and drifted off to sleep
Her's was always restless while mine was long and deep
It wasn't till I woke up that I found something was wrong
The bed and house were empty, I knew that she had gone

Chorus

It seemed my life was over as my eyes turned to tears
The thought of life without her was more than I could bear
But when the night had passed, and the birds began to sing
Second thoughts took over, so a new world could begin
First thoughts will overpower you, listen if you must
But second thoughts are the ones to trust

I knew that she still loved me and that I felt the same
But sometimes that's not enough, and no one should be blamed
As a new world opened up, my sadness slipped away
Those first thoughts tried to crush me, but second thoughts won the day

And now a lifetime later it's easier now to see
That the day that she walked out was a precious gift to me
Second thoughts have led me to a second time around
A life that I once dreamt of, where true love has been found

The Story Behind the Song

Somebody Stole My Hole

Chorus

Somebody stole my hole, it ain't nowhere to be seen
It was there last night when I turned out the light
Over there on that patch of green
I just can't carry on, now my hole is gone
You better watch out there's a thief about
Yea somebody stole my hole

Well I spent all day working through that clay
In wind and rain and sun
My back is sore, and I'm pretty damn sure
I must have moved a ton

It ain't hard to describe its round and wide
With nothing in between
But there ain't a soul that's seen my hole
Now I'm feeling pretty damn mean

I didn't waste time in reporting that crime
They asked where I'd seen it last
I said late last night when I turned out the light
Then I thought I heard someone laugh

Send a patrol to find my hole
I screamed at the policeman
He said I ain't got time to fight this crime
But our finding a hole man can

I put down that phone and waited at home
But the hole man never came
So early next day I took out my spade
Intending to start again.

I tried to start but I had no heart
Even half a hole was just too much
So I drank some beer and I held back a tear
Till my thoughts had turned to mush

Gawd bless my soul I miss that hole
And I curse the thief that came
Life goes, on I'll carry on
But I'll never be the same again

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

Thank You James

I was just a young boy, with first guitar in hand
The only thing I dreamt of was playing in a band
Hendrix, Purple, Zeppelin, I followed with my friends
But I needed something different to satisfy my pen

When I heard you singing, I knew my life had changed
Just a simple tune that sent shivers down my spine
I didn't have much money, but I always found a way
Of buying every song of yours that I could find

Thank you James
For being there when I needed a friend
In Mexico we walked through fire and rain
So long ago and far away
Thank you James
For being on that Jukebox all alone
I cried as you were singing your sad songs
But it sure was good, to get home again

I practised hard and there came a day I was always in demand
From studio to studio and endless touring bands
But all I ever wanted was to play the songs I wrote
They rejected everything without listening to a note

This Taylor sound is very good but the market's much too small
Come back when you've got something we can sell
Now thirty years and more have past and you're still selling every day
And you still hold your audience in a spell

Thank you James
For helping me to go round one more time
Carolina was always on my mind
Walking down that lonesome road
Thank you James
How I wish that yours was my town too
But you know that I won't lie for you
Sweet baby James, I am the man they froze

Thank you James
It's good to know that you will not die young

Not a victim of Kelly's machine gun
On that October road, with sunny skies
Thank you James
Even though I'll be lonely tonight
All I have to do is close my eyes
And sing your song of Copperline
Thank you James

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

Four Seasons

Four and twenty fading leaves have fallen from the tree
With silent echo from distant centuries past
Fleeting thoughts of summers gone with loves that came and went
While sand was falling slowly through the glass

A time of warm reflection floating gently by
The daylight baton relayed once again
A time to open palms and pass on our borrowed gifts
Putting down the sword to reach out for the pen

The air takes hold its icy grip as the day breaks into light
Gardens white from Jack's immortal sword
The fragile journey in circles caught trapped by borders dark
But comfort found as a note within a chord

The festive bridge so welcome, spans from old to new
Following a star from centuries past
Giving strength to face a new year, head bowed before the wind
As a weary mother prepares the summer's cast

With darkest days behind us, the cleansing has begun
Terra brings to life the sleeping roots
Tiny hearts are soaring from tree to waking tree
While Eros stands awaiting time to shoot

The crease has been prepared, the willow linseed oiled
By hands that dream of centuries to come
From ash to dust to hungry earth, the empty beds awake
A symphony conducted by the sun

As life steps firmly forward the stars put in their place
Cases packed with dreams that can come true
Sleeping layers forgotten, time touched by evening sun
A wine glass filled with nothing much to do

Majestic rows of colour, waving to the sky
Trading light for life that birds will plant
A berry can down branches passed and necks that glow at night
While still green hearts are learning how to dance.

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

This Town

It's good to see you back here
My old friend
I hear that life has treated you well
I still remember two boys
Walking home from school
What stories we could tell

We never caught that big fish
They talked about
But we sure did try
They still talk about that time
You farted in class
We laughed until we cried

Chorus

This town is enough for me
This town is all I'll ever need
This Town is where I want to be
This Town
This Town
This town

This town wasn't right for you
We could see in your eyes
The city lights and buildings grand
How strange to see that young boy
Now a powerful man
Holding lives in the palm of your hand

Yes I'm still living here in the same old house
Teaching in that same old school
My kids still look for that big fish but still no luck
Laughing with friends and playing the fool

I wish you all the best, my dear old friend
But your world is not for me
This here is my empire, I know it's not so big
But what I've got is what you see

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

Too Much Stuff

I came home late last night didn't make a sound
Opened the door and looked around
There was too much stuff, too much stuff
There was paper on the hall stand, bottles on the floor
Still a Santa costume hanging on the door
There was too much stuff, too much stuff

Chorus

You got too much stuff it's driving me insane
I've just fallen down those stairs again
One of these days when you ain't around
I'm gonna bury that stuff deep underground
But I know if I did you would just buy more
Now you've got you've own parking space at the store
I know that you say you ain't got enough
So it's just as well, I got so much love

A different pair of shoes for each day of the year
Handbags coming from out of your ears
You got too much stuff, too much stuff
You got enough books to open a shop
If you don't know what it is you throw it in a box
You got too much stuff, too much stuff

I can't sit down without clearing the chair
A pile in every corner from here to there
You're slowly taking over my wardrobe space
I'd like to hang a painting but there ain't no place.

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Terasa*

Weave a Life of Love

Sunday morning, slowly starts the day
Bacon frying, the kids are on their way
A sleepy kiss good morning
A smile that warms the heart
A feeling that the world is good
And we all can play our part

Chorus

You've got to weave a life of love
Spread it everywhere
Stranger friend and family
Let them know you care
The greatest gift that you can give
Is that tapestry you weave
For your children and their children
And all that they believe

Lunch is packed you pull out of the drive
Excited voices so glad to be alive
The beach is not so crowded
The kids run off to play
The smiling faces all around
Say all they need to say

Monday morning quickly starts the day
Office driving, your car knows the way
It's not the work you dreamt of
But you know its value well
As do those that trust you
The people that you help

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

What Am I To Do

For as long as I remember he was always there
Our first day at school both of us scared
He put his hand on my shoulder and said will you be my friend
From that day till now that friendship didn't end

Those years weren't so easy the kids played it rough
But he always stood beside me and taught me to be tough
It was us against the world standing side by side
But his were the shoulders on which we relied

Chorus

Should I tell him or look the other way
Make his world come crashing down or wait another day
One day he's gonna find out and ask if I knew
I don't want to lie to him, so tell me, what am I do

Both of us the best man at each other's wedding day
Soon the world was perfect when we watched our children play
She told me that she loved him with all of her heart
So why did it end and why did it start

I checked in at a hotel on a trip I hadn't planned
It was then that I saw her standing in the arms of another man
It was only too obvious that they were more than friends
Through a tangled web of lies, I could see the end

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

A Kind of Love Song (Duet)

I'd like to say I love you, but I don't
I'd like to say I'll stay here but I won't
I need you like a turkey needs to be at Christmas lunch
I'd like to say I love you, but I don't

I'd like to say I'm bothered, but I ain't
I'd like to say you're special, but I can't
I need you like just like a fish needs a frying pan
I'd like to say I'm bothered, but I ain't

How good it feels to think of ways to say our last farewell
To live with you forever is my idea of hell
If only I could turn back time to the day before we met
I'd have stayed at home that night
And not know this regret

If you want to leave then be my guest
Just get your hat and coat, I'll do the rest
I need you like I need an earwig in my head
If you want to leave then be my guest

One day I won't be here and then you'll know
The meaning of regret to let me go
I need you like a tiger needs a visit to the zoo
One day I won't be here and then you'll know

But for now I suppose it's time for tea
It's just another anniversary
Fifty years have quickly passed and nothing much has changed
But for now I suppose it's time for tea

How good it feels to know that we
Don't mean the things we say
From love to hate and hate to love
I know it's just our way
But through it all, the hardest times
We chewed and spat them out
'cause laughter is the only thing
We just can't live without

Broken Wing

If you could fly where would you go
To distant lands where warm winds blow
Or would you like to stay near home
Where what you see is what you know

From branch to branch from friend to friend
To hungry mouths that you must tend
My feathered friend with broken wing
How sad the song that you now sing

Chorus

The highest mountains I have climbed
And seen the world from way up high
Such complex problems I have solved
Some with brass and some with gold
An empire lays beneath my feet
But as I look down at your beak
None of that means a thing
If I can't mend your broken wing

From branch to branch I watch you fly
With careless soul and weary eye
The world can be a dangerous place
For gentle hearts that lose the race

My furry friend who hunts for fun
Do you understand what you have done
But I know I can't hold you to blame
As in your place, I would do the same

The Story Behind the Song

From the album *Field of Dreams*

Bye Cycle

You won't see me any more
That's one thing I know for sure
You 'caused me too much pain
Left me lying in the rain

Time and time I told you, never again
But you called me back just like a long-lost friend
But this time I'm saying you went too far
When you threw me in front of that moving car

Chorus

Bye cycle, Bye cycle
You're up for sale, there's no turning back
Bye cycle, Bye cycle
I ain't taking no more of your crap
Bye cycle, Bye cycle
You can take some other mug for a ride
Bye cycle, Bye cycle
You can't say that I ain't tried

You know I've given you so much love
Treated you with velvet gloves
What do I get in return?
A real sore arse and road burns

Broken bones and brown underpants
A hundred stitches maybe more
Repair bills that I can't afford to pay
And bruises by the score

The Story Behind the Song

From the album *Field of Dreams*

Field of Dreams

I don't know why I wrote this song
I don't know if it's right or wrong
I only know if it's right, it must be written
To some, it might seem absurd
Writing songs that are never heard
But those who won't lie down should be forgiven

Day after day my head is filled with tapestries of sound
I sit there in wonder as each word gets written down
Just where it comes from is a mystery to me
Like every word is cast in stone and that is what must be

Chorus

Welcome to my field of dreams it reaches far and wide
To you in may seem nothing much but I stand here with pride
If you build it, they will come I once heard it said
But right or wrong there's nothing that I'd rather do instead

There are times when I must confess, I'd like to stop and take a rest
And do those things I've never time to do
But who knows when the well runs dry, when it does you won't see me cry
Maybe just a little tear or two

I used to say I didn't care if recognition came along
That all that really matters is the singing of the song
But it's hard to see the ones you love die slowly on the shelf
Still I think of just how blessed I am that I want for nothing else

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

I'll Be Here for You

If the world could see beyond your smile
Would they see a woman or a child
Alone and scared praying that there's someone there
Who understands if only for a while

How I wish one day that they could find
What lies behind a troubled mind
But we fire into the dark hoping that we hit the mark
Not knowing if we are cruel or we are kind

Chorus

I don't have a magic wand, how I wish I did
But I do have a heart to share and will give what I can give
I don't know what the answer is but this I know is true
If you feel you need a friend, I'll be here for you

If the world would only understand
How life can change with the turning of a hand
If you're young or old, shy or bold
We all build our lives on shifting sand

Just remember everything must pass
Today's pain might just be the last
There are people that care, always someone there
So just reach out behind that looking glass

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

Planting Trees

There's a cloudless sky, the sun is fierce
The earth like dust, no shade to be found
The world is just a story told
time stands still in this African town

Out from nowhere, a man appears
Alone and fearless he stands
There's only one thing on his mind
Where to empty his hands

Chorus

God bless those people who never took the score
Planting trees that they never saw

It's hard to dig in the midday sun
But he doesn't notice doesn't seem to care
All he feels is there's work to be done
Using a spade instead of a prayer

Where once there was nothing now stands a twig
Where mighty oak will grow
As years pass by just where it came from
No one will ever know

There's some that give with careful calculation
And some that give with no reason or rhythm
There's some that talk with endless hesitation
Saying nothing time after time

But once in a while, someone comes along
Doing what needs to be done
No thought of reward or recognition
No bottom line or banging of a drum

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *India*

If Daddy Was Wrong

If daddy was wrong, was it really his fault
He did the right thing, or that's what he thought
We are what we see, we do what is done
What was right yesterday, today may be wrong

He might not have shown it, but he loved in his way
He was there when you needed him, through night and through day
Things weren't as easy as might have appeared
Each generation has its own tears
So stop for a minute before judgement is made
Of those gone before us and the prices they paid

If mummy was wrong, it don't mean you were right
Did you stand in her shoes, did you see with her sight?
She had her dreams just like you do
She traded them gladly to be close to you

She did what she thought was right at the time
She looked at reason while you looked at rhythm
You treated your future like it had no worth
It was all she could think of from the day of your birth
If you're right or your wrong, it don't matter anyway
The hand that you're given is the hand you must play

The choice is yours to look forward or back
To follow a path or fall through the cracks
We can look for life, or we can look for blame
We can choose forgiveness, or we can choose pain

From the Album *India*

It Ain't Right

You said you were tired of staying at home
So I went out and took a loan
It ain't right
I booked this fancy restaurant
because I thought that was what you want
It ain't right

But you've spent the night looking at your phone
I'm sick of hearing that ringing tone
You're sending photos of your food
So now it's cold and that's just rude
Your reading texts that don't say a word
And answering while you eat dessert
I don't wanna start a fight but
It ain't right

I bought us tickets to The Lion King
'cause I know you like that kind of thing
It ain't right
What a show it turned out to be
The best one that I ever did see
It ain't right

But you spend the night looking at your phone
You might as well have stayed at home
What is it about this Instagram
That turns a person's mind to jam
Your world revolves around Facebook friends
Ask yourself where your freedom went
I don't wanna start a fight but
It ain't right

You've spent the day looking at your phone
With a room full of people sitting alone
One day I won't be around
And you'll miss the life you never found
I know a father don't mean that much
Compared to that screen that you have to touch
I don't wanna start a fight but
It ain't right

The Story Behind the Song

It Takes a Real Man to Cry

The door opens, everyone turns around
It's that special moment where dreams are found
A dress of flowing satin worn by the bride
Beside her a man, bursting with pride

Ooh, ooh, things well never be the same
There's a new man in her heart
Ooh, ooh, it's not easy letting go
Now the tears do start

Chorus

It takes a real man to cry, a real man to sigh
To stand by his emotions, look them in the eyes
And say this is who I am, I'm not afraid to say
These are tears of pride, and I will not look away

Curtains open, the performance has begun
He hates the opera, wishes he could run
Doesn't wanna be there, only came to please his wife
'cause she's the best thing, in his trouble life

Ooh, ooh, but as the music takes hold
He feels something stirring and touch his very soul
Ooh, ooh, he tries to not let go
But his life is filled with beauty as the tears begin to flow

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

Playing to the Crowd

They ask me if I knew him, I have to say I did
We'd solve the problems of the world even though we were just kids
Arguing in black and white on each side of our class
He with silver spoon in mouth and me with one of brass

They ask me if he meant well, I have to say he did
but his heart was in his pocket, that's something that he hid
It's easy to be liberal with interests not at stake
When others have to pay the price for all of your mistakes

Chorus

Playing to the crowd, that's the safest way to go
If you can't give them what they want, then give them a good show
When you're playing to the crowd, you always have a friend
It's only when your time has passed, they see what you have spent

They ask me if he understood, just what was at stake
But it was all the same to him when the crowd began to wave
Here you have my principles, a great man once said
And if they're not to your liking, there are others in my head

The question you should really ask is why time and time again
We accept the choices passed down by Hobson and his friends
When the crowd is cheering, and the heart begins to race
Is when our eyes are blinded to what lies behind the face

From the Album *India*

Simple Rules of Life

Don't sit down when the flames are getting higher
Don't stand up when the bullets start to fly
Don't start to swim until you're in the water
Don't fall in love if you're afraid to cry

If you like life, don't complain of getting older
Don't fall asleep till the fat one starts to sing
If you wanna run, make sure you're moving forward
Don't start a fight unless you're wearing wings

Chorus

The simple rules of life might seem obvious to you
But laugh at them, and that might be the last thing that you do
They're much the same for everyone, whether you're high or low
Who knows where they come from and who knows where they'll go

Don't be brave unless your eyes are open
Don't think twice when you've jumped out of a plane
Don't burn a bridge till you've reached the other side
Don't lose the key if you've wrapped yourself in chains

Don't hog the ball when someone's talking to you
Don't talk to a fool without opening your heart
Don't start a dream if you can't throw the dice
Don't ask for a credit until you've played your part

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

Those Damn Pipes

The first time that I saw you, I'm afraid it must be said
The thought of a life together was furthest from my head
It's not that you weren't pretty, in a spooky kind of way
It was just those damn bagpipes that you said you had to play

I don't claim to be an expert in matters of the ear
But sanity is of those things that I do hold most dear
The noises that come out of that bag of windy pain
Is of those things I prayed that I would never hear again

Chorus

Those damn pipes, they're driving me insane
I've tried almost everything, like leaving them in the rain
Those damn pipes are indestructible
I would give most anything to not see them again

She knows that I would like a pet, a cat or dog would do
And if she was being honest, she would like one too
I did bring home a cat one day, a ball of furry sweet
But one note from those bagpipes and it ran off down the street

A thousand curses to the man who invented that machine
Designed to torture eardrums, it's every sadist's dream
But as it makes her happy, I'll grin and bear the pain
And if she does grow tired of it, I'll open some champagne

The Story Behind the Song

The Search

Chorus

I will search for truth
I will search for freedom
I will search for purpose
To the corners of the world

A young man packs his bags, father I am leaving
I can't go on living in despair
I look around, all I see is confusion
Pain and suffering and a God that doesn't care
You live your life and do your best of that I'm sure
I just have this feeling that there must be something more

He travels far, talks to many strangers
Learns to pray in many different tongues
He drinks the wine passed through generations
Breaks the bread with those he lives among
But after many years pass by, he's no closer to the truth
So he packs his bags and returns to the country of his youth

A traveller falls in love, a woman of rare beauty
A happy home, built on solid ground
Father, I'm contented, but there's something that still troubles me
I searched so far but the truth I never found

But son you have found the truth the truth is you are happy
And if you want a purpose you will find it with the truth
If you want to see this God that you've been searching for
Just look into your loved one's eyes
And you'll see Him there I'm sure

From the Album *The Gate*

Different Paths

Times were hard, days were long
But there was always strength to carry on
We planted dreams and watched them grow
We sat and watched the river flow

Now we choose to end the fight
The days are long and how dark the night
We both know it's the only way
To love tomorrow, we must part today

Chorus

Different paths, different roads
Different worlds, with different loads
You see me, I see you
On different paths, with different views
A different sky, a different blue
In the pouring rain, on a passing train
Different paths

Two kids at an altar, some words were said
What were the thoughts going through your head
Promises and futures all were sold
But fortune tellers wouldn't be so bold

We had so much love, had so much fun
Travelled to places just to see the sun
But now that it's over I have to say
There's a heavy price we both must pay

I look at the future, and that seems bright
But that's not going to help us tonight
I wish you all the love that you can find
But don't forget what you left behind

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Gate*

Peruvian Girl

I had arrived in Peru that morning with my heart in my hands
I was knocking back the Pisco Sours on the El Silencio sands
I was in the mood for romance I was in the mood for love
I had to find a Peruvian girl
A sweet and kind Peruvian girl

Then suddenly before me like right out of a dream
There's a woman with a beauty like none I've ever seen
And a smile that said a thousand words struck deep into my heart
What is your name, Peruvian girl
Do you feel the same, Peruvian girl

Chorus
And she said, la la la etc

We walked along the shore a while with the moonlight in her hair
She didn't understand a word I said, but she didn't seem to care
I did so much want to tell her what was in my heart
Did she feel the same, Peruvian girl?
Did she feel this flame Peruvian girl?

Within a week we were married on Peruvian land
I was looking forward to spend my life on the El Silencio sand
But that night she looked into my eyes and in perfect English said
Please don't be mad, my Englishman
I have been bad, my Englishman

She said there's something that I've tried to say to you all week
But I have wanted you so bad that I could hardly speak
I come from Bethnal green my love in sunny London town
We go home tomorrow, my Englishman
Let's see no sorrow, my Englishman
Then I said, La La etc etc

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *McDonald's Farm*

She Said Hello

I could see her walking in the rain
It had to be her, she looked just the same
The years had passed her by with kindness and respect
In the years she'd spent with me, she only knew neglect

I was close behind her, she entered the cafe
I stood there frozen, wondering what to say
When at last I entered, I saw her sitting there
With a smile so kind and warm she didn't seem to have a care

Chorus

She said hello, how have you been
It's so good to see you, let's talk for a while
But I don't have long
She said hello, I heard goodbye
All I saw was a stranger who was once part of me
It hurt so much when she said hello

I sat beside her not knowing what to say
She took control, and I well recalled the day
When the world to her was fearful, she would shelter in my arms
And I thought she'd not survive a day without keeping her from harm

Now as she talked it wasn't hard to see
Her world had opened, on the day I set her free
As I sat beside her, a man once strong and sure
A victim of the confidence of the woman I still adore

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *McDonald's Farm*

Have Pity on The Writer

I'd like to welcome you today to celebrate with me
The marriage of creation to the mind of the free
The power of the written word is awesome indeed
But the beauty of the word in song is what the spirit needs

You see before you an open book there's nothing he shall hide
He'll tell you of the times he's loved and the times that he has cried
For an artist's life is governed by expression of his pain
And it's hard to find emotion when you're sheltered from the rain

Chorus

Have pity on the writer he has not long to live
Just as long as it might take to give all he can give
His road is long and crowded, he follows fortune's trail
And by the side, you'll see the graves of so many
That have failed

From years of frustration, he stands before you now
At last the words have found their place yet still he can't say how
His music weaves its way around the lines on a page
Setting fire to the words released from their cage

And when this night is over and you're lying in your beds
Thinking of the day you've left behind
Will the words he's given you be floating through your heads
Or lost forever in the writer's mind

From the Album *McDonald's Farm*

She's A Mother Now

Caroline will be staying home tonight
Her child is sick
It's nothing much, he's going to be alright
She loves him so
Another night to spend alone
The fun of youth she's never known
She's a mother now

At seventeen she thought she knew it all
Like most of us
Trying to run before she could hardly crawl
Afraid to miss the bus
Her parents just didn't understand
They were strangers in a child's land
She's the stranger now

All she ever wanted was a place of her own
Somewhere to tell the world
"Hey look now I'm grown"
Then someone told her one day
The answer was well known
Just have yourself a child
And they must find you a home

It seemed so simple and a lovely child as well
That was hers alone
She never realised just what she had to sell
Till it was gone
Another night she sits alone
No one to see how much she's grown
She's a mother now

Caroline will be staying home tonight
Her child is sick
It's nothing much, he's going to be alright
Is there nothing more?

From the Album *McDonald's Farm*

Germinal

Sitting there on the desert sand
Cool night air and guitar in hand
Picking out a tune
Looking for some words to sing
Thinking about those last few years
Writing songs that no one hears
Watching the night pass
Wondering what the next day will bring

It's been so hard, as the flower grew
Wondering if he'd ever make it through
But something inside him said he had to write
And not to rest till he'd won the fight
Though there were times, when he'd lay in bed
Crying "Lord won't you give me strength to raise my head
Please watch over the seeds I've sown
Let them find a place in someone's home"

Trying to prophet in your hometown
It's like facing winter in an evening gown
With no one to turn to who will ever understand
People smiled as they turned away
"He'll learn" he'd hear them say
"He's nothing special 'cause there's nothing in his hand"

But now he's so close, he's paid his dues
He's had his share of the reds and the blues
His music judged from leather chairs
Criticised before it hit the air
By the masters of a factory
Where lives are ruled by fashion industry
But his time will come one day
When seeds are strong, they'll always find their way

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *McDonald's Farm*

A Rat Race

When the New York city streets
Prepare themselves for midnight
You can feel the tension in the air
It's there you're going to find them all
Crawling from the woodwork
Rising from the sewers of despair

Do you want to buy my drugs?
Do you want to meet my sister?
Five dollars and she'll show you a good time
Guns for sale any kind you want
Let them do your talking
Walk with them down the avenues of crime

Chorus

It's a rat race, it's a fight for life
Only the strongest will survive
It's a rat race, don't you hang behind
And the only prize you'll get is to stay alive

When the New York city streets
Prepare themselves for daylight
Painting over the dark and deadly grime
It's there you're going to find them all
Crawling from their mansions
Walking to their world of legal crime

Would you like to buy these shares?
We can make a killing
There's always someone on the street who'll pay the bill
You're feeling sick, come to me
My business is to care
I'll cure you, but the cost is going to kill

You want the child, that's my game
I can buy you justice
But you'll work for half your life to pay what's due
Vote for me, I love you all
I'll build a better world
Then maybe I will build one for you too

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

The Flower

She dreams as she walks through the forest for hours
Singing and dancing in tune with the flowers
A child on her own with a heart so pure
Blind of the trouble she must one day endure
Then suddenly before her on a carpet of green
A wondrous flower, like none ever seen
She's so excited on this magical ground
She feels she must share what she has just found

By the side of the road, she calls to a man
"I've something to show you, please come if you can
I'll show you a flower, and I'm sure you'll agree
A more beautiful sight you never did see"
"Yes, said the man, I happen to be
An expert in this, so let's go and see
I make them myself, I arrange and dissect
So I will know if what you say is correct"

He smiles at her innocence and watches her glow
She is only a child, what does she know
Only a man as learned as he could really know the truth

They arrive at the place where the flower stands proud
He stands in the sun with his head in a cloud
His eyes see the truth but his heart won't admit
That this flower is special and he asks her to sit
Listen my child, you must stop this charade
This flower is pleasant but that's all I'm afraid
I've made hundreds myself, almost the same
I know it's quite pretty but it's not what you claim

She looks up and smiles, stands proud and strong
"I'm sorry kind sir, but I'm afraid you are wrong
Please wait here a while by the shade of that tree
I'll find someone else, and I'm sure they'll agree."

"How dare you!" He cries out, "doubt what I say
I am a critic, it's my opinions they play
Ask someone else then, bring them if you can
Who do you think they'll agree with, a child or a man?"

Now he's alone he studies the flower
He knows that it's special and it turns his life sour
He must find the secret so he can create
Such a wondrous thing as this

So he picks the flower, it lay dead in his hand
There seemed nothing to it, he couldn't understand
Why its wondrous beauty burnt through his skin
So he tore it apart to see what lay within

"Just as I thought! He cried out in joy
It's just bits and pieces, like the kind I employ
I've studied creation and one day they'll see
If such beauty exists, it will come from me."

The child then returns with an old man she's found
When she sees what has happened, she falls to the ground
The old man is angry and filled with dismay
"I knew of this flower and it's true what she says"

"Now you've destroyed it, so no one can see
God save us from men like you claim to be
You claim to create, but you love to destroy
You are envy's tool and mediocrity's toy."

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *A Chair by the Window*

Forest of Fire

I had a dream in my pocket, love in my hands
And a forest of fire in my soul
But there was smoke all around me
From the heat of the fire
And I know now I'd lost my control

In a world full of stories, passions and glory
I must find some for myself
There's so much to say, in so many ways
And my forest of fire's gonna help

But now I see the road more clearly
I can see what was always there
Now I must follow, don't feel so hollow
And my forest of fire, now helps to inspire

Please gather round me
Now that you've found me
And listen to what I must say
Ambition is nothing if you don't have the reason
So let your forest of fire show you the way

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

The Fields of France

When tiny feet are playing
The coldest heart shall warm
With futures shining in their eyes
A better world is born
The fields of France are resting
The sleep that never ends
Near monuments to avarice
Lie rows of fallen friends

When happy feet are dancing
Two hearts that dance as one
To celebrate a union
A love that's just begun
The fields of France contented
Their deaths were not in vain
If those they loved and left behind
Would never know such pain

When tired feet are marching
Through endless reasons why
Their God was truly on their side
And God would never lie
The fields of France are restless
They've heard such words before
They stand beside a God that cries
I never spoke of war

When lifeless feet are laid to rest
Beneath a distant star
Those they loved and left behind
Are left to bear the scars
The fields of France are once again
Crying out in pain
As the wheel that's turned by avarice
Comes around again

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

Fame Without Talent

The bar's almost empty, stale smoke fills the air
He's finished his last song
He puts down his guitar, but nobody cares
How much longer can this go on

He's sung with a passion the songs of his life
As they talked and they drank their beer
A troubadour walks on the edge of a knife
Waiting for a break to appear

Just as he's leaving someone calls out his name
A drunk at the bar, who's sipping his shame
Come sit down beside me, I have something to say
I've come here a distance just to hear you play

I see by your face, you know who I am
I'm one of the kings of guitar
But I'd give anything, to play like you can
So much for the superstar

Chorus

Fame without talent is a curse my friend
It's a rod on your back that will never bend
It's a fire in your heart that will never burn
But just smoulder and choke your soul
Smoulder and choke your soul

I don't know how I made it, it just happened one day
When they wrote that I played like a king
But they'll say what you want, as long as somebody pays
And if you want, you'll believe anything

For a while I believed them and held my head high
And saw what I wanted to see
But a day never passed when I didn't hear
Someone playing much better than me

But you've got real talent and one day I'm sure
You'll also be famous and hear the crowds roar
But no matter how long I'm playing this game

I've nothing to offer but a face and a name

They laugh at you now 'cause they don't understand
The power you hold deep inside
But at the end of the day, it's what you think of yourself
That allows you to stand there with pride

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

Come a Little Closer

Each day he wakes
And walks slowly down the sleepy village streets
Till he stands beside his faithful fishing boat
His heart is full

He takes the wheel
Glides slowly through the harbour to the sea
Looks around at all he holds so dear
His heart is free

God touches those
Who know when they are happy and content
Not crying for the things that they don't need
His heart is touched

There's the island that he's passed a hundred times or more
Something's changed, but what it is he's not quite sure
Then she appears
before his eyes
Like a dream

Please come a little closer
There's no need to be afraid
Those rocks are harmless
Over here is where dreams are made

Then she was gone
As quickly as she came, she disappeared
Left him wondering if it had been real
But life goes on

Day after day
He sees her and she's singing the same song
He wants to go and meet her, but he's scared
The rocks aren't safe

Then one day their eyes meet with a feeling strong and true
She tries to fight but knows that there's nothing she can do
She feels so confused as her head begins to spin
But her heart is melted when she hears him sing

I can't come any closer, those rocks will sink my boat
So far from land, I'll be lost without a hope
But you could swim here to my side where we'd both be safe
Then we could be together, riding the waves

Please come a little closer
There's no need to be afraid
Those rocks are harmless over here
Is where dreams are made

But he is wise
He shakes his head and slowly sails away
He knows how many lives those rocks have claimed
But his heart aches

She stands alone
She knows her world will never be the same
She wants so much to stand there by his side
But she is scared

The next day when she sees him, she casts caution to the wind
She jumps into the sea and to his boat she swims

Please come a little closer
There's no need to be afraid
Here inside this boat with me
That's where dreams are made

And so they live
With a love that just gets stronger every day
But there is one thing that she asks of him
That he should see
Where she came from

And so one day they sail up
To the island of her birth
Cautiously he waits there
But then he hears her sing.

Please go a little closer
There's no need to be afraid

I know a place to land
it's there, my dream was made

Against his better judgement
He feels she must be true
For if the rocks were dangerous
Then she would perish too
As the boat goes closer
The sea begins to change
He's seen it many times before
But nothing quite so strange
He tries so hard to turn away
But there's nothing he can do
The wind is so relentless
As the rain obscures his view
Soon the boat is crashing
on the unforgiving rocks
He knows beyond a doubt
That this last fight will be lost
As the sea take hold of him
He sees his love close by
And with his last remaining strength
He swims there to her side

Then suddenly
Just as they both surrender to the sea
He takes her in his arms and asks her why?
I don't understand

Why did you guide me to those rocks
Now you will die as well?
Why would you trade what we had
For a one-way trip to hell?

I could not help myself, that is who I am
It's just in my nature, there was no thought or plan

Please come a little closer
There's no need to be afraid
At last, we're together
That's where dreams are made.

The Story Behind the Song

Free Rum

Welcome to the party son
This is where good sailors come
When their time on earth is through
There's always room for one more crew
We usually ask for fifty years
Through stormy seas and bitter tears
But those who answer the siren's call
Are also welcome one and all

Chorus

Free Rum, Free Beer
A party for every day of the year
Clap your hands and stomp your feet
Dance along to the sailor's beat
A chair is not the place to stay
When the fiddler starts to play
We've only got the rest of time
So jump right in and join the line

Here you're always with your friends
The fun and laughter never ends
A dancer's work is never done
When one tune ends, it's just begun
It might seem now that you'll get bored
But you just need to cut the cord
No more storms and no more fear
No more sirens in your ear

The Story Behind the Song

The Florist

Her love is like a forest, mysterious and deep
Forbidden fruit on every branch that swings from tree to tree
A place that offers comfort and shelter from the rain
To come and go with freedom from life's eternal chains

Her love is like a florist open every day
Exquisite scent of perfumed flowers for those prepared to pay
She can bring to life a fading stalk with tender loving care
But don't to her for commitment 'cause you won't find it there

Chorus

Some that want to judge her are standing first in line
Some try to convert her, but she doesn't have the time
It's always been that way and forever it will be
And there but for the grace of fate it could be you or me

Her love is like the Far East a distant spicy treat
Sometimes too hot to handle, sometimes sour and sweet
Some say underneath it all her heart is set in stone
But that's a place that up till now, no one's ever known

From the Album *India*

A Long Long Way

Daylight tells me I'm still alive
Another long night I have survived
My clothes are wet, I'm chilled to the bone
My comrades my family, this trench my home

I'm a peaceful man, never wanted to fight
I never understood how it could be right
Then a young girl, the fairest in the land
Came to me with white feather in hand

Chorus

It's a long, long way from my land
Trying hard to understand
What I am fighting for I don't know
And why I go where I'm told to go

Day after day they kept telling me
I should go and fight for king and country
I listened to the choices they gave
I could be a coward, or I could be a slave

Now that young girl who I loved at first sight
No longer speaks to me, no longer writes
She sent me to fight for king and country
Then changed her mind, to set Ireland free

The Story Behind the Song

Bad Raven

Bad raven looking for a place to land
Sees the world as food on demand
Strutting around like a king with a gun
He's got a mate but looks after number one

He lives his life in the only way he knows
Trouble follows wherever he goes
If he comes at midnight, you better beware
Clever tricksters, working in pairs

Chorus

Bad raven, bad raven

Bad raven, how he'd like to change
To be the good guy and it might seem strange
That in his heart he's a robin at play
Doesn't want to kill or steal but he does it anyway

Flying like an acrobat, playing catch with a twig
Guarding the tower, mimicking a pig
Looking down on crows with his beak in the air
When you least expect it, he'll crap in your hair

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *India*

Both Sell Hat Fruit

They stand together in clouds of wonder
To misty signs, they stare below
At piles of bricks and worshipped blunder
Afraid to leave the river's flow

Through the sands of darkness
They fall from, a crystal stream
To a dragon's dream

A walrus stamps upon the flowers
Where insects rule with rusty swords
Good old boys will drink for hours
And sing along to crusty chords

There the graves of the gifted
Who never could shout aloud
So pass the crowd

There he walks his sense forsaken
In clothes of finest silken thread
Who can see that he is naked
Just a child with eyes in head

And so the price
Of vanity
Insanity
Must be paid
By those in the shade

The Story Behind the Song

Boxes

Why didn't I see it, there was writing on the wall
I walked right past it, just like a fool
If only I had stopped, and looked behind the page
It could have been me that opened her cage

You never asked for much, just a little of my time
But I took it for granted, it was just a pastime
I looked just to humour you, with and a patronising smile
The wife and the writer, I couldn't reconcile

Chorus

As I look through the boxes that contain your life
It's hard to believe that you were my wife
It should have been you and not me on the stage
Now these eyes are damned by the lines on a page

Now I've nothing but time and her boxes by my side
I am moved to distraction and torn by my pride
Why didn't I see, the gift that she had?
I know she forgive me but that just makes me more sad

The Story Behind the Song

Don't Come Back

If you leave, then don't come back to me
'cause where you are is not where I want to be
Wherever they send you is not my concern
Whether you're up there, or down there getting burned
You can go away, but me I'm gonna stay
And live my life, my way

I hate to scare you, but you don't look too good
If I had my way, I'd fix it if I could
I'll do my best to help you pull yourself through
'cause I'd like to spend a few more years with you
You can go away, but me I'm gonna stay
And live my life, my way

Chorus

Don't get me wrong I've been happy with the time I spent with you
I know you drove me nuts sometimes, but then sometimes I did you
We had our good times that's for sure and maybe more than most
Leave now if you must but don't come back as a ghost

I've got no problem with living here alone
So don't feel obliged to visit me at home
Things bumping in the night is not my idea of fun
And in this house, I've got nowhere to run
You can go away, but me I'm gonna stay
And live my life, my way

The Story Behind the Song

Every Day Has Its Dog

Monday is the day I take Lucky to play
Down to the park with his friends
He chases them around a big circle and stops
And the chases them around again
Tuesday it's Sadie's turn to go out
But all she wants to do is flirt
Showing off her how clean is her coat
And then rolling around in the dirt

Chorus

Every day has its dog, they like the routine
If I try and change it, they can get pretty mean
Every dog has a master, don't make me laugh
Truth be told, every dog has its staff

Wednesday Jasper knows it's his turn
To take me out for a walk
I have to go where he leads me
And I'm not allowed to talk
Thursday it's Jean who's a crapping machine
I fill a dozen bags or more
Friday it's Bill, who seems to get a big thrill
From pissing on every door

Saturday you'll find Wolfie at play
Chasing the cats around
As long as they run, he has a lot of fun
Until they stand their ground
When it comes to Sunday, this dog has his day
That's the day I keep for myself
They can howl and holla all that they want
But their leads will stay on the shelf

Grand Gestures

If I leave here tonight will you still see the light
I left shinning at the back of the room
Or will you just carry on like I wasn't gone
And take it for granted that I'll be back soon
How I'd like to shout, there's always a doubt
Tomorrow might never come
You can never be sure when I walk out the door
That I'll find my way back home

Chorus

It's not the grand gestures that matter the most
It's the small things that show how we care
Diamond rings are all very well
But what counts is how much we share
It's the flowers you buy for no reason
And the smile that says I love you
It's the hug that you share each morning
And the vows you don't need to renew

If I left in the morning without giving you a warning
Would your world still revolve just the same
Or would you sit in your chair wishing I was there
Wondering who it was that's to blame
You think I won't leave but don't be deceived
Nothing is set in stone
Bricks and walls may protect us all
But it's selfless love that builds a home

We Could Have Been Friends

It all seems so long ago, I just can't I recall how it started
It was one of those trivial things that happens each day
I did what I thought I should do, there was nothing else on my mind
Why would you take what is pure and pollute it that way

Chorus

We could have been friends through all of these years
But for misunderstanding and unfounded fears
If we had just talked instead of building those walls
I could have been there for you each time you called

The only thing that I could see was an accident waiting to happen
I could have pretended to care then look the other way
Tell me what you would have done, faced with the same situation
Sometimes when we do the right thing there's a high price to pay

You spent your life fighting shadows, it was only when tragedy called
You could see it was all just a game where nobody scores
When you were standing alone, I was the first to reach out
When I did what I thought I should do just like before

The Story Behind the Song

I Couldn't Sleep Last Night

I couldn't sleep last night, there was something on my mind
Those kinds of thoughts that leave sanity behind
Round and round in my head
I couldn't sleep, couldn't sleep last night

I couldn't sleep last night, I knew something was wrong
You were tossing and turning all night long
So close but so far away
I couldn't sleep, couldn't sleep last night

You say that nothing's wrong
That your love for me is strong
As the days when we first met
But I've seen you sit and stare
At some place that's just not there
Is there something that you want or can't forget

I couldn't sleep last night, my dreams kept me awake
If we talk it through maybe it's not too late
We just can't give up the fight
I couldn't sleep, couldn't sleep last night

I couldn't sleep last night,
Maybe I got it wrong
But those troubled thoughts stayed the whole night long
Could this be the start of the end
I couldn't sleep, couldn't sleep last night

From the Album *Terasa*

Do you Remember

Do you remember the first time
Do you remember that day
How the world seemed to fall apart
When she went away

There's nothing like the first time
For breaking your heart
You think it will hurt forever
But then time plays its part

Do you remember the first time
Walking up that aisle
The day was so perfect
You did it all in style
But time changes everyone
There's no reason or rhythm
No fault stands alone
In the judgement of time

Do you remember the last time
Do you remember that day
Knowing for the first time
That love was there to stay

No aisle was needed
The same vows were said
But their meaning had changed
By the lives that we had led

Hey Hey

Hey hey, it's the end of the day
Looks like I've got the sunset to myself
My my, not a cloud in the sky
There's no room in my head for anything else
There's the church bell telling me it's 8 o'clock
Time to make my way home
But I'll stay a while and collect my thoughts
Sometimes it's good to be alone

Hey hey, that's all I can say
As time trickles through my open hands
My my, what's that in the sky
Is it an hourglass or just a grain of sand?
Memories of distant times
Uninvited but welcomed like old friends
Those once loved and left behind
Still in my heart and often in my mind

Hey hey drift away
Watch the sea as it fades into the night
My my, there's no need to fly
When everything is here within my sight
I can feel the gentle breeze float softly by
With the hint of a smell from yesteryear
Thinking of what I have and not what I gave
This time will last as long as I am here.

The Story Behind the Song

I Could Have Been Cool

Damn these numbers, damn this office chair
Damn the meetings, damn the millionaires
They say I'm the best, at the top of the tree
I got everything that I'll ever need
Except the one thing I want the most
To have my freedom but I'm not even close

Chorus

I could have been cool, I could have been the man
I could have filled the room like a piano grand
I could have told jokes, could have played the fool
Now I got everything I want
But I ain't got cool

It's all so easy, I could do it in my sleep
I'm so secure, but that sure don't come cheap
There's something about an accountant that makes a body yawn
It feels like I've been doing it since the day that I was born
But that's not who I am, you've got to understand
Don't look at the spreadsheet, you gotta look at the man

Just because it's Over

We're holding on to something that just ain't there
Trying to build a castle in the sand
No matter how you look at it, our time has passed
Things just didn't go as planned
I know it ain't easy, but it's got to be done
We just can't go on this way
The things we used to laugh at, are no longer fun
I don't know what else I can say

Chorus

Just because it's over doesn't mean it wasn't right
Just remember yesterday when the candle still burned bright
We are what we remember and there's one thing that I know
There's a place for you inside my heart wherever I may go

It makes it so much easier that we both feel the same
So I know that we can still be friends
It's comforting to know that there's no one to blame
And we'll see each other now and then
Some people grow together, some grow apart
That's just the way it's always been
But time is just so precious we can't let it slip away
We've got to move to the next scene

I Never Learnt to Dance

When I was young, I had it all
There was nothing more I liked than the time I spent at school
No problem stood before me that I couldn't solve
Fulfilling with no effort each and every goal

Top of my class, top of my year
Strong in mind and body, I simply knew no fear
People came to me with problems I could answer right away
I had the world beneath my feet, each and every day

Chorus

I travelled around the world and did my best to do what's right
Working every hour I could, relishing the fight
But now the fight is over and though I never had the chance
The one thing I regret the most
I never learnt to dance

Time was for me a commodity
I spent it like a miser with nothing spent on me
Controlling every meeting, it had to be my way
But I like to think that I was fair and let others have their say

I can't recall a single time when I ever stopped to say
That's enough for now, I'll take some time to play
I thought that I had friends, but it's only now I see
That my life was ruled by deadlines that took control of me

The Story Behind the Song

I Sing because I Have To

I ain't got much to live for, I got nowhere to go
Stuck in this tiny house, with no high or low
I might look happy, but don't you kid yourself
The reason I am singing is 'cause I've got nothing else

Chorus

I sing because I have to or else what would I do
You put me in this cage just to keep you amused
If you really love me then let me fly away
I'd rather have my freedom, even if for just one day

Sometimes friends come calling giving me all the news
With tales of their migration and all the miles they flew
I know that they mean well but it only hurts the more
Hoping along this perch, when I could truly soar

I know there's danger out there
But it does seem quite absurd
When I hear you say you'd like to be
As free as a bird

The Story Behind the Song

India

Long ago, I saw you in a dream
Not knowing what I'd seen, so unreal
It felt like, I was being shown the way
To where I couldn't say, only feel

India from generations past
The die was long since cast
I was being called to make my way home
India how was I to know
Where it was I had to go
When so little did I know about
India

Time soon passed and fate was kind to me
Allowing me to see so many places
I travelled far, so many things I saw
The world an open door, so many faces

India, you showed me I was blind
To a world that lay behind
What there is, and what we see
India, your heart is open wide
You welcomed me inside
Forever I am yours
India

India you are suffering once again
With a world that shares your pain
When it will end?
India when will we meet again
But for now I can only send
My love
India

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *India*

Jack of What Trade

There's a cold wind blowing in this town tonight
There's evil in the air
Dark eyes burning through the fading light
Fixed in a deadly stare
Hungry eyes filled with unanswered prayer
Can never pick and choose
They take the money with no questions asked
When you have nothing, you have nothing to lose

Chorus

Jack of what trade, nobody knows
Darkness follows him wherever he goes
A sailor, a surgeon a painter or prince
Leaving a stain of blood that won't rinse

There was a cold wind blowing in this town last night
One less victim to greet the day
There's mystery shrouded in careless minds
Leaving the devil to play
What is this darkness that dwells in some
That reason just cannot touch
That is the true mystery of this life
That haunts us all so much

The Story Behind the Song

Just a Few Seconds

Once upon a distant time
Before the world was yours or mine
Seasons went and seasons came
While seconds passed by just the same
As the seconds that still pass us by
Some that laugh and some that cry
Marching forward with the strength of time
Not caring where we draw the line

Chorus

Oh oh don't look back
The tolling bell will never crack
Whether your time is short or long
In just a few seconds, you'll be gone

When dreams come calling to our beds
The grandest scenes may fill our heads
They have no reason have no rhyme
They've no respect for tide nor time
I heard it said that the longest dream
Will pass in seconds though it might not seem
So seize the day and make it yours
And set your sails to distant shores

Time weighs heavy on a waiting child
While loving parents stop and smile
Wishing that they could slow the time
Before their children start to climb

The Story Behind the Song

Keep the Aspidistras Flying

I'm gonna set the world on fire tonight
The greatest novel in history I will write
I guess I always knew, this is what I want to do
And my goal is so nearly in site

I gave up my job yesterday
Told them I had to find my own way
I've got so much inside no matter how much I tried
I couldn't work and find the words to say

Chorus

Keep the aspidistras flying put them on your windowsills
It might be enough for you, but that's not how I feel
That's not the life that I want, I yearn for so much more
A writer's life is the one for me, of that much I am sure

I started out such a hopeful man
But things haven't quite gone as planned
Inspiration comes and goes but never seems to flow
Into words that I can understand

How much brighter the world does feel
When you're on the right side of a meal
It only takes some wine to make the world seem fine
But next day you're on the wrong side of the hill

I've bought an aspidistra, and put it on my windowsill
Found myself someone to love, and I am fulfilled
A writer's life is not for me, and I don't really care
If I set the world on fire or get less than my share

The Story Behind the Song

Keep the Change

The first time that I saw you I remember it so well
It was like I had fallen under a spell
You were everything I dreamt of, and my dreams were big
You taught me to love, taught me how to live

You had a kind of freedom that you don't often see
You were the kind of person that others wanted to be
But as the years slipped by us, I became aware
The person that you once were, is no longer there

Chorus

Life was all so simple then when everything was new
We had all we needed although you never knew
But ambition took control of you I know this may sound strange
I'll keep what you used to be, you can keep the change

We dreamt we would travel and live from day to day
Sleep on beaches and stacks of hay
You would play guitar around a fire burning bright
With friends all around us, late into the night

Another night spent waiting, for you to come home
The world is such a small place when you're sitting alone
Is this really what you want, to drown in success
To let them take the best of who you are, and leave you with the rest?

Leader of the Band

I played for the leader of the band
Reading factory dots with a guitar in my hand
Playing factory tunes
That couldn't end too soon
Being paid in factory grains of sand

Just a menial job and nothing more
The only thing that mattered was the floor
When challenges are few
There's nothing left to do
But hand your life over to the score

Chorus

The leader of the band, he's just a businessman
With a gift for selling what he doesn't own
Waving arms around not connected to the sound
Only those who play will understand
What it is to be the leader of the band

Day after day we made the treadwheel turn
On endless motorways, the engine burned
Not remembering what we'd seen
Or where we had just been
Or what lessons we had left to learn

What happened to the young man I once was
Who answered every question with because
I heard the piper call
And acted like a fool
When I played the tune, forgetting who was boss.

The Story Behind the Song

Lenny

You might know me as Mona, but Lisa is my name
I am the recipient of extraordinary fame
Oh Oh, this is no bluff
They say I was the wife of a wealthy businessman
How I wished that were true but my life was not so grand
Oh Oh, times were tough

Chorus

Lenny was sure a helluva man
With magic there in both of his hands
The jokes he told I'll never forget
I'd laugh until my knickers were wet
I'm still laughing after all these years
At the selfie he left, that they covered in tears
Generous to the rich and poor
Never was there a man loved more

I was a humble barmaid till Lenny came along
I took a turn at dancing and sometimes sang a song
Oh Oh, I owe him everything
He said he liked the way, my eyes followed him around
But that is not surprising he was handsome and profound
Oh Oh, the joy he did bring

There are many things that are not known for sure
What did he believe, or did he have a grand amour
But Oh Oh, I'll tell you today
I was the soul of discretion, I didn't show and tell
But I'm here to tell you now, that he sure rang all my bells
Oh Oh, that's all I will say

The Story Behind the Song

Lucky Boy

The temperature's rising, your head is spinning
Your breath is shortening, alarms are ringing
The room is growing smaller, the light shines far too bright
The floor draws closer, there's no more doubt
Someone's shouting, is there a doctor about
While a thousand empty bottles join in the fight

He's a lucky boy, his friends agree
He's gonna get through this wait and see
Since he was young, he's always been that way
There's no doubt about it, he's gonna pull through
They'll fix him up, just as good as new
Then it won't be long before he's back at play

The medic's working, the siren's howling
Eyes are closing, regret comes calling
Will you ever see the ones you love again
Your mind is wandering, senses failing
All around you, the world is sailing
When the engine stops, it's good to hear the rain

He's a lucky boy that's all you hear
As blood runs pounding in your ears
A bright light is showing you the way
He's a lucky boy they all agree
With a will to live you don't often see
He'll survive to see another day

You're a lucky boy, back at home
Seeing things that you've never known
Tears of joy falling from your eyes
A lucky boy, laying in your bed
Thinking of what you've never said
With another chance to look up at the sky

The Story Behind the Song

Money in my Pocket

It's Friday night and the world looks pretty good
The sun's still shining, just like they said it would
The bus queue's long but I'll get there in the end
Just a few more hours and I'll be with my friends

Chorus

I got money in my pocket and a weekend in my hands
Maybe I'll go crazy but you've got to understand
I've worked all week and sold my soul away
For money in my pocket and a weekend of play

I went to my boss and asked him for a rise
He said I got to get my haircut because it's getting in my eyes
Good God almighty it's more than I can bear
When the measure of my worth depends on how long is my hair

Oh oh, oh oh, The things we do for dough
Oh oh, oh oh, that's just the way it goes
Oh oh, oh oh, I'm selling out my time
Oh oh, oh oh, On the wrong side of the line

The Story Behind the Song

No Connection

Back seat, driving across town
Nothing but smiling faces all around
There's no doubt it would be just fine
If I took their place and they took mine
So many times I've said not again for sure
I don't see the handle, so I break down the door
This is the last time I say time and again
The start is always different, but the end is just the same

Chorus

Why do I do it, I just don't know
Trouble follows me wherever I go
Is it down to choice or the blood in our veins?
When there's no connection between the fist and the brain

I step out of the car, my wrists clamped tight
A crowded cell will be my home for the night
I'll greet old friends, enemies too
We'll tell each other lies and pretend that they're true
I never made a profit from the trouble that I caused
It's just pride that makes me break the law
I'll accept my judgement and do my time
I can't blame anyone, the fault is mine.

The Story Behind the Song

No Place for a One

I've been sitting here fighting with a stubborn bunch of squares
They're taking all of my time and it really don't seem fair
My rubber's worn down to the bone, it's the hardest puzzle I've ever
known
But I've going to finish before I get up from this chair

Chorus

There's jellyfish and XYZ
Floating all around my head
There's loop to loop that go nowhere
And not a single naked pair
I've tried to colour but that ain't no good
I'd like to chain if only I could
Pairs and triples have all been done but still
There's no place for a one

A unique rectangle was the first thing on my mind
Hidden pairs there's not one I can find
I've coloured till my eyes turn red and had X wings follow me to my bed
Am I a fool or am I just being blind

The Story Behind the Song

Nothing

Feeling alright, kicking up stones, whistling in the wind
Nothing to do and that's just fine with me
I'll go down to the park, stay there till dark, walk from bench to bench
And spend some time talking to the trees

There's never been a problem that I could not avoid
I'm telling you it's a special kind of skill
There are countless ways to pass the day doing nothing without a break
And tomorrow I'll be doing the same still

Chorus

Nothing is nothing more than something you don't do
Just make sure that you do it well
You can't lose a race or fall on your face
That's a fact that I am here to tell

Feeling alright, laughing with friends, saying nothing endlessly
When you got nothing, time is on your side
There's a thousand ways to avoid the day when something must be done
When you're doing nothing, there's nothing you have to hide

There's nothing in my pocket, so nothing left to lose
It's so easy when you don't know how
Before you criticise me try walking in my shoes
And get yourself from out under that cloud.

On the Floor Again

Looks like I'm on the floor again
Me and this floor, we've become old friends
Things look so different from down here
While I listen to the crowd cheer
Waiting for the dizziness to end

I was sure it would be different this time
I've trained for months till I was in my prime
But one second off my guard and I got hit so hard
I'm seeing stars and hearing church bells chime

1,2,3,4 hello ceiling, hello floor
5,6,7,8 better get up before it's too late
9, 10... and I'm up again

Looks like I'm on the floor again
That looks like one of my old bloodstains
Yes, I remember that fight, it went well that night
Different start but the end was just the same

I think that it's time to hang my gloves
The body knows when it has had enough
I don't know where I'll go 'cause this is all I know
Compared to this, the world outside is tough

The Story Behind the Song

Right Person Wrong Time (Duet)

When you called me and said it was over
It was hard, but I got there in the end
Sitting by myself every evening
Writing letters I was careful not to send
I thought that the hurt would last forever
But I woke up one morning and it was gone
Suddenly the world seemed so much brighter
And I knew then that I could carry on

When I called you I thought it was over
I did what seemed right at the time
Though I still loved you, we had drifted apart
There was no ours, only yours and mine
I know I should have told you in person
But just a single look in your eyes
I knew for sure I would weaken
And return to the pretence and the lies

Chorus

What we had was special, of that there is no doubt
The only thing that I regret is that our time ran out
Sometimes in love, the words are wrong even if they rhythm
You were the right person, at the wrong time

I don't know if it was right or was wrong
I only knew that it had to be done
It felt like I was always in darkness
And needed to be in the sun
But what good is the sun and the moon
Without someone to share it with
What I am trying to ask
Is can you forget and forgive?

I'm so sorry to hear that you're hurting
I mean that from the bottom of my heart
But I've moved on and made a life that makes me happy
During the time we were apart
We can meet sometimes for a coffee
Share a laugh and talk about old times
But what we had is now in the past
Your future is not the same as mine

The Story Behind the Song

Round and Round

A tree is just a tree when you're sitting in its shade
Round and round, we all fall down
Like children in a circle, ringing roses that we made
Making such a happy sound
We capture and we watch the snowflakes melting in our hand
Leaving just a memory behind
The glass is slowing emptying its last few grains of sand
While the troughs are filled with endless wasted time

A fish is just a fish when it's waiting on a plate
No questions asked, it tells no lies
Silently advising not to make the same mistake
It lies beneath a fragile sky
Meeting after meeting about where best next to meet
Leaving the future far behind
Relying on the fact an honest man you cannot cheat
Making sure the blind will lead the blind

Sleep little baby, don't you cry
Mama wants to sing you a lullaby

The hardest truth that we must face is that which we deny
The end will always find its way home
It doesn't care who we are or if we laugh or cry
Only the seeds that we have sown

Self-Love

Sonny sits at home with her life mapped out
A note on every surface removing doubt
She's done every course that there is to do
When it comes to following she can't get enough
She'd like to think for herself but finds it kind of tough
She knows somebody loves her, but doesn't know who

Chorus

The answer to a questions is always the same
If you don't love yourself, then you've got yourself to blame
But if that don't work then try something else
love those around you, instead of yourself

Everybody loves you, one note says
Another says you're great in every way
You're the centre of the universe remember that
I had to take a dump, but I was scared
I'd end up with a note up my you know where
You can't see the walls through the notes around her flat

You've got to love yourself, there ain't no doubt
But not too much or you're gonna find out
Man can't live on self-love alone
Self-love is the house, but love is the home.

The Story Behind the Song

Singer in a Band

He said he was the singer in a band
But I find that hard to understand
'cause he couldn't sing a single note in tune
Though he promised that he would one day soon
I went to see him singing one day
It was painful to my ears in every way
But he had something I could not deny
More than just the crazy in his eyes

Chorus

He span around in circles
He jumped high into the air
Did a backward somersault
And danced like Fred Astaire
The crowd just couldn't get enough
And kept screaming out for more
From the stage he dived and landed
Face down on the floor

They all said that he was supercool
But he grew tired of playing the fool
So he worked hard and taught himself to sing
Hoping that fulfilment it would bring
He practised till he found a voice of gold
But sadly it just turned the audience cold
Where was the dancing fool they came to see
Get off the stage is what they all agreed

Now he sings under a different name
Turned his back on fortune and on fame
Half-empty bars with bands not ever seen
But happier than he has ever been

He used to spin around in circles and jump high into the air
Did a backward somersault and danced like Fred Astaire
Now the crowd is dancing and cheering a machine
Worshipping a bass drum with no singer to be seen

The Story Behind the Song

Some Folks

Some folks like to go out all the time
Some folks look for mountains to climb
Some don't leave their office at all
Some are always waiting for a call
Some folks are glued to a mobile phone
And some never want to leave their home
I'm not saying that they got it all wrong
But that's not a place where I belong

Chorus

Me I like to go down to the shore
And put my feet in the water till my toes get sore
With a book in my hands and a beer by my side
Before you write me off why don't you give it a try
Tomorrow's gonna come and I'll do the same
If your feeling stressed, you got yourself to blame
So get yourself down to the edge of the shore
Put your toes in the water, till they get sore

Some folks are always rushing around
Some folks never have their feet on the ground
Some like to go out for a walk
And some like to sit for hours and talk
Some like to spend their lives in a bar
And some dream of driving a racing car
I'm not saying that they got it all wrong
But that's not a place where I belong

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *India*

The Best of Times

Are you looking at us now
Are you wondering how
We could let the world get in such a state
Is your heart filled with pain
When you see torrential rain
Drowning cities and leaving them to fate
Are you sitting with your friends
Asking if this is the end
And wondering if there is any hope
Could the precious gift you gave
Tell us how to behave
Or have we slipped too far down the slope

Chorus

Yours was the best of times, that's what you say
That life was so much easier than the one you see today
But yours was the worst of times, surely you can see
Most of the things you dreamt of have now come to be
As bad as things are now
These are the best of times

I have never seen
Sitting at a guillotine
A woman knitting as the blade hits its mark
I have never seen a child
From hunger made wild
Abandoned and crying in the dark
There are far far better things
Than your arrows and your slings
Outrageous fortune though for some will always be
The poverty you knew
And the icy winds that blew
Have now weakened, surely you can see

The Story Behind the Song

The Cactus

I was just a young boy on the day
The cactus came to town
People flooded onto the streets
There was excitement all around
Known throughout the land
For a fist as hard as iron
But a just man with a heart as warm
As any you will find

Some said he'd met his match this time
From a man called lightning bolt
So-called because he could be seen
But he could not be caught
Striking hard then vanishing
Not seeming to touch the ground
As the fight grew closer
People gathered round

Chorus
Roll up, clap your hands
For the greatest fighters in the land
Such courage you will never see
If you live to be one hundred and three

With preparations made the bets are laid
The giants both shake hands
They take off their shirts, eyes alert
Power at their command
With knuckles bare, they stand square
The fight had now begun
Men of honour, proud and strong
Malice was there none

Bolt strikes first, a mighty blow
With the same effect as sun on snow
The cactus lands a punch so hard
The bolt is stunned and lets down his guard
The cactus tries to knock him down
But lightning strikes with a cracking sound
Their faces now are glowing red

As punches land on stubborn heads
They fight like lions strong and proud
Encouraged by the cheering crowd
Eighty rounds had passed I know
When the cactus lands the killer blow

The crowd had gone when the bolt comes around
They embrace each other tight
Reliving every moment
As they drank on through the night
Next time it will be different
Was the promise that Bolt gave
They toasted to the next time
And said goodbye with a friendly wave

The cactus has long since been killed
For nothing more than a forgotten hill
Sent to fight someone else's fight
While they slept soundly through the night

The Story Behind the Song

The Feast of the Dead

When I opened the door, I couldn't believe my eyes
Standing before me was a once in a lifetime surprise
There's Jimi Hendrix with Prince by his side
Bob Marley standing close behind
Not saying a word, they let themselves in
A party was clearly on their minds

Chorus

Welcome to the feast of the dead
I know we're late, but don't be misled
We'll always be a part of your life
Don't be afraid, put down that knife
We mean no harm we're just having fun
Open the door, there's more to come
We're gonna Jam and party all night
And we're not gonna stop until it gets light

There's Freddie Mercury standing on top of a chair
Singing we are the champions as Lennon hands him a beer
There's Joplin and Morrison dancing out of control
And Jones looking for a pool
While Presley and Buckley play air guitar
I'm doing my best to try and look cool

The Story Behind the Song

The Gift Inside

She sits down on the waiting chair
Outside the garden door
Holds the letter in her hand
Wishing it said more
How could he leave her alone like this
When she knew his love was true
It made no sense for him to leave
When he knew she loved him too

A year soon passed since the day he left
There was nothing left to do
A young girl walks beside her dog
While the hunger in them grew
She reached the town where she thought
Her lost love might be found
And walks from street to faceless street
Asking all around

Have you seen a man whose eyes can warm the coldest heart
With voice as soft as angel hair I'm sure he can't be far
The only thing I ask of you, is would you be so kind
To tell me how to find him, before I lose my mind

The city streets can be so cruel
To those who've lost their way
With endless hours that pass by night
And fruitlessness by day
With shoes not meant for walking far
Her feet gave her such pain
And soles that were too thin and tired
let in the cold and rain

Just as she thought all was lost, he suddenly appeared
Though she hardly recognised the man behind the beard
They held each other desperately like children lost and found
Silence saying everything as tears fell to the ground

Now at last she's found the man
That could warm the coldest heart
The only thing she thought of

While they were apart
The only thing she asked from life
Was to be there by his side
If he no longer loved her
Then she would surely die

I didn't want to leave you I did what I thought was right
You know I'm just a poor man with no future insight
I've worked so hard in this past year and all I have to show
Are these shoes you see upon my feet and an ache that never goes

He fell down to his knees and cried
"How could I be so blind"
Not to see what I was searching for
Was what I left behind
As he spoke the dog made clear
There was something he should see
Scratching at her worn-out shoes
To show him feet that bleed

He walked into his master's store and found some tools of use
Took his shoes and began to cut with no time left to lose
With a skill that took him by surprise, the shoes were brought to life
Then handed them to Mary who agreed to become his wife.

Now there is a family
As happy as you will find
A shoemaker whose fame has spread
As quickly as the wind
There's a gift inside us all
That just needs to be found
It may be in the stars
Or it may be on the ground

The Story Behind the Song

Brothers

If I had a penny, I would give it all to you
I know that it's not much but it's the best that I can do
You can spend it all on sweets or put it in your piggy bank
Buy yourself an empty book and work on pages blank
Maybe start a collection and watch it slowly grow
I'm sure mum will add to it with the other seeds you sow
If you have a penny, there's so much that you can do
Then when we are both grown-ups, we can look back at the view

Shall we play out on the street or go down to the park
Mum says we can go if we get back before it's dark
I'll push you on the swing, just as high as you can go
If we see that bully, I will punch him on the nose
We could kick the ball around, I will go in goal
Or we could make it cricket, you bat and I will bowl
We'll get home exhausted, have our tea, you'll go to bed
Then I will plan tomorrow and all the days ahead

Let's go to the pictures, you must lie about your age
Or open up your picture book and start on a new page
We could get out the Meccano Set and make a thing or two
Or maybe play monopoly, or find some things to glue
You could thrash me at Subbuteo and do your victory cheer
Toast yourself with cola and pretend that it's beer
Now that we live far apart not seen from year to year
I think about the times we shared, and it always brings a tear

The Story Behind the Song

Prisoner of a Dream

Visions of misty drifting through the night
A fleeting glimpse of something passing out of sight
The sound of children laughing, echoes in my ear
The memory of my parent's dream that once they held so dear
Such a gifted child they said but I couldn't understand
Why the gift was placed into my unwanting hands
It should have been given to one who heard the call
To one of those who looked at me with envy and thought I had it all

Chorus

I know that I was loved and that they did mean well
But this is not what I wanted and it's too late now to tell
If only I could have played outside and make mischief with my friends
Not a prisoner of the keyboard in a piece that never ends

Visions of misty, smoke in my eyes
Endless hours in half-empty clubs while the child inside me cries
If this hand is so gifted why do they talk and look away
If it's not for them or me, then for whom do I play
Why does it surprise you that I turned to misty ways
To help me through the dark night when all I could do was play
My only hope is you son, don't go where I have been
Don't you be a prisoner of someone else's dream

I know that I was loved and that they did mean well
But this is not what I wanted and it's too late now to tell
If only I could have played outside
And make mischief with my friends
Not a prisoner of the keyboard in a piece that never ends

My gift to you is freedom, from someone else's dream

The Story Behind the Song

The Soldier

They say he was a soldier
Though you never would have guessed
A gentler hand you'll never find
Or a soul that's quite so blessed
Those who tried to harm him
Were disarmed with just a smile
Those who sat beside him
Would stay for a while

Though many years have long since passed
Memories come flooding back
Dreams with no respect for time
Keep him under attack
So many lives he's taken
Though never with a choice
No matter whether friend or foe
They all have the same voice

Chorus

But the greatest fight of fifty years
Was fought with paper and bitter tears
To claim for what he rightly owned
From those who live inside his home.

Who'll give him back those wasted years
When he fought for what was his?
How could we take all we could take
When he gave all he could give
Even now he would lay down his life
To do what must be done
How could we have forsake him
Leave him to fight while we run

They say that even now at times
He has a look that instils fear
The strongest men will look away
If bad intentions become clear
They say he was Gurkha
The bravest of the brave
I say I owe my life to him
And my father who he saved

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *India*

The Wrong Question

You ask me if it's yes or no
No in-between or room to grow
It's the same old story time after time
Will half a dozen be enough
Or maybe six is just the stuff
To sit and wait or stand in line

You'll find all the answers
In the questions you don't ask
In that place that lies between black and white
The clues are somewhere hiding
In what has come to pass
But you choose to keep them from the light

Chorus

It's the wrong question that you're asking me
It will give the answer how you want it to be
You twist all the words to get what you want
So you get the answer you chose all along

Should it be the birch or whip
Or token words that fail to grip
The choice is ours if it can be found
Is it best to stay or leave
Which fairy tale do we believe
Is it best to jump or to be drowned

Hobson, you were a devious man
You always got your way
Today the choices still remain the same
You make our minds up long before
We get our final say
Then take the credit or pass on all the blame

The Story Behind the Song

This Damn Dam

Here I am on this cold dark night
With my finger stuck in a hole
I've been waiting here for someone to come along
But I ain't seen a single soul
I'm tired and hungry, busting for a pee
And these stupid clogs hurt like hell
Won't somebody come along and rescue me
And then ring the warning bell

Chorus

This damn dam, it's near fit to burst
If I take my finger from the hole, it's gonna do its worst
This damn dam, I'm just a little boy
I should be safe and sound at home, playing with my toys

I was just walking around
Minding my own business, doing just fine
When I saw this crack with water pouring through
My finger came to the rescue just in time
Now I'm sure regretting it
But what else could I do?
Someone had to save the town
Though I'd rather it was you

The Story Behind the Song

Three Jacks in the Pack

Chorus

He's got, three Jacks in the pack
A screw loose in the hoose
Ten cents short of a dollar
No fruit in the juice
He's only using one chopstick
There's no knot in his noose

I got a friend called Bill
Some say he's kinda ill
But they don't know him like I do
And that my friend is true
If you take him for a fool
Then you're playing by his rules

His secret of success
Is not to do his best
So if you underestimate
You're gonna seal your fate
You'll get it right between the eyes
Before you even realise

Until Next Year

Soaring high above the fields and houses
Friends by my side we are southward bound
I'd love to stay just a little longer
But I must go before the leaves turn brown

It's been good to spend some time with you
It's meant a lot to me, the hours we've shared
I hope you enjoyed the songs I've sung you
Thank you for the crumbs you shared

Chorus

My journey is long, there's no time for song
I'll sleep for only seconds at a time
When you lay down each night, think of me in flight
Soaring on the wings of your rhythm

I have nothing more than what you see
Just these wings and a voice of gold
But that is all I will ever need
Why take more than I can hold

The world is my home the earth my table
My children are my reason to live
I'll see you next year if I am able
But for now, it's time to leave

When He Calls

And when he calls, where will you be
Somewhere far away, overseas
Endlessly searching for the truth
Finding questions in all that you do
The world is full of traps and stairs
And well-worn paths that lead nowhere
The truth is simple and doesn't care
If he calls and you're not there

And if he calls while you are there
Will you see him and be aware?
He may not be dressed in finest silk
Or bring you gifts of honey and milk
He may repulse, and you look away
Without listening to a word he says
The truth is simple and doesn't care
If he calls and you are not there

He did call once while you were home
But you were busy with your phone
If only you had raised your head
You might have heard the words he said
Would you have listened anyway?
To words not sung in cabaret
The truth is simple and doesn't care
If he calls and you are not there

The Story Behind the Song

When it's Over it's Over

When it's over, it's over, there'll be no more curtain calls
Senses are still glowing from the thrill of it all
The heart is still aching from words set on fire
Voices still shaking a seat that never tires

When it's over it's over, but the memory never fades
Echoes from a distant past, fill the empty stage
Comforting the restless soul, helping get through the night
When eyes are closed what really counts is what remains in sight

There's a young boy and his mother living each day as it comes
Cold and hungry, sometimes scared, sometimes out of turn
The greatest gift she ever gave was to make him see
If you have theatre in your life, a rich man you will be

When it's over it's over, a man sits alone
A life of fulfilment with a family of his own
But each week in a theatre seat, the man becomes a boy
A mother in his heart and a life that's filled with joy

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *India*

Winners Also Cry (Duet)

Maybe I am wrong, maybe I am right
But aren't you the man that I once saw fight?
If I'm not mistaken, they called you Hooker Sam
With legs that seemed to shout aloud, catch me if you can

Won't you sit down my friend and join me in a beer
No you ain't not mistaken, Hooker Sam sits right here
But it's been a long time since I heard that name
And an even longer time since I left the fighting game

Chorus

He was a contender with the world once at his feet
There once was a time when he could not be beat
A rising tide of power, world title was his aim
But each tide has its hour, then returns from where it came

I'll not forget the time I saw you fight Big Jim
Built like a house with an evil cunning grin
But you moved like a fly and stung like a snake
The ref stepped in and stopped the fight when he took all he could take

Ah yes that was a fight, perhaps my finest hour
I thought I was invincible, watching Big Jim cower
But confidence I found, is a sword with a double edge
Let it take control and you will fall right off the ledge

I know I missed my chance but what will be must be
I don't regret a single thing and am happy being me
Sometimes it's not the winner that walks off with the prize
So if regret comes calling, remember winners also cry

The Story Behind the Song

You Are Special

Don't just sit there, doing nothing
The world is waiting for you
I know it seems like your life is passing
And there's nothing you can do

But you are special, there's no one like you
It's just you've lost your way
Don't let the past, destroy your future
Make this your day

Don't just wait there for tomorrow
It only does you harm
If you're looking for a helping hand
You'll find one on your arm

You are special, you must believe that
There's a dream for everyone
The choice is yours, succeed or fail
This day has just begun

Don't just sit there, it won't help you
Saying it's unfair
Many of those that you envy
Once sat in that chair

You are special, if you forget that
It won't help a bit
It's not what happens, that really matters
It's how you handle it

Polanda Blues

I've been sitting here on this goddam boat
Must have been two hours or more
I've been six times around the island
And six times around the shore
All I got for my trouble
Is a condom and a plastic bag
They're jumping all around me
Just to make me mad

Chorus

I got the polanda blues, that ain't nothing new
Day after day, it goes the same way
But I ain't gonna stop till I catch me a fish
Then I'm gonna make my favourite dish
Look out guys my time has come
This time tomorrow I'll be number one
With no polanda blues

My pal Nicksha goes out every day
The same old places as me
For every fish that I don't catch
He always catches three
Everyone says I got the gift
So no one can understand
Why day after day I come back
With two big empty hands

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Field of Dreams*

First Move is the Hardest

Sitting on her chair, seems like she just doesn't care
Taking her time, drinking her wine
Acting like he just isn't there
Ooh but deep inside, there's a woman alone
Dragging out the hours, till it's time to go home

Sitting on his chair, acting like he just doesn't care
Like it's the same to him, if he sinks or he swims
Trying so hard not to stare
Ooh but deep inside, there's a man alone
Dragging out the hours, till it's time to go home

Chorus

First move is the hardest though you know it don't make sense
The worst that could happen to you, is you step back over the fence
Your mind is on its way there, but your legs refuse to move
You've got your reasons not to, but you know that they're not true

He looks down again, feels the same old pain
Rejection is tough, he's had more than enough
Will this time be the same?
Ooh he's a good man, with love to give
And she's a good woman, with whom he could live

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

The World Can Wait

Hello sky, remember me
I was as here yesterday
Lying here on this field of grass
Watching time pass away
I have to say you're looking fine today
As clear as you could be
I can't think of a single place
I would rather be

Chorus

The world can wait another day
I got things not to do
Like not doing this or not doing that
Or changing my view

Hello clouds, remember me
It's been a while since I saw you last
I'll spend this day just laying here
Watching you drifting past
I suppose there's things that I should do
That seems to be the way
But there'll be time when the rains comes down
And so I'll wait till that day

Hello rain, it's me again
I expected you so came prepared
Your gentle touch upon my face
Runs gently through my hair
Sun or rain, it's all the same
When you're watching time pass away
I played my part right from the start
So now I own this day

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Field of Dreams*

Walk This Way

If you're lonely and feeling down
While the rest of the world is out on the town
There's something that you can do
Guaranteed to chase away those blues
You don't need money you don't need fame
You don't need to play their game
Ain't nothing to it just do as I say
Get yourself ready, to walk this way

Chorus

Walk this way, don't hold back
The sillier the better, that's a fact
Lift your leg in time to the sounds
When it feels right, put it back down
Swing your arms like a crazy bird
It ain't no good if it ain't absurd
Skip to the front, skip to the side
I've walked this way you can say with pride

It just don't matter, how bad you feel
It's better than drink, better than pills
If you're feeling down, I don't care what you say
You can't feel bad if you walk this way
You don't know how to sing, don't know how to dance
Well that don't matter if you give this a chance
Tell the world, come what may
That you're ready to walk this way

The Story Behind the Song

From the Album *Field of Dreams*

Sugar

Rain clouds are coming I got time on my hands
Today is just the kind of day that's not for making plans
I know me and the kitchen just don't see eye to eye
But I got this overwhelming need
For a slice of sugar pie

Sugar for my rhubarb, pastry for the base
Just a touch of chilli to help me find that place
Chocolate covered mushrooms for that decadent surprise
Last of all but not the least
A pair of chicken thighs

I know what you're thinking, those ingredients don't fit
But it only takes one serving to help to make you regular
Just a little taste and you'll be crying out for more
One day you'll find my cookbook will be flying from the stores

Sugar for my fishcakes, add a single bean
Smother it with spinach sauce to make the whole thing green
Add four pints of turnip wine to help the night along
Stir it on a low heat while you sing this crazy song

Sugar for my dumplings a banana in between
Just a touch of angel hair and cover it with steam
Put on a bed of filo sheets and toss it for a while
Guaranteed to hit the spot and leave you with a smile

Sugar, all you need is sugar
Sugar, all you need is sugar
Sugar, all you need is sugar

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

I'm a Slob

There's egg on the fridge and milk on the floor
The doorbell's broke, there's no handle on the door
The Wi-Fi don't fly, the TV's on its knees
I've pushed and I've poked but the plug's still broke
It's the third day running that the water's gone cold
Is the world growing smaller or am I getting old?

Chorus

I'm a slob, that's my job
If you don't like it, you can kiss my knob
It's a tough job but it's got to be done
When it comes to doing nothing, I'm number one

The cheese turned blue and pancakes pink
The milk is far too lumpy to drink
The springs have sprung on my three-poster bed
There's next door's music playing in my head
The cockroaches left in great disgust
They said they couldn't breathe through all the dust

There's crumbs in my bum from the bread in the bed
I can't see the time through the sleep in my head
There's clothes on the chair and clothes on the floor
My socks are dirty, so I'll have to buy more
The rent man's trying to get blood from a stone
If you see him outside, tell him I ain't at home

The Story Behind the Song

Crazy

She's a little bit crazy, a little bit shy
A little bit down, a little bit high
Standing on the front foot
Leading from behind
When she's about you better watch out
She's a bad friend of mine

She'll tell you that the truth lies
Somewhere between right and wrong
That you can always find her
Somewhere between here and gone

Crazy
Tapping against the rhythm
Trying to find a place to come in
Crazy
Trying to find a question for an answer
To find a place under your skin
Crazy
Digging a hole for her to put her worries in
Giving it as a gift to you
Crazy
Pulling a string to keep the peace for long enough
To trade your old thoughts for new
Crazy

She's a little bit Monroe, a little bit Brando
A little bit Park Lane, a little bit Skid Row
Always sits to reason
Arguing day is night
Giving you all the answers
In nothing but black and white

But time and time and time again
You go back for more
Round and round and round you go
Walking backwards through the door

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

Still They Carried On

Deep in the forests of this land
Lives a woman old and true
She'll offer you her calloused hand
You don't know her, but she loves you
Crystal streams trickle through her veins
The trees that stand so proud
Whisper out her name
A deer running through the open grass
Casts a friendly smile
And so she carries on

Into to her forest comes a soldier
He fights the war that never ends
He's twenty-one but looks much older
His master's wealth he must defend
You have so much, and our needs are great
I need to take some trees
To keep our fires burning
It's just this once then I will be gone
You won't see me again
Then you can carry on

With a loving smile she takes his hand
"All that you see is yours to take
But please be sure to understand
Use it wisely for your children's sake
Could it be you really need them
Or are you sheltering from the calm
A wind that does no harm
I'm not as strong as I used to be
Don't ask too much from me"
But still he carries on

Year after year he keeps returning
To take more trees from his old friend
The fires of war are fiercely burning
But he's been told, one day they'll end
"I beg you child, know what you do
You can't go on this way
You burn away our future

Since time began I've worked so hard for you
Don't throw it all away"
But still he carried on

Then one day he calls around
But things have changed, something's wrong
The sky is black, there's a deathly sound
The place deserted, the old lady gone
He searches far, but now with shelter gone
The cold wind chills his bones
And the earth cries out in pain
At last he knows how much she meant to him
He was her only child
And so he carries on

At last she's found by the riverside
This lady once so strong and proud
Cold and scared, death in her eyes
Too weak to move, she cries out loud
“My time is short, I will soon be gone
I pray you will survive
But I don't hold out much hope
You kept on taking, now there's nothing left
I begged you all to stop
But still you carried on”

“Don't die old lady, I need your help
I know that I've done wrong
But I've learnt my lesson well.”
Her heart was breaking for her helpless child
But she had given everything

He held her in his arms
And wept just like a child
As her life slipped away
She just couldn't carry on

Going Down Gently

Going down gently to the other side
Taking my time enjoying the ride
The day days are short, the night are long
But I still got time to sing my song
It's never gonna wait, that time and tide
Until you get to the other side

Going down gently to the other side
You can't live forever ever, but I'm sure gonna try
The bed's too low but the chair is high
The wine is good but the price too high
You can go down fighting or try to hide
But we're still gonna meet on the other side

Going down gently to the other side
The day's gonna come when I see that light
I ain't scared of what I'll find
Just those things that I'll leave behind
So just sit back and enjoy the ride
While you're going down to the other side.

From the Album *Terasa*

I Met Her on a Monday

Can I sit beside you and talk with you a while
I was slowly passing and was attracted by your smile
The café lights were comforting, the food of love played on
I met her on a Monday, by Friday she was gone

We laughed and talked and were hypnotised by the magic in the air
It electrified our senses and left defences bare
Is this what we were looking for and could we build a home
I met her on a Monday, by Friday she was gone

A fire grew within our hearts like none I've never known
A year for every minute spent, our love had fiercely grown
But as quickly as it started the end also came
I met her on a Monday, by Friday she was gone

At the time it seemed so sad but now I look back through the years
At the perfect love affair we had with no bitterness or tears
It's true our love had ended but it's the same for everyone
You will meet them one day and another they'll be gone

I'm just glad I found a love that I might not have known
I met her on a Monday, by Friday she was gone

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

It Started with a Riff

Sitting on my own on a Saturday night
While my friends were out having a good time
Just me and my guitar for some company
And my second cheap bottle of wine
That song didn't wanna be written
I tried every trick I knew
Defeat was round the corner
When it came from out of the blue

Chorus

It started with a riff
Just a simple riff with some attitude
It started with a riff
Just the right feel and just the right mood
It started with a riff
A riff like that is so hard to find
It started with a riff

A few days later I was out on a gig
In a bar on the right side of town
I was singing and playing my heart out
But it just wasn't going down
There was a girl sitting in the corner
Laughing with her friends
I was trying to get her attention
And when I did, it just came and went

There was only one thing I had left to try
So I started picking out that riff
The bar went deathly quiet
While I was giving it all I could give
From then I couldn't do no wrong
I found a place in their hearts
Now me and that girl are still dating
And that riff's hit the top of the charts

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

The Crest of a Wave

Zsuzsa was a woman who lived in Hungaria
A simple land where truth can't be sold
Her sweetness and kindness were a gift so rare
Her innocence and beauty a joy to behold

She loved her home, her family and culture
She loved the sun that followed the rain
But she'd always dreamt of the City of Angels
So she left the home that she'd not see again

Hollywood was waiting for this woman of beauty
This child of sweetness with soft golden hair
"We love you dear Zsuzsa you brighten our lives
Your youth and your virtue are a breath of fresh air"

"Come play with us dance with us, let us surround you
We are the angels we're truthful and just
Give us your innocence lend us your virtue
We are your friends and it's we you can trust"

Her life was sweet but with future uncertain
She started to search for a husband and friend
Her virtue demanded a handsome young prince
But she only found vultures with riches to lend

The young men with beauty and bodies like marble
Offered her promises but gave her no bread
"I'll not marry a man without fame, youth, and fortune
A man without value will not enter my bed"

Then from the darkness there came a young actor
His fame and his fortune were known through the world
His body and beauty were all she had asked for
He captured the heart of our lovely young girl

"I love you, I love you, I love your dear Zsuzsa"
He said with conviction while combing his hair
"I'll always remain both honest and faithful"
Three years soon passed, and she never knew where

Though nothing was said, she assumed they would marry
She longed for children, a family, a home
But one day while walking she saw her young actor
In the arms of her best friend, her true love had flown

She cried and she cried, and her friends did console her
They took her to clubs to try ease the pain
In time she got over her handsome young actor
But somewhere in her world, it had started to rain

Her beauty and sweetness were still strong and alluring
But lines could be seen in the cruel light of day
Though her hair was still golden and soft as a child's
It had to be coloured to hide streaks of grey

Her life free and single was still fun and exciting
But with future uncertain she searched once again
I'll not marry a man without youth a fortune
A man without value will approach me in vain

Then through the darkness there came a man younger
A businessman rich and every girl's dream
A house in the hills a Mexican villa
A rock of great strength in a dangerous stream

"I love you, I love you, I love you dear Zsuzsa"
He said with conviction while combing his hair
"I'll always remain both honest and faithful"
Three years soon passed, and she never knew where

With no mention of marriage she could wait no longer
"We must soon be wed and have children three"
His reply was with sadness, but their ending was final
He could not marry a woman with less riches than he

She cried and she cried, and her friends did console her
They took her to clubs to try ease the pain
In time she got over her wealthy young businessman
But our lovely young Zsuzsa was never the same

Her beauty still shone as she looked in the mirror
But age was now showing in the depth of her eyes

It was back to the fun and the people that loved her
Back to the clubs and the little white lies

Then through the forest of dreams came a stranger
A man with great power, kindness and truth
A writer of songs, a man of creation
An angel of comfort, a giver of youth

“I love you, I love you, I love you dear Zsuzsa
I see deep in your soul you’re a woman of worth
You are all I have searched for in a journey of wonder
From the heavenly skies to the depths of the earth”

“I have nothing to offer but my past and my future
In there you’ll find all that will make you content
Let us be married and build empires together
And finish our days in a happy lament”

“I’m sorry sweet dreamer that’s out of the question
I cannot agree to become your wife
It’s true you are kind, truthful and gifted
But a man without fortune shall not enter my life”

He looked deep in her eyes, something there touched him
And he wrote her the song that you’re hearing this day
She never knew that a part of her died
When she kissed him so gently and sent him away

And she watched him slowly walking away
And she watched him slowly walking away

Zsuzsa returned to the fun and the bright lights
The wine and the dance and the musical chairs
Her answer was simple, to stay young forever
Five years soon passed, and she never knew where

“Who is the fairest?” she would ask her admirers
“Who is the sweetest in this game that we play?”
“Why you my dear Zsuzsa your beauty still shines
We’ll love you forever and have a nice day”

Once more she felt the need of a family

So with future uncertain a search she began
Then came a man who'd sold his youth for a fortune
As Zsuzsa was trading her youth just for fun

"I love you, I love you, I love you dear Zsuzsa"
He said with conviction while counting his gold
"Your position is weak you have nothing to offer
You must realise it's your body you've sold"

"You can have all that your heart may desire
You can look at the young men but don't ever touch
But kids I'm afraid are out of the question
They're a pain in the neck and they cost far too much"

The first year of marriage was all she had hoped for
Security, friendship, a house, and a home
But the love for a child she started to long for
And the love for a man that she'd never known

The years soon slipped by, then came the boredom
The networking cocktails and lunches with friends
The man she had married was becoming a stranger
Fights that are bitter, time never mends

"I hate you, I hate you, I hate you dear Zsuzsa"
Suddenly her husband announced from the blue
"A man with my fortune can find someone younger
And that this time of your life, all are younger than you."

"You keep the house, keep all your diamonds
I'll still give you all that your heart may request
Your age disgusts me, you have nothing to offer
Now your beauty is spent you can keep all the rest"

She laughed at his words, she laughed at his leaving
"Now I'm secure what more can I need
I'm still the fairest you're just stupid or blind
I'll soon find a young man, just wait and see"

But after ten years of marriage, the world had now changed
Her beauty no longer opened the doors
Fun had now moved from the places she'd left it

She played the same game, but they'd changed all the laws

The friends that she had, gave her no comfort
For now there was nothing they could take in return
Still, who needs friends when there's help in a bottle
But life only hands out the help that you earn

Through half-conscious eyes she searched for a young man
Who now and again she managed to find
They'd stay for a while till they got what they came for
They took all her love, and left nothing behind

Deeper and deeper into darkness she fell
Till the drink and the drugs had no more effect
Then out to of the blue obesity found her
At last went the one thing she'd swore not to neglect

"I just can't go on there's nothing to live for."
She cried day and night though no one could hear
Loneliness slashed at her chest like a knife
Her life was now over in its forty-fifth year

And she felt it slowly slipping away
And she felt it slowly slipping away

To the Malibu ocean she went in desperation
A place where she'd always found peace of mind
The sand felt so good as she savoured the clean air
But hope in her world was still hard to find

Then her attention was drawn to a family
Three happy children playing in the sand
A mother and father wrapped in affection
Holding a world of love in their hands

Zsuzsa felt pain like she'd not known before
At the sight of a world that she'd never know
Her life had been spent in a world full of strangers
Where love had depended on which way the wind blows

Then to her surprise the father came over
Looked deep in her eyes and then understood

“Excuse me old lady but is your name not Zsuzsa
The child of Hungaria, the woman of Hollywood”

“Yes my name is Zsuzsa, but I’m no old lady
And who are you stranger that you know me by name?
I can't see you clearly, but your face is familiar
What do you do, have you fortune and fame?”

“Don’t you remember I’m your young dreamer?
The writer of songs the man of great truth
I loved you more deeply than you can imagine
Just one more admirer far back in your youth”

He rested his hand on the side of her cheek
The warmth from his soul tore her apart
“Well my dear dreamer what of your life
And what of the dreams that were deep in your heart”

“That is my house on these Malibu sands
My fame and my fortune are known through the world
Here are my dreams and here is my future
But there is my life, two boys and a girl”

“The woman you see there I do love most dearly
She is all I could ask for, she is honest and true
But each day I reflect on my journey of wonder
And my soul is tormented by the memory of you”

“Is it too late she asked her young dreamer”
With tears in her eyes from his pitiful glance
“I have nothing to offer but my present and future
So if you still love me, please give me a chance”

“It’s true I still love that woman from Hungaria
But now she belongs to the Hollywood streets
Another sad victim of the city of angels
Another life ruined by the Hollywood cheats”

“It hurts me so deeply to see you in sorrow
But you are what you’ve made and I’m sure that you know
My love and my loyalty, lies with my family
I wish you good luck but now I must go”

For Zsuzsa at last the moment had come
To pay for the wasted days of her youth
For where there's no truth, there is no meaning
And where there's no purpose, there is no truth

She watched as her dreamer played with his children
And knew but for fortune they could have been hers
To be their mother for just five simple minutes
She'd have given her riches, her diamonds and furs

With all of her strength she held back her tears
And with dignity walked through the Malibu sands
She stopped at a place where no one would see her
Collapsed in great sorrow her face in her hands

She lay there for hours crying and shaking
Some people passed by, but nobody cared
It was just another story of the city of angels
Another lost soul, with eyes dull and scared

The evening was warm, and the sea seemed so gentle
As she walked through the sand to the edge of the world
With beauty now gone her life was now over
It was hard to imagine our lovely young girl

She put on her makeup, brushed her hair gently
Placed her bag neatly onto the ground
She started to walk to the Malibu ocean
Never looked back, never made a sound

And she walked slowly into the sea
And she walked slowly into the sea

So there is the end of our child from Hungaria
An innocent angel, that love could have saved
If you go to the sands by the Malibu waters
You can still hear her crying on the crest of each wave.

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Crest of a Wave*

We Will Be in England

The fields of France told us tales
Of the trouble of their years
The cobbled streets sang their songs
Of happiness and tears

Chorus

Our travels took us far from home
But now the end's in sight
And we will be in England tonight

The farms and vineyards proudly danced
To music from the sky
They warmed the hearts of travellers
That cast a wondrous eye

We will be in England, where a welcome fire burns
It seems to get more beautiful each time I return

Rome was filled with wonder
Of all we can achieve
Romantic cities fired by love
Were so hard to leave

The mountains of Switzerland
Were blanketed with snow
In spring we watched them fill the streams
Where crystal waters flow

The isles of Greece could offer nothing
But the joys that life can bring
A simple land where sunshine rules
And all can live as king

In Spain we sang and danced until
The dark gave way to light
A thousand years of music
Was shared with us that night

One Day You're in Paradise

Don't look at the telephone, come away from the door
You know he won't be coming back no more
I know he said he'd love you, till his dying day
But that's just one of those things that lovers say

I know you won't believe me, but one day the pain will pass
And you'll look back at this and smile
Someone else will surely come along, just wait and see
How all this pain will be worthwhile

I know it hurts
You feel so dead inside
You can't go on
There's nowhere you can hide
You miss him so
No one ever felt like you
You look to me
But there's nothing I can do

Chorus

One day you're in paradise the next day you're in hell
Just be thankful you're alive and the difference you can tell
One who never learnt to walk is one who never fell
One day you're in paradise, the next day you're in hell

You may be surprised to know, that I was once young
And I can tell you I was also stung
But now I look in retrospect, it just had to be
It never could have worked, it was so wrong

Then one day someone came along, and I'm sure you can see
That she and I were always meant to be
So all the pain had been worthwhile or how would I know
Just how much she means to me

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

The Look in Your Eyes

There's that look in your eyes, I know it too well
Sometime today, I'll be going through hell
Is it something I said, have I done something wrong
Did I put something trivial where it doesn't belong

Chorus

Whatever it was, was it worth all of this
Shall we spend the day fighting, or shall we just kiss
Spend the day peacefully enjoying what we have
Or spend it in torment at the bottom of a wave

With that look in your eyes, I've learned to keep quiet
But it can be so hard when you've made up your mind
The most trivial comment and I'm under attack
But I know it will pass and soon you'll be back

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Terasa*

Sex is a Wonderful Thing

Sex is a wonderful thing
It kinda makes your heart sing
When you hit that bell
You know darn well that Sex
Is a wonderful thing

Sex is a wonderful thing
Without it what would life bring
You'd need a bed
Like a hole in the head, yeah sex
Is a wonderful thing

Sex is a wonderful thing
It's like the first hot day of spring
At the end of the night
Don't turn out the light, 'cause sex
Is a wonderful thing

Sex is a wonderful thing
A ring a ding, ring a ding ding
If you're old and grey
Do it anyway, yeah sex
Is a wonderful thing

Sex is a wonderful thing
It's kinda like a ball of string
It's proud and strong
No, I've got that wrong, anyway, sex
It's a wonderful thing

Guitars are wonderful things
They're full of strings and things
They don't beat sex
Or a ride down to Mex... but still
They're wonderful things

Smooth Talking

Suit and tie made to fit, shoes that say hello
Hands that talk and say out loud
There's nothing I don't know
Armani shirt and socks to match
Hair that laughs at wind
Walking tall, seeing all
Leading with his chin

Chorus

Smooth talking, cool walking, swimming against the tide
Handshaking, wave breaking, there's nothing that he can't hide
Smooth talking, cool walking, stealing every show
Quick thinking, unblinking, there's no place he can't go

The day is done, the world's been changed
Some are happy, some are sad
Looking up, it's hard to see
All that glitters is not bad
Though self-assured, words still hurt
When blind judgements made
Half a story equals none
Misfortune envies the brave

The Story Behind the Song
From the Album *Weave*

The Story Behind The Song

I originally released this as a series of Instagram posts and it had so much positive feedback that I decided to include it with this book of lyrics. The background to many of these stories needs explaining, so to avoid repetition, I have included it here.

I live in a wonderful little village called Mlini, near Dubrovnik in Croatia. This came about through my wife Federika, whose family have lived in the village for generations. We own a house one minute from the sea and have three apartments that we rent out during the tourist season.

In the summer, I sit on the *terasa*, a large public terrace next to the sea. I have a folding chair adapted to hold an umbrella and a wall to put my feet up on. What more could a writer ask for? I do all my writing there, and with five months of usually perfect weather, I end up writing far more songs than I will ever get a chance to record. I have a studio in our house where I spend most of the winter months recording.

Below, you will find many references to “the first line” of a song. The first line and melody generally come to me at the same time, and that is usually what the story of the song will be based on. Sometimes I will use the line exactly as it appeared, i.e. *Sing for Your Child*, and sometimes there will be a small adaptation, i.e. *Sad Raven* became *Bad Raven*.

Many of the songs in this book have yet to be recorded, so this is very much a work in progress. When new songs are released, you will be able to find them at www.nemojames.com/new-songs. If you would like to be notified of when new songs are released, you can join my mailing by filling in the form you will find on this page.

FLORA'S HOLIDAY

“Nymphs and Shepherds come away.” Of all the first lines that came to me, this was one of the weirdest. I knew it as an old English folk song we were forced to sing at junior school. You don’t see a lot of shepherds around these days and even fewer nymphs, so heaven knows what made me think of this song.

Having no idea how to turn that line into a story, I turned to Google and discovered that the original song was written by Henry Purcell and was about an ancient spring festival known as *Flora’s Holiday*.

1000 ACRES

The title of this song came from a book I was reading with the same name about a farming family in Iowa, USA. In one of my many lives, I owned a squash club in Derby, England, where many of my members were farmers. I remember one of them being unhappy about being trapped by the only life he knew. He earned a good living and would inherit the farm, so although his life stretched out securely in front of him, it was not what he wanted to do. If the farm had gone bankrupt, he might have been forced into a different kind of life that might have made him happy, but the farm was doing well, and so security had trapped him.

For most of my working life, I lived in a state of insecurity. I never thought much about it as it was all I ever knew, but most of the good things that happened to me were consequences of insecurity. The few times I did feel secure, I felt quite uncomfortable, so maybe my actions forced me to abandon that security in search of new and exciting directions. Things always turned out well for me, but I have to say that I have now reached a time in my life where security is most welcome.

A GOOD MAN

During my schooldays, unless lessons involved dreaming or sport, I had very little interest in them. The only book I ever read was *The Old Man and the Sea*, and that was only because it had my two essential requirements, it was very short, and it was about fishing. It wasn’t until I was nineteen that I started to read, and I don’t know if it was my impressionable age or the quality of the writing, but the book that has had the most influence on my life is a book of short stories by Somerset Maugham. Forty-five years later, I can still remember most of those stories, or at least the morals behind them.

One story was called *Salvatore*, about a handsome fisherman from Naples. He was engaged to a beautiful young girl, but her parents wouldn't allow them to marry until he had completed his military service. While he was serving in China, he became very ill and was told he would never fully recover. He returned to Naples, hoping to marry his sweetheart, but her mother told him, "My daughter cannot marry a man who would never be strong enough to work like a man."

Though heartbroken, he accepted it, and ended up marrying a kind but very unattractive woman; she was the only woman in the village that would have him. They had children and, despite all that life threw at him, he and his family were very happy. In Maughan's words, "He possessed a quality which is the rarest, the most precious and the loveliest that anyone can have. Goodness, just pure goodness."

Maughan starts the story by wondering if it was possible to write about a simple man and keep the reader's attention. Well, if you're up there reading this Mr Maughan, not only did your story keep my attention, but I have thought about it many times over the years and have even written a song in its honour.

A SIMPLE LOVE SONG

This is probably the most popular of all my songs. I wrote it for my wife, Federika, soon after we first met in 1990. In most songs, I try to say something new, and although I am well aware that someone somewhere has said it all before, I can honestly say I have never knowingly copied anything. The problem is if most songs are written are about love, how do you find a new angle? How could I write the words "I love you" knowing that I had said the same thing to other women? The solution was to write a love song about how hard it is to write love songs.

In December 2015, I sang this song at a televised concert at the Kaboga Palace in Dubrovnik, and Federika was sitting in the front row. At first, the cameraman zoomed in on the wrong woman, but when he finally found the correct target, Federika was looking up at the ceiling in an effort to stop herself bursting into tears. It was the most touching moment of my career.

A SONG OF SIXPENCE

Anyone who was a child around the time of the humble sixpence will know what a magical coin it was. To ask Mum for a shilling or half a crown was pushing it, but there was always a chance that she might cough up a *tanner* (sixpence.) On the rare occasion I stood in a sweet shop with a *bob* (a shilling, worth twice as much as a tanner,) I felt uncomfortable at

having such a huge sum to spend. Sixpence was just enough to keep my feet on the ground. Most exciting of all, was when a fairy left a sixpence under my pillow in exchange for a tooth. I always doubted the efficacy of that story, but who was I to look a gift horse in the mouth?

The first line of the chorus had to be “Sing a song of sixpence,” so it was a short jump onto the train of thought that took me down memory lane, even if nostalgia is not what it used to be.

A WARM NIGHT IN MAY

In 1971, I worked for two winter seasons at the Palace Hotel in the skiing village of Gstaad, Switzerland. It was literally like being picked up in London on a gloomy winter’s day and dropped in heaven. I was paid a lot of money, had all expenses paid, and there was a multitude of girls’ finishing schools whose clients (mainly American) were hypnotised by my “cute” English accent.

I was working for the jet-set bandleader *Renato Sambo*, who was one of the most charming men I ever met, which I suspect was the main reason for his success. I was nineteen when he told us one night it was his fortieth birthday. I was flabbergasted that anyone could be so old and still sing, let alone have so many women falling at his feet.

Fast forward twenty years and I was standing on a bridge in Southern Spain, looking down at a dry riverbed. The line “Look at the river, it’s starting to flow” came to me. OK, it was late summer, so it wasn’t actually flowing yet, but the rest of the song certainly did. I immediately thought of Renato and wondered if his life turned out like the man in the song.

A WOMAN UNKNOWN

There used to be a homeless woman in Brighton, that walked the streets with a shopping trolley and dozens of plastic bags. The first time I saw her, it occurred to me that when we see homeless people, it is easy to forget that they weren’t always homeless. Many of them were successful professionals, loving parents or people who led normal lives. All of them had once been children with a future.

AFRICA

This song demanded to be called *Africa*, and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t come up with an alternative. It left me with the problem that there have been so many great songs written about Africa by people with far more of a connection to it than I have. Fortunately, the solution came with

the first line “When she was young, she used to have a doll,” which led to, “she called it Africa.” Africa, the continent, became Africa the muse. It didn’t seem right to assume that, just because it was a doll, it had to belong to a girl, so I gave it to a young boy, and the rest of the song wrote itself.

BAD RAVEN

The first line of this song was *Sad Raven*. Not knowing the first thing about ravens, I did some research, and it soon became clear that *sad* didn’t really fit the profile of your average raven. I was amazed at how clever and fun-loving they are so I set to work listing their characteristics

BOBBY TWO BEERS

I gave up on music for the second time in 1999 and sold all my guitars and recording equipment. In 2010, my autobiography *Just a Few Seconds* was published. Writing it was a pleasant trip down memory lane, but it was also a way of finding closure to that chapter of my life. I never thought I would play again and didn’t miss it in the slightest, but then I met Bob.

Every year, Bob and his family came to Mlini from their home in Norway. He rented an apartment from my sister-in-law, and as it was his birthday, she made a big lunch in his honour and invited Federika and I. Bob was very interested in my musical background so bought a copy of my autobiography and a CD. Two days later, he came round to our house to tell me he had finished my book and wanted to buy four more copies for his friends. During my career, I met a lot of people who liked my music, and I sold thousands of CD’s and tapes, but I had never known anyone as enthusiastic about my music as Bob. I invited him and his family around for a drink that night, and he agreed on the condition that I played something for him. How could I refuse?

There was a cheap guitar hanging on our wall, so that afternoon, I took it down and started playing for the first time in twelve years. To my surprise, not only was I still able to play, but I enjoyed it. I started with the Bob Dylan classic *Don’t think twice it’s alright*, which was strange because it had never been in my repertoire. It literally came from nowhere. Even stranger, was when I sang it that night, Bob was dumbstruck, as not only was he a big Bob Dylan fan, but that was his favourite song. From that day on, I started playing again and was surprised to find myself playing better than ever.

And the story behind the song? I always like to make sure our guests’ glasses are topped up, but it was difficult with Bob, as every time I looked, I saw his glass was empty. I got so tired of going back and forth to the

fridge that I started serving him two beers at a time. Bob was delighted with the service and his new nickname, although his wife wasn't so pleased.

A LONG LONG WAY

Inspiration for this song came from the book by Sebastian Barry of the same name. One of the characters was shamed into volunteering to fight in the First World War after a beautiful young girl gave him a white feather. He marched out of Ireland a hero, when he returned, he was treated like a traitor

BOTH SELL HAT FRUIT

The title of this song is an anagram which so far no one has been able to solve. There are plenty of clues in the lyrics.

BOXES

Most of us, at some time in our lives, have thought we would like to write a book. Most will never put pen to paper, and some will start but not finish when they realise how hard it is. Of those that do finish their first novel, the chances of being published are very low, and minuscule if they have no qualifications, so most will give up writing.

There are some (though very few) who, to quote Somerset Maugham, "Don't write because they want to write, they write because they have to write." They continue to write, even when there is no hope of ever being published. It is undeniable that amongst those people, there will be some that have written great books and even the occasional masterpiece. The world is full of boxes containing unpublished books.

BROKEN WING

Cookie turned up uninvited one day and informed us she was going to live with us. I don't like being treated like a servant, which is why I never regarded myself as a cat person, but I must admit, you do get attached to them. The problem is, Cookie is a furry killing machine which is OK with mice and rats, not so OK with lizards and snakes and definitely not OK with birds.

Recently, she killed a beautiful African Hoopoe and left it intact on our step like she knew she had gone too far this time. Honestly, it flies all the way from Africa, stops off for a kip in Mlini and then wallop...no more

bird. Grounding Cookie or even telling her off, doesn't have much effect, so all I could do was write this song, even if she does refuse to listen to it.

BROTHERS

Occasionally when I am writing, something happens around me and enters the song, which makes it very special.

The first line of this song had to be, "If I had a penny, I would give it all to you." It seemed logical to follow the implication that the penny belongs to a young boy who gives it to a young girl. I started following that path and was halfway through the song when I received a text message from my sister-in-law, giving me delivery instructions for my brother's birthday present. As soon as I ended the call, I realised that the penny in question was given by me, to my younger brother David. From there, it was just a simple matter of adding all the heart-warming recollections of us growing up. Also true to life, is the last line of the song which brought a little tear to both of us, as he lives in South Africa and me in Croatia.

BYE CYCLE

One of my dearest friends is the world-famous journalist, Barrie Tracey. OK, maybe he wasn't world-famous, but there was a time when his news stories certainly were.

At the ripe old age of eighty, he is still going strong(ish) and riding a mountain bike, or to be more precise, falling off a mountain bike. He contacts me regularly to tell me of his latest mishap, which recently included falling into a river and breaking his collar bone.

Barrie rents one of our apartments every year and often takes my bike out. It was bought with good intentions but soon abandoned, so I was glad to see it being put to good use. He returned from one trip exhilarated and tried to talk me into going for a ride. I shook my head, leant it against the wall and said, "Goodbye cycle." The perfect cue for a song.

CAT ATTACK

Living in Mlini, you don't get much choice regarding cat ownership, and by that, I mean a cat, owning you. There are lots of strays in the village, and as soon as word gets around that there is a vacancy, they have a secret meeting where they decide amongst themselves which cat is going to do you the honour of living with them.

For a while, there were so many cats living in the centre of the village that it became a no-go zone for dogs. Any poor, unsuspecting dog walking

past was attacked from all sides and rarely came out on top. With that in mind, I was walking through the village one night when the title *Cat Attack* popped into my head. With a title like that, a song writes itself, and all the cats and dogs I ever knew have made an appearance.

COOL WATER

This is a song about Mlini, my favourite place in the world. Every day, I wake and remind myself how lucky I am to be living here with such a close family and good friends. The song describes a typical summer's day in Mlini. Fishing early morning, lunch, siesta, a game of bridge on the terasa and then a barbecue with friends to round the day off. It doesn't get much better than that

CRAZY

In my distant youth, I dated a young girl and have never really figured out why. Maybe it was the novelty of being with someone so utterly impossible. She had multiple personalities, and an auto disagree response to everything. My life revolved around reverse psychology which was hard work. If I wanted to stay at home, I had to say I wanted to go out. If I wanted to go for a drink, I had to suggest going to the cinema. She was as gentle as a lamb one minute and then psychopathic the next. It didn't last long, but I do sometimes wonder what happened to her and how many people she drove nuts.

DIFFERENT PATHS

This is one of the first songs I wrote after splitting up with my first wife after twelve years together. It surprised me how two people can live in each other's pockets for so long and then suddenly go their own ways.

A CHAIR BY THE WINDOW

I knew from the beginning of my musical career that I was going to be a composer, which is why I found it so frustrating when everything I composed in the first few years was rubbish. I had a breakthrough in 1975 when I wrote a series of classical guitar pieces that were graded from beginners to advanced. They were published by EMI and can be found on my website. I started to write instrumentals effortlessly, but songs still evaded me, and in particular, the lyrics. In common with most mediocre songwriters, when I was stuck on a line, I wrote any old rubbish and

pretended to myself (and hopefully others) that the words had some deep meaning. *A Chair by the Window* was my first experience of a song writing itself in my head. It was autumn 1989, and I was driving along the M1 to Derby when a simple tune came to me with the words, “There’s a place in a chair by the window, where a young girl sits.” It is the kind of line that leads effortlessly into a story.

By the time I arrived at my destination, the song was written in the sequence, girl, woman, wife, widow, old woman, and dead woman. The structure was there, so filling in the blanks was easy.

I have never had such a positive reaction from a song as I have from *A Chair by The Window*. I worked at the Dubai Hilton just after the Gulf War when the bar was full of American servicemen. They were queueing up to buy my tapes and while at sea, this song went around the aircraft carriers like wildfire. When the servicemen returned on leave, they came into my bar and insisted I played it several times a night. I had a similar response wherever I played it.

In 2016, I played it in a large, open mike bar in Cape Town where it had a lukewarm response. Whether that was down to the South African taste in music or because these days, maybe the public is more inclined towards happy music, I have no idea.

DON’T COME BACK

This song was inspired by the well-known Jewish joke as told by Jackie Mason.

An old man lies dying, with his family gathered around him.

“Papa, Papa, is there anything I can do for you?” asks his eldest son.

“Yes,” the old man replies weakly. “I’d like a slice of your mama’s delicious cheesecake that I can smell baking.”

The boy hurries off and returns, looking dejected.

“Sorry, Papa, but Mama says the cheesecake is for the funeral.”

DREAMER ON THE RUN

I expect it is a common occurrence, but when writing fiction, I find that sometimes people I am acquainted with, read about a character and think I have written about them. This song was on my first album released in 1992, and it wasn’t long before I received an irate phone call from someone saying how dare I write such a disparaging song about him. I had

written it two years before I even knew he existed and anyone who has worked in a bar for any length of time will know the man in this song

FAME WITHOUT TALENT

In 1990, I did a summer season in a holiday camp, and the cabaret artist was a musician who had been famous in the sixties. The audience lapped him up and were oblivious to the fact that he was really not very good. How hard it must be for those who are acclaimed as brilliant musicians when nearly every time they turn on the radio or hear a street busker, they hear someone playing better than them.

FIELD OF DREAMS

I loved the Kevin Costner film of the same name, and it is a story I can relate to. He bought a farm in the middle of nowhere and made a baseball pitch on the off chance that the voices in his head were correct in saying that a bunch of famous dead baseball players would come along and play on his pitch. That story is far more feasible than that of a sixty-eight-year-old man making it in the music business. But just like Kevin, I plough on every year in the hope that one-day “people will come.”

FIGHTING ON THE WALL

Where I grew up in London, there was a house next door with a wall a couple of feet high in the front garden. As a kid, I used to stand on that wall with friends and have competitions where we tried to push each other off. A day rarely passed without one of us failing to clear the wall and scraping our legs on the edge. It was a painful but non-lethal experience. In those days, running to mum for sympathy and a cuddle wasn't a viable option, as we invariably got a whack around the head for playing such a stupid game. It might sound heartless now, but it certainly took our minds off our cuts and bruises.

FIRST MOVE IS THE HARDEST

Despite being self-confident in my youth, I still found it hard to approach women. On the other hand, I have spoken to women who said there had been times when they wanted to be approached by someone but were too shy to give any encouragement. How many *Grand Amours* never happened simply because of the lack of courage or fear of rejection?

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

The general opinion (particularly amongst agony aunts) is that if someone is unfaithful, it must be because something is wrong with the relationship. I don't believe that for a minute. This song is about a woman I knew who had a good, kind husband and loving family but still went astray. She loved her husband and was perfectly content with her life, but she simply wanted some excitement. It ended in disaster, and she wondered how she could have ever been so stupid as to risk so much in return for so little, but it is the oldest story in the book.

FOUR SEASONS

The first line of this song was "Four and twenty blackbirds," which I suppose was a flashback to the childhood nursery rhyme. Imagine that, they used to put lovely blackbirds in a pie! Worse still, it appears that the chef parbaked the birds, so when the pie was opened, they could sing to the king while he was eating them alive. There was my dear old mother singing me to sleep, not realising that if I had stopped to think about the words, I could have been traumatised.

Back to *Four Seasons*. The blackbirds became leaves falling from a tree which laid a path to seasons. I enjoyed writing this song, as the poetic feel of it gave me scope for more ambiguity than normal.

COME A LITTLE CLOSER

This song is featured in my novel, *A Single Tear*. A friend of mine asked me for help with a song he had written about a siren. In common with most beginners, the lyrics were disjointed sentences thrown together, so it was impossible to determine what the song was saying. I gave him some suggestions which he rejected out of hand. In particular, he said the twist in his song was that the siren was a good person. I pointed out that if she was a good person, then she wouldn't be a siren, but it fell on deaf ears.

However, a song about a siren sounded like a good idea, so with his approval, I wrote my own version which combines Greek Mythology with the well-known story about the scorpion and the frog.

FREE RUM

Also featured in my novel, *A Single Tear*, this is the follow-up song to *Come a Little Closer*. In Anglo Maritime folklore, *Fiddler's Green* is a place where sailors go when they die if they have served more than fifty

years at sea. Not only did it present a great theme for a song, but the perfect ending to the most important chapter of my book.

GERMINAL

It was 1991, and I had just been offered my first record deal. It was an independent company called *Rosie Records*, whose owner described my songs as “The best I have heard in twenty-five years in the business.” It was a small record company, but they were working in collaboration with the major publisher *Acuff Rose*. The UK head of Acuff Rose promised to give my album *Touch the Moon* his full backing.

I was working in the Dubai Hilton at the time, five hours a night with a ten-minute break each hour. It was at the end of one of those gruelling nights that I was walking back to my apartment across some waste ground when I had the urge to sit on a rock and take out my guitar. Instantly, the guitar riff appeared, and the first line was unsurprisingly, “Sitting here on the desert sand, cool night air and guitar in hand.” OK, the air wasn’t that cool by British standards but compared to the forty-five degrees in the daytime, it was blissful.

If you want to know what happened next, you will have to read my autobiography, *Just a Few Seconds*.

GIVE ME A SMILE

I was nineteen and working in working Gstaad, Switzerland. It was a glorious sunny morning when I walked past a lovely young girl on a snow-covered street. She smiled at me, and I smiled back. It was obvious that she liked me, but could I approach her? My head demanded to stop and talk, but my legs continued walking. This was in sharp contrast to the Italian members of the band who only required their prey to have a pulse before they descended on them mercilessly.

Years later, when I had a lot more confidence, I was on a train platform one day when I noticed an attractive woman, who in my defence, didn’t seem to notice me. I got on the train, and as it was pulling away, she looked up from the platform and gave me the kind of smile that said, “Why didn’t you speak to me, you pillock?” A frustrating experience, but at least I got a song out of it.

GOING TO THE FACTORY

This one goes out to all those parents who did as little as humanly possible when they were young, only to be dismayed at seeing their children do

exactly the same. It is easy to forget that when you're young, the idea of working in a factory doesn't seem so bad compared to the horror of getting out of bed or turning the TV off. If shouting or bribery doesn't work, try piping this song into their bedroom at full volume until they do something constructive.

PLANTING TREES

One of my favourite sayings is, "A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit." It is a Greek proverb that Socrates used to quote which just goes to show how hard it is to come up with anything original.

I'LL BE HERE FOR YOU

Someone I know who suffers from depression posted a message on Facebook asking which of her friends were there for her. I had a period of depression myself following a work-related burnout so I know how awful it can be. I really felt for the woman but didn't know her well enough to give a meaningful response. I could hardly post a comment saying I was there for her when we had hardly ever spoken. However, what she wrote played on my mind, and a year later, I released this song dedicated to her.

I HATED WHAT I FOUND

I used to play squash at a club where one of the least popular members informed us one day that he was leaving his girlfriend and giving up his job because he wanted to travel and "find himself." Like many who have the same intention, the implication was he was going to find a great writer, painter or philosopher. If only he had asked around, we could have saved him a lot of trouble and told him what he would find...an arsehole.

I'M A SLOB

Slobs get a lot of bad press. To tell someone they are a slob, is to imply they should change their way of life and live more responsibly. That's all very well, but there are plenty of people who enjoy the life of a slob and who are we to judge them? One of the happiest men I ever knew was a self-confessed slob although I lost touch with him, so don't know how life turned out for him.

I MET HER ON A MONDAY

I always used to think how romantic it would be to meet a woman in a pavement café, but it never happened. This song is a cross between “It is better to have loved and lost” and an adaptation of a quote from Catch 22.

“It was a long love affair.”

“What do you mean long? It only lasted five days.”

“It’s over. You don’t get any longer than that.”

INDIA

Federika and I have in the last few years been very lucky in being able to travel wherever we wanted and avoid the worst of the winter. Years ago we considered India, but as neither of us is keen on noise, crowds or dirt, we kept putting it off. Then someone suggested a practice run to Sri Lanka, which is described by some as being *India for beginners*. It was 2 am when our taxi dropped us off at the Grand Oriental Hotel in Colombo, and the first thing we saw was two rats walking casually across the entrance to the hotel.

Despite the welcoming committee, we had a great holiday in Sri Lanka, and the following year we went to India, starting in New Delhi. It was noisy, filthy, chaotic and surprisingly cold, but it was also magical. Once we accepted India for what it was, we loved it and went back three years running. We felt totally safe at all times, and neither of us had any problems with upset tummies despite being adventurous in our choice of food. The people are wonderful, and I have never felt so welcomed in my fifty years of extensive travel.

I SING BECAUSE I HAVE TO

During the summer of 2020, I was sitting with Federika on the terasa when she told me how much she was enjoying reading the book, *I know why the caged bird sings*. As soon as I heard the title, I knew there was a song in there somewhere. By coincidence, not far from where we sit, there is a house that has canaries in cages on the front terrace, and we often hear them singing. I know people say they are perfectly happy and bred for the purpose, but it breaks my heart to see them in cages. Are they singing, or are they really crying to be set free?

I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU CRYING

I knew I had to leave this first line exactly as it was but wanted to avoid the well-trodden path of *lost love*, so I decided it would be a child that was crying.

I had a very happy childhood and a great dad, so this song was a joy to write. The strange thing is, although we had a good relationship and he was a brilliant role model, I wasn't at all upset when he died. He had a good and full life, and I had no regrets as I knew I had been a good son. Despite taking his death so well, while I was writing this song, there were tears rolling down my cheeks, and I had to stop at times.

I employed an artist and created a video of it. I would love to create an animated version, but that is well beyond my means. What surprises me is that some people see the video as sad. My father had a good life, thirty years of very happy retirement and died peacefully at the age of ninety-three. In the last scene of the video, he is standing beside me saying, "I will always be inside your heart," which is true. What more can we ask for? and how can that be sad? Sad is when a parent dies, and a child regrets not having been closer to them.

IT STARTED WITH A RIFF

For those of you who wasted your time at school studying instead of learning to play guitar, a riff is a short phrase that is repeated. The introduction to *Satisfaction* by the Rolling Stones is probably the most famous guitar riff of all time.

Nothing too deep about this song but it always surprises me how often I pick up a guitar with no intention of writing anything, and then a nice little riff appears from nowhere, which leads effortlessly to the rest of the song.

IN THE GARDEN

The terraced house where I grew up in South London had a very small back yard with a narrow border for flowers. The earth was very poor and littered with builder's rubbish, so it was difficult to grow anything. It was a shame because my father would have loved a garden, but we made up for it by going camping every weekend in the summer.

When my father retired, my parents moved to a semi-detached house in Lancing, West Sussex, where they had a large garden with an elaborate pond that I built them. For years, they both worked in their garden from morning till night, and in the summer months, it looked magnificent. I used to love watching my mother pottering around with her plants, so it was a great pleasure to write and record this song dedicated to her.

IT AIN'T RIGHT

Before I start, let me say I have embraced technology ever since I bought my first computer in 1985. It was an Apricot with no hard drive, and the operating system was on a floppy disc. Every new innovation that came along, I was first in line. These days there is very little in my life that doesn't revolve around technology, and I love all things it can do for me.

Having said all that, I dread to think what my life would have been like if all this technology had been around when I was young. I had a wonderful childhood. I was crazy about sport and hardly ever at home. I was supremely fit, and the wide variety of clubs I belonged to meant I had a large circle of friends. I have quite an addictive personality so have absolutely no doubt that had there been computer games and mobile phones around at the time, I would have been addicted to them and spent most of my life alone indoors.

In this song, there is a true incident where a friend of mine wanted to treat her niece, who was going through a difficult time. Though she could ill afford it, she took her to see *The Lion King*. Her niece was thrilled but then spent the entire night sending text messages to her friends.

I MET HER ON THE M25

The M25 is London's ring road which opened in 1986 at the cost of nearly one billion pounds, and that was in the days when a billion pounds was a lot of money. They hopelessly underestimated the amount of traffic that would use it, which resulted in years of disruption while they added lanes.

Despite the improvements, anyone who travels on the M25 regularly will know that it only takes the slightest hiccup to grind it to a halt. If you think this song is farfetched, remember Murphy's law, "If something can happen, it will happen."

IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER

This song was inspired by something my father said, although I can't remember the actual words and have no idea where they came from. It was something like, "In time, everything pales into insignificance." It didn't mean much to me when he said it, but when I look back at events that seemed so catastrophic at the time, I can see how trivial they were in the grand scheme of things.

It ties in with another of my favourite sayings, attributed to the Greek philosopher Epictetus, “It’s not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.”

IT TAKES A REAL MAN TO CRY

It was 1978, and I was working for a big band at a wedding. As always, we played background music during the dinner and then sat at the band table and ate while the speeches were on. The bridegroom stood up and started his customary speech but didn’t get far before his voice broke up, and he started crying uncontrollably. It was an awkward moment with embarrassment all around until his father-in-law stood up, put his hand on his son-in-law’s shoulder and said to him and all the guests, “Don’t worry son, it takes a real man to cry.” The audience went wild with applause, the bridegroom sat down with his self-respect intact, and his father-in-law took over the speech saying what a wonderful son-in-law he had. You have to take your hat off to a father-in-law like that.

Many years later, I was watching the great film “Billy Elliot” and was deeply moved in the final scenes when Billy’s tough, no-nonsense father sat in the audience with tears in his eyes bursting with pride for his son, the ballet dancer. Truly great acting by Gary Lewis.

IT’S A CRAZY WORLD

Of all the weird first lines that came to me, this must be the weirdest, “There’s a monkey on the line.”

How was I supposed to build a song around that? I still have no idea whether the monkey is on a telephone line or a railway line but if it’s a crazy world it doesn’t matter, does it?

I would like to thank one of my favourite public speakers, George Bush, for making an appearance at the end of this song.

I USED TO BE

I have spent my life dreaming and can’t remember ever taking up a hobby without wanting to become professional at it. I was going to be the first person ever to represent his country in football, cricket, boxing and fishing. These weren’t just idle dreams but passionate ambitions. Then there were the lesser dreams like becoming a professional stamp collector, writer, cyclist and card player.

Needless to say, when I started playing guitar, I dreamt of being a rock star, but if you had asked me what my ultimate goal was, I would have said

to live in a sleepy little Mediterranean village. By an extraordinary twist of fate, I achieved my goal, and although I still write and dream of recognition, I am aware that success would take me away from a life I love. So why do it? In the words of the scorpion, “It is in my nature.”

JACK OF WHAT TRADE

The first line of this song was, “There’s a cold wind blowing in this town tonight,” which immediately took me to London where I grew up. With a line like that, where else would I end up but at Jack The Ripper’s doorstep? While researching this song, I wondered why it was he has received so much notoriety when he only ranks at joint 311th in the serial killer league table. I suppose it is down to the mystery surrounding the case. Nobody has any idea where he lived, how many people he killed or what his trade was.

JENNY AT THE FRONT DOOR

I was working in a bar on a cruise ship when one night I started talking with an elderly woman who was sitting by herself. She was a friendly woman but very lonely since her husband had passed away a few years earlier. She had plenty of friends and an active social life, but her only family was a daughter that lived in Australia. They had a good relationship, but the daughter never wrote and seemed incapable of picking up a phone and calling her. The first line of this song was, “Jenny, standing by the front door waiting for the post to come,” which made me think of that woman, although I don’t remember her real name. I always hoped this song would guilt a few people into phoning their mum.

JUST A FEW SECONDS

During my songwriting binge in the summer of 2020, I thought it was about time I wrote a song to support my autobiography of the same name, even if it was ten years overdue.

I found that writing my autobiography was a pleasant experience, but I did get stuck on the first paragraph, which I always think is the most important. I didn’t want the standard opening “I was born in bla bla,” but how else do you start an autobiography? Then one day our local church bell started tolling to tell us someone in the area had died. For me, it literally did *ring a bell* and gave me my first paragraph.

One of the drawbacks of writing your memoirs is the awareness of just how quickly time has passed. One minute I was writing about an episode

from my twenties and then, boom! the next thing I knew, I was in my forties. If you are interested in genealogy, it gets worse. You look at a census form that your grandfather was listed on and see he was nine years old at the time. Ten minutes later, you have seen him get married, bring up five children, die and find that all his children have also passed on. If you are young, this won't make much sense to you but trust me, one day it will.

KEEP THE ASPIDISTRAS FLYING

Inspired by the book of the same name by George Orwell. I read it forty years ago, and its message stuck in my mind, although I recently read a summary and it seems I might have come away with the wrong message. This is how I remember it:

You look down on the middle classes with their boring lives and their aspidistras in the windows. You want to be a writer, and the only thing that's stopping you is your day job, so you hand in your notice. You have lots of time on your hand, but writing is much harder than you thought, so you lose confidence in yourself. You have no money, and your optimism is directly linked to the amount of food in your stomach, which is usually very little. You fall in love, go back to your day job, and buy yourself an aspidistra.

LEADER OF THE BAND

For years, I worked as a freelance musician working with big bands in functions and backing cabaret artists. The bandleader would stand at the front waving his arms around, and the audience always assumed that the reason the band sounded so good was down to the bandleader, which in most cases couldn't be further from the truth. They are businessmen. They hire the musicians, and most of them use off-the-shelf arrangements meaning that most big bands sound the same. They appoint one of the musicians as musical director and put them in charge. The first thing you learn as a band member is not to follow the bandleader. A lot of them became bandleaders because they were not good enough to find work as musicians. I worked for one bandleader who played the piano, and he got so drunk one night we had to turn his amplifier off.

It is common for a bandleader to not even be at a gig and some will put out three or four bands on the same night in their name. You might splash out and hire the famous *Joe Bloggs Big Band* for your daughter's wedding, only to find out that Joe Bloggs is fifty miles away doing another gig.

I know I sound bitter, but I am really not. I just want to set the record straight. Someone has to get the gigs, pay for a PA system and roadie, and

book the musicians, although some bandleaders don't even do that. Like any businessman, bandleaders should be rewarded for their risk and organisational ability. If I do harbour any bitterness, it is towards the banqueting managers and agents who take such huge slices from the booking fee for doing virtually nothing.

I must finish by saying I am sure there are many bandleaders that are great musicians, although I never worked for any of them.

LENNY

I had no first line for this song, so I had to turn to Google for inspiration. Heaven knows how I got there, but an image of the Mona Lisa suddenly appeared, which led instantly to the line, "You may know me as Mona." I had to do some research into Leonardo Da Vinci, and although I knew of his genius, I knew nothing about his social life and how popular he was.

LIKE CRYSTAL

This song was written about my parents. My father was stationed in Milan at the end of World War II, following the liberation of Italy. It was the happiest time of his life. He was a chronically shy man, so when he and his friend saw two young girls walking through a park, I don't know how he managed to pluck up the courage to speak to one of them. He proposed on their second date, and they were married six months later. Their marriage lasted sixty-seven years until my father died, aged ninety-three.

LOOKING FOR YOU

For a short period in 1989, I found myself single, and the only thing I could think about was finding love again. Being in a particularly romantic mood at the time, I fantasised about all the possible ways I would meet someone. As it turned out, I met the woman of my dreams in a Quaker house of all places, despite neither of us being Quakers. Not quite "A small café on a warm Parisian night" but close enough for me.

LUCKY BOY

I lost touch with my school friends on the day I left school, and it wasn't until the website *Friends Reunited* came along thirty years later that I got back in touch with some of them. It is always interesting to discover what happened to old friends, and Chris was one of the surprises. If our class

had voted on who was most likely to become one of the captains of industry, we would have all voted for Chris.

Chris stayed on at school but became a little too fond of the *wacky baccy*, and so his studies literally *went to pot*. He became a plasterer, and although he may not have achieved his full potential, he was happy with his life. I do know he would have been a brilliant plasterer.

Drugs remained a constant companion throughout his life until in his late fifties when he had a heart attack and was given a quadruple bypass. The doctors told him he was a *lucky boy* and that it was a miracle he survived. All of this, he told me whilst puffing away on a cigarette.

His recollection of the event was very interesting and what struck me most was how when he got home, he lay on his bed and started crying uncontrollably.

MEET ME AT MIDNIGHT

With a first line like this, there were many directions I could take, but most of them were down well-worn paths. I was getting bogged down with deciding who it was I was supposed to meet when I realised it wasn't a person at all, it was my muse. Until then, I had thought of inspiration as something that floats around us all, looking for a receptive mind to drop into. It was in writing this song that I realised I have had an invisible friend standing beside me for years, and now we had finally met.

MOJ PRIJATELJ

One of the most popular songs in Croatia is *Moj Galabe* sung by the great *Oliver Dragojević*. It is a song about an old man sitting on the rocks talking to a seagull. I turned the table and wrote a song about the seagull talking to the old man. I was hoping that Oliver would one day sing this, but sadly, he died in 2018.

.MONEY IN MY POCKET

A simple song that took me back fifty years to the only time in my life I was tied to a job I hated. I was a solicitor's clerk at Lincoln's Inn. I will never forget that ecstatic feeling of leaving the office on a Friday evening knowing that I had the whole weekend to myself. I swear I could hear a choir of angels singing on the day I left the office for the last time to become a professional musician.

NO CONNECTION

The son of a friend was talking to me about his childhood. His mother and father had divorced, and the thing he remembered most was sitting in the back of his father's car. It wasn't that he was unhappy or that he disliked his father, only that he would rather have been doing something else. This song started off about him but got hijacked. On the other hand, he had a wildness about him, so maybe he did turn out like the man in the song.

NONSENSE

With a first line like, "Looking for a place to do the fandango," this was destined to be a song about nonsense. I had a flashback to my schooldays and a lesson on "Jabberwocky" a nonsense poem by Lewis Carol. It was fun to write a song about nonsense because you can't really go wrong. If you mess up or lose the plot, you can just say, "Well, what do you expect, it's nonsense."

NO PLACE FOR A ONE

I was standing in WH Smith at Gatwick airport on my way to Mlini for my summer holiday when I saw a book on Sudoku which I had heard was the latest craze. I wanted to buy it but knew I would get hooked and have an overwhelming desire to become a professional Sudoku solver. I reluctantly decided to leave it on the shelf as I already had too many things taking up my time. During that holiday, a friend was doing a sudoku puzzle, and I made the mistake of asking him to explain it to me. He showed me what to do and tore out one of the other puzzles from the magazine for me to do. That was twenty years ago, and I have done a puzzle every morning since, working my way from easy, to the *Mensa*, *Absolutely Nasty Sudoku* series, level four.

ONE DAY YOU'RE IN PARADISE

What do you do as a parent when your daughter has her heart broken and is convinced she will never find love again? It goes without saying that you should pretend to be sad while you hide your delight, considering her boyfriend was a waste of space. It is also probably best not to mention that the last time her heart was broken, she found love a few days later. The easiest thing is to discreetly play them this song.

ON THE FLOOR AGAIN

I was a keen boxer when I was young and used to train at the Fitzroy Lodge Club in London. I was pretty good but didn't get very far as I didn't have the killer instinct. I always felt the urge to apologise to my opponent after hitting them.

I really didn't like being hit, but I was fast, so I managed to get out of the way most of the time. I was surprised to find that some boxers didn't mind taking punishment, and one of the older boxers used to laugh about it. He even boasted about the number of times he had been knocked out. I liked him a lot and was happy to have in my thoughts while I wrote this song.

OVER YOU

Of all the songs I have written, this is the one I most enjoy singing. I was at a dinner party one night when some guests asked me to play, so I sang this. I came to the emotional ending and was pleased with my performance. When the applause had died down, the man next to me said, "Very nice. Do you know *Country Roads*?" That was the night I realised I would probably never play in public again.

PERUVIAN GIRL

Federika was born in Dubrovnik, Croatia but immigrated to Peru when she was one year old. We met in 1990, which was when I started writing songs prolifically, so what better subject for a song than a *Peruvian Girl*. The storyline is a lot different to our own, but we have walked on *El Silencio Beach* together and do spend a lot of the time talking at cross purposes.

POLANDA BLUES

I have always loved fishing even though growing up in London, it was not the easiest of sports to pursue. One of the best days of my life was when I pulled out of Mlini for the first time in my own boat. Most of the fisherman in this area fish from boats catching bluefish of the mackerel, tuna variety and the most prized of these fish is Polanda, the local name for Atlantic Tuna.

When I first started coming to Mlini in 1995, there was plenty of Polanda around, but there seems to be less and less every year. However, "My pal Niksha" has clearly sold his soul to the devil because every time he takes his boat out, he comes back with not only Polanda but a variety of

other, even more desirable fish. Mind you, I suspect his multimillion-dollar fish finder might have something to do with it.

PRIDE

One of my favourite films is *Dangerous Liaisons* starring the great John Malkovich, and one of his lines really struck me, “Pride is stronger than love.”

It reminded me of a short story by Somerset Maugham called *The Back of Beyond* in which a man finds out his wife is having an affair, so he leaves her. His wife tells him she still loves him and that the affair meant nothing. She pleads with him to stay with her, but he refuses. He ends up living alone and miserable while the man she had the affair with, lives happily in his place. To quote the final line of the story, “What a fool I was to throw away what I wanted more than anything in the world because I couldn’t enjoy exclusive possession of it.”

His pride was stronger than his love.

PRISONER OF A DREAM

I played with a lot of great musicians in my time, and one of the best (and least known) was the pianist Dave Simpson. He used to play with the Ted Heath Orchestra before moving to South Africa. He was so good that other pianists went especially to hear him play when they were in town.

I was playing with him in a plush restaurant one night when in the middle of a song, he suddenly slammed the lid of the piano down and went home. I was astonished, but the bass player told me it was quite a common occurrence. He was an alcoholic who had reached rock bottom but had now turned his life around. He did the occasional gig, but his main job was as head of the Yamaha Music Foundation in Johannesburg, a job that he loved.

The next time I worked with him, we were chatting during a break when he told me he despised the piano and learning it was the worst thing that ever happened to him. He had been a child prodigy, so his parents forced him to practice for hours every day and in his own words, “All I wanted to do was go and play with my friends.”

I was always devoted to music, so it astonished me that someone so good could hate his instrument so much, but I could see his point.

REMEMBER THIS DAY

I wrote and performed this song for the wedding of my stepdaughter. It was celebrated in Mlini where she came every summer for most of her life. She walked down the steps from her grandmother's house with her father and bridesmaids. The whole village turned out to watch the procession make their way to *The Karaka*, a replica of a sixteenth-century ship. I played the wedding march on guitar as they boarded the boat.

We sailed slowly along the coast and anchored just off Dubrovnik old town where the wedding ceremony took place. The older I get, the more emotional I become, so I knew singing this song might be a problem. While I sang, I stared directly at the sea as I knew if I looked up and saw anyone crying, I would burst into tears and be unable to continue. It was just as well, because as I strummed the final chord and looked up, the bridegroom, along with half the audience, was in tears.

THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE

Having written and performed a song for my stepdaughter's wedding, Federika gave me strict instructions to write another song for my stepson's wedding six months later. Having only recently returned to music after a twelve-year break, I had doubts if I could write to order like that, but to my surprise, the song popped out like a pearl from an oyster, although the story behind their romance did help.

My stepson was on a three-month tour of South East Asia when on New Year's Eve, and much the worst for wear he literally jumped onto an open taxi while it was moving. He was hanging off the back of the taxi when a young girl grabbed his arm and dragged him in. They fell in love, and not long after, they married in his wife's hometown of Seattle. His wife is known to all her friends as *The Dove*, hence the title of the song.

RIGHT PERSON WRONG TIME

We start by meeting the right person at what we think is the right time, but it usually turns out that they were the wrong person at the right time. Later we meet the right person, but by now it is the wrong time. We leave the wrong person to be with the right person only to find out that the original wrong person was the right person all along, it's just that we met them at the wrong time. Life can be very confusing.

ROSEMARY AND TIME

I have rarely met anyone who has regretted ending a relationship, only that they regretted not ending it sooner.

A woman I knew wasn't sure if she wanted to marry, but everyone convinced her to go ahead, saying her fiancé was perfect and it would all work out in time. She knew in the first year of marriage that it was a mistake and wanted to leave, but her parents advised her to give it more time. She got pregnant, and three children later, she fell in love with someone else. People convinced her to stay with her husband and told her she would get over it in time, but she never did. Time can be a great healer, but it can also be cruel captor. The person in this song is the same as in *Forbidden Fruit*

SECOND THOUGHTS

When I split up with my first wife, we were riding high and owned a big squash club and a restaurant. My first thoughts were filled with disastrous scenarios, most of which came true, but after the initial shock passed, second thoughts came along. A new and exciting life appeared before me, and although it was no easy ride, I realised that first thoughts are often corrupted by emotion. "Second thoughts are the ones to trust. "

SELF-LOVE

I was flicking through the TV channels when I caught a few minutes of an American guru giving a lecture to a huge audience. She appeared to be saying that the answer to all life's problems was to love yourself. She was obviously very successful, and there was no question that she loved herself, so maybe she had a point.

It reminded me of a woman I met in Los Angeles. On nearly every surface of her apartment was a post-it note telling herself how wonderful she was. "Everybody loves you; you are strong; you are amazing," etc. etc. The romance didn't last long. I know self-confidence is one of the most important things in life, and it is essential to be kind to ourselves, but surely too much self-love is just as harmful as too little.

SHE SAID HELLO

For a few years in the 1980s, I owned a squash club, and a woman came to work for me. It was her first job since she got married twenty years earlier. Despite being very capable, I had rarely met anyone with such little self-confidence. Her husband was a good and very capable man, but it seemed that she had become too reliant on him. Within a year of her going back to work, she became a different person. Sadly, the more her confidence grew, the more they drifted apart, and they ended up separating. I never saw

either of them again, but I assume like in the song, they would have met at least once by chance. I know her husband would have wanted what was best for her, but I suspect he would have missed the days when he was the centre of her world.

SILLY OLD MAN

I have a soft spot for eccentrics, with my father and grandfather falling firmly into this category. Grandfather Nemo used to start his day by walking down the garden path making chicken noises and flapping his imaginary wings. I was told it was more of a satire aimed at machismo rather than an indication of insanity. My father used to watch television with a cushion on his head whilst reading a book which used to incense us when we wanted to watch another channel. He insisted he could do both, so we tested him from time to time, only to find it was true. I have to say that later in life, I did find something comforting about sitting with a cushion on my head, and I recommend you at least give it a try.

I was thinking about my dear old dad while I wrote this song, but I can't say it is about him. I had in mind some of the characters I saw at Venice Beach in Los Angeles, and in particular, *Skateboard Mama*, an eighty-year-old grandmother dressed in her best hippy gear, skateboarding up and down the beach every day.

SINGER IN A BAND

One good thing about being so totally unknown is there is no risk of being defined by your music. If you decide to take a new direction, you can, because no one knows what the old direction was. Artists who have a massive hit in their youth are destined to repeat that song and style for the rest of their professional careers, or risk losing their fans.

This song was inspired by the protagonist in my book *A Single Tear*. A man who makes a living from the only song he wishes he'd never written.

SING FOR YOUR CHILD

It was 1989, and I was staying with my parents after my marriage and businesses had failed. I was just about to go out one night when I had the urge to pick up my guitar. I sat on the edge of the bed, and instantly the words and music *Sing for your Child* came out. I have never had children or much contact with them, so where on earth that line came from, I have no idea.

We didn't have a lot of money when I was growing up, and as we were a family of six, my father had to do a lot of overtime to make ends meet. Because of that, I didn't get to see much of him, except in the summer when we went camping every weekend. I have the fondest memories of us playing cricket together in the day and sitting by a gas lamp, playing whist or shove halfpenny at night.

Contrary to the message of this song, the last thing I would have wanted was for Dad to sing as he was utterly tone-deaf, but both my parents were always willing to join in with anything we suggested. Maybe that was where the title of the song came from, that the greatest gift my parents ever gave me was their time, the most precious thing we have.

SMOOTH TALKING

This was supposed to be about a cool dude strutting along the boulevard, but it was hijacked by a rich and powerful businessman. The most annoying thing was, I found myself defending him.

My father was a passionate socialist all his life. He despised capitalism, with Rupert Murdoch being on top of his hit list, but his love of cricket was greater than his hatred of Murdoch. The only way he could watch cricket through the long depressing winter months was by subscribing to Murdoch's *Sky Sports*. He held out for a few years until the winters became so unbearable that he broke down and subscribed. His quality of winter life dramatically improved while he sat all day long with a scorecard in hand, following the test matches.

I always try and see both sides of a story, and while I hate corrupt businessmen and bankers as much as the next person, I can't help thinking that, "all that glitters is not bad."

SOME FOLKS

Every year, Mary and her two sisters rent one of our apartments for two weeks. They live far apart, so rarely see each other for the rest of the year. For two weeks, they have nothing to worry about but themselves, and they love every second of it. Each morning, they take their beach chairs to the edge of the shore and sit there all day with their feet in the water.

I was just about to dive into the sea for my twice-daily swim when I saw them sitting there in Mary heaven, and this chorus came to me. Normally, I would record it on my mobile phone, but not having it with me, I had to keep singing it during my twenty-minute swim to stop me forgetting it.

SKI WITH ME TONIGHT

Skiing used to be one of my favourite things in the world, until the sad day when messages from my brain to my legs started to develop a time-lapse, which is not ideal when sliding down a mountain at high speed, or any speed for that matter. I could still ski but had lost that effortless coordination that is so essential to the preservation of life and limb. Of all my skiing memories, the best are those nights when I met up with a group of friends at a mountain café, had a few glasses of mulled wine, and then skied down in the moonlight. Heaven knows how we got down in one piece although the Swiss have a saying, “The skis know their way home.”

SPECIAL DAYS

I have always been intrigued by fate, not just the *sliding doors* scenario but the fact that sometimes our tiniest actions can have such a huge impact on other peoples’ lives.

Many years ago, my elder brother registered with a pen pal agency and wrote to a young girl living in Worthing. I like to visualise him standing by the post box unaware that when he let go of that letter, he was not only changing his own life but also my life and that of so many other people.

He ended up marrying that young girl and living in Worthing. When my father retired, my parents bought a house near him. Years later, I lived with my parents for a while, which led to me meeting my wife Federika, which led me to Mlini.

We all have *special days* in our lives, when walking into a room, missing a train, or any number of insignificant events can have a massive impact on not just our lives but those around us and “all those yet to come.”

STRANGE HAPPENINGS

This song started with a riff that had a *strange* vibe to it. It triggered a flashback to a night fifty years earlier when I was watching a television play with my family. A husband and wife were arguing with each other when the wife shouted at her husband, saying he was mad. The husband got very angry. He put one hand on his hip and the other arm up, imitating a spout and handle and replied sarcastically, “Yes that’s right. Look at me, I’m a teapot.” My father burst out laughing, which made me feel happy, and for some *strange* reason, that scene has stuck in my mind and found its way into this *strange* song.

SUGAR

The first line for this song was “Sugar for my baby,” and it came through loud and clear. I have an aversion to the word *baby* in songs and combined with a desire for meaning in my lyrics the only solution was to write about cooking, despite the fact that I am not a cook, what Joe Frazier is to flower arranging. Having read somewhere that sugar makes everything taste good, I came up with some unique recipes that are sugar-based, and although they might not win any prizes, no one can deny their originality.

THANK YOU JAMES

Throughout my musical career, the only two artists I can say were my heroes were James Taylor and George Benson. There are many artists that I liked, but those are the only two I give hero status to, although if Elton John or Gregory Porter played guitar, they would also be on the list.

The year was 1976, and I was in great demand as a session musician. Through the sessions, I got to know a lot of record company bosses, so when I finished writing my first few songs, it was easy for me to get the right people to listen to them. Being a big James Taylor fan I wrote in that style, but while they liked the songs, they told me not to waste my time writing that kind of music.

“Disco is the big thing now. If you want to get anywhere these days you have to write disco music,” I was told with great authority.

“But James Taylor is very successful writing in this style,” I replied.

“It’s a very small market, and it won’t last,” were their final words.

I listened to them and proceeded to write some bad songs in styles I had no feel for.

To this day, James Taylor is as popular as ever, and it is difficult to find someone who doesn’t like his music, except of course for the music moguls whose job it is to create lucrative new trends.

Thirty years later, I was entrenched in an acoustic-based style of music where I felt most comfortable, and a few weeks before Christmas 2017, I finished *Thank You James*, in which I pay tribute to the great man. It was hard work, but I managed to incorporate lines from all my favourite Taylor songs within the three choruses. Everyone loved it, and I knew it was a good song.

I was desperate to get it to James Taylor, but it wasn’t easy, as any message sent through his website goes into a bottomless pit. I finally managed to track down his manager and sent the song to her. She replied, “I will forward the link to James, but he might not reply as he gets so many songs written for him.”

There's nothing like making your fans feel special, is there.

I always try and think the best of people and hope that James Taylor never got to listen to my song, but after posting it to his many Facebook groups which include members of his family, I find it hard to believe he never heard it. If he did hear it, I find it hard to believe he couldn't take ten seconds to send a message.

They say you should never meet your heroes, and they are probably right, but despite this unpleasant experience, I would still love to meet him.

THE ANALYST

This was the first song I wrote after a five-year sabbatical from music in the late 1980s. I was single and living in Los Angeles at the time, and every woman I met had either been in therapy, was having therapy, badly needed therapy, or was a therapist.

THE BEST OF TIMES

Most of the time, a melody comes to me with a first line, but in this case, there was nothing, so I turned to google for some inspiration. I searched for "best first lines from books", and unsurprisingly top of the list was "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens.

This song has no connection to the story in the book, but the title reminded me of a frequent discussion I used to have with my father. He was not the most positive of men and frequently commented on how things were so much better in the "old days." Considering his upbringing, I found it a strange thing to say.

He grew up in a slum in London and fought in some of the worst battles of World War II, so his nostalgia didn't make much sense. When I presented him with the arguments against, he always accepted them but ended the conversation by saying, "That's true, but at least we had hope."

In 2012, I went to visit *Pieve di Sacco*, the town in Italy where my mother was born. A few months earlier, I got her to write her memoirs and was shocked to discover how poor her family was. I went to see the tiny apartment where six of them lived. It included her illiterate grandmother, who had lost her husband and son to tuberculosis. In her memoirs she wrote, "The words *to want* just weren't in our dictionary. We knew our parents had nothing, so we never asked for anything." Things got so bad that they moved to Milan where their situation improved, but then the war came, and things got worse than ever.

After I walked around the town and had coffee with some long-lost relatives, I went to a large supermarket where the shops were stacked with every conceivable type of food and people were queueing at the checkout with trollies filled to the top. It was then that a thought occurred to me. When my father went to Piove di Sacco in 1945 to visit my mother's relatives, if a genie had appeared before him and asked what he wished for, what would he have said? He would have wished for a family, a nice home by the sea, an abundance of food, regular foreign holidays and for his children to enjoy the same luxuries. Everything that he would have wished for has come to pass.

As I write this, we are in the middle of the Covid19 pandemic so I am sure there will be plenty of people who will be horrified by me describing this as "the best of times," but when making comparisons with the past, I believe we must compare like with like. We must compare a bad time now with bad times from the past. Ask yourself, if you were poor, would you rather it be now or in Dicken's Times?

THE CACTUS

This started with a line that contained "when the circus came to town." A circus would have been a good subject to write about, but once again the song was highjacked, this time by an imaginary bare-knuckle fighter known as *The Cactus*.

Boxing is often referred to as "the sport of gentlemen," not because it was practised by gentlemen but because boxers had to follow rules as opposed to street fighting where anything goes. I saw a lot of violence in the many clubs and pubs I worked at, although ironically, the worst incident I ever saw was at a wedding. I could never understand the sheer hatred that fuelled the violence, which was often sparked by the most trivial of incidents. It was a pleasure to meet the two men in this song who are tough, brave fighters who have no animosity towards each other. They respect each other and fight for money, not because someone accidentally spilt beer on them.

THE CREST OF A WAVE

I wrote this song in 1989 about a woman I met while living in Los Angeles. It is a city associated with aspiring actresses, but there are also a lot of women who go there to look for rich or famous husbands.

After returning to the UK, I put together a home studio and for the first time had access to virtual instruments, so went to town on this piece which combines folk, classical and rock music.

Presenting the music industry with anything other than what is *happening* is hard at the best of times but a thirty-five-minute song, in an unspecified genre, by an unknown artist has no chance. Even Bohemian Rhapsody, a masterpiece recorded by a world-famous rock band, lasting eight minutes, was fiercely rejected by the music industry *experts*.

I was happy with the result but knowing there was no point in trying to get it published I forgot about it until recently a friend insisted that I send him everything I have ever written. To my surprise, he singled this out as by far his favourite. If it wasn't for him, I expect it would still be gathering dust.

THE DANCER

During my years as a freelance musician, I backed a lot of cabaret artists. At one show, I got talking to a dancer who said in her youth she was regarded as a very gifted ballet dancer, but she pushed herself too hard. The day came when it was too painful for her to dance ballet, so she made a living dancing in shows. She was never short of work, but the next time I saw her, she told me she had been advised to give up dancing completely or risk ending up in a wheelchair

THE DAYS I WILL REMEMBER

With the opening line, "Hey little girl, who you going to run to?" there was no doubt what this song had to be about although I did find it emotionally hard at times. I never had children myself, and it is one of the few regrets in life.

THE FIELDS OF FRANCE

I was ten years old when we stopped on our last night in France after a lovely four-week holiday visiting my grandparents in Italy. It was dusk when I was out walking with my father, and we came across a field of white crosses that stretched out as far as I could see.

Of course, I had heard about both world wars and been told that millions of people had died in them, but they were just words. I never really understood why it was my father hated war so much when it always seemed so glamorous in the films. After seeing that field of crosses and realising that every one of them represented a person who was killed, I began to understand.

THE GATE

The year was 1989. I owned a squash club and a restaurant with my first wife, which were already struggling when we decided to split up. Everything was going down the pan when out of the blue, I took out my guitar from its case and started playing for the first time in five years. No songs or melodies, just improvising in a bluesy, meandering kind of way. I know it sounds like a tired old cliché, but it really did feel like the guitar was talking to me. Over the next few weeks, I started drifting back into music and was surprised to find that my failing marriage and businesses didn't seem to matter anymore. What surprised me the most was that my songwriting finally started coming together.

If we find ourselves on a “cold dark road,” maybe it is the things we left behind that can light our way.

THE LOOK IN YOUR EYES

When this title came to me, it was screaming out to be a standard love song. It is a common phrase in songs but usually relates to *the look of love* theme. It was time for someone to speak out for the many other looks that lurk behind our *window to the soul*. In this case, I refer to that unmistakable look that says you have either done something wrong, will be blamed for something that went wrong, or your partner has guessed you are about to do something wrong. Either way, you're in big trouble.

THE MINSTREL

When returning to music in 1989, I found myself writing in an acoustic style, so it seemed natural to see if I could make a name in folk clubs. I knew it meant small audiences and very little money, but I would be able to play my own songs with just me and a guitar, and that was all I wanted.

I put together a nice little set and was delighted when this song came to me, as it would make a perfect finale to a concert. The minstrel (me) asks the king (the audience) is it right that I make a living in the arts when there are so many people in essential services that struggle to make ends meet? The king replies “Your words won't change the world, but they make our pain much easier to bear,” which leads to the final chorus that is sung by the audience.

“Yes we like the songs that you have sung
And we like the friends that we've become
We like your music
And the words of your songs.”

People love to sing along in folk clubs so it would have made a magical finale once the audience got to know the song. It was the perfect plan, but in the immortal words of the great Blackadder, “It was bollocks.”

No one wanted to book an unknown singer-songwriter in folk clubs unless they were prepared to make a name for themselves by travelling around the country several times, competing with local amateurs for a ten-minute floor spot.

THE GIFT INSIDE

This song is featured in my novel, *A Single Tear* and marks the birth of *The Olivia Puppet Company*.

What happens to genius if it has no outlet? If Mozart had been brought up in a mining village with no piano in sight, surely his genius would still be there inside him? If so, with no outlet, would it not drive him crazy? Moving down the scale a long way, I used to attend cricket school every week with John Emburey, who ended up being captain of the English Cricket team. At one time, he was regarded as the best spin bowler in the world, but what if his teacher Mr Gunter, hadn’t suggested one day that he tried spinning a cricket ball instead of bowling it at 100 mph like the rest of us?

Do we all have a special gift inside us that few of us get the opportunity to discover?

THE POET

Not much I can say about this song other than it is definitely not autobiographical. I was going through a bad time when I wrote it, but I have always been a loner so on the few occasions I have had to “walk alone,” it didn’t bother me too much.

But the song had to be about a poet, and who has ever heard of a happy poet?

THE FEAST OF THE DEAD

This was a difficult song to write as the lyrics had to fit the guitar riff, which restricted the syllables.

“I opened the door” was the only first-line I could come up with. Considering I spend half my life opening the door to Cookie (our cat,) it seemed natural to write about her. I finished the song, and it was only

when I went back to it a few weeks later that I found I wasn't happy with it.

So I started again, only this time when I "opened the door" I was surprised to find Jimi Hendrix standing there which was a lovely surprise, especially when I saw who he had brought with him.

THE SOLDIER

I don't know what the opposite of *turning in his grave* is, but whatever it is, that is what my father will be doing when he hears this song.

Old soldiers generally fall into the *don't want to talk about it* or *never stop talking about it* category, and my father was definitely in the latter group. I was always fascinated by his stories and in particular when he talked about the Gurkhas. He told me about their extraordinary bravery and said there was no doubt he would not have survived the war without them. He was appalled at how badly they had been treated by successive governments, and even when they won long-standing court battles, they were still cheated out of their rights.

When my father died, I found an envelope containing his last wishes. He wanted me to hire a van to save the expense of a hearse, and wanted a coffin made of cardboard, carried by Gurkhas. Typical of my father, along with these wishes, he also said if I was unwilling or unable to carry out any of his wishes, that was perfectly alright. It was just as well, as the only thing I managed was the cardboard coffin which ironically cost more than a wooden one. I did contact the Gurkha Brigade Association, but they were unable to help.

THE SONG YOU'LL NEVER PLAY

I wrote this song in 1989 with the shameful intention of enticing a woman away from the boyfriend she said she was tired of. In my defence, she did tell me she thought there was "something between us." She really liked the song and got the message loud and clear, but it failed spectacularly to get a result, and I never did find out whether she got off the train.

THE TREE

Someone once told me about a film they saw where a soldier arrived at a man's farm announcing he was from one glorious army or another. The farmer had no interest who the soldier represented but simply asked, "I suppose you want my chickens then?" It turned out that armies came, and

armies went, but the only effect it ever had on the farmer's life was that they wanted his chickens

It reminded me of my Italian grandmother telling me that when Mussolini wanted to invade Abyssinia, he called on married women to give up their wedding rings to help pay for the war. We always seem to be paying for things we don't want, don't need or don't understand.

THE WHEELS GO ROUND

What is it about train journeys (or at least the thought of them) that is fascinating? Although I am speaking as someone who doesn't have to commute on them. On the rare occasion when I do travel by train, I am either looking into people's lives via their back gardens or trying to guess what my fellow passengers are thinking about.

THE WORKHOUSE CHILD

This was my biggest disappointment. It was 1992, and I had just landed my first record deal. A few days later, I received a phone call asking me to travel to London to sign over the publishing rights to Acuff Rose, who described the song as "a future classic." It was urgent because Cliff Richards was going to record it as his Christmas single that year, so there wasn't much time. A few days later, I was told Cliff had changed his mind.

No problem. The record company would release the song as a single and Acuff Rose had been touting it around the BBC. Four of the top producers were going to put it on their playlist, and there was even talk of it being *Record of the Week* on Radio 2.

A few days later, I had a phone call saying that there had been a big shakeup at the BBC and producers were no longer allowed to find their own songs to play. There would be a global playlist, and producers were only allowed to choose from that list. When the meeting came to agree what songs went on that list, *The Workhouse Child* was rejected on the grounds that being about a workhouse "it was not relevant to today's world." In other words, the 200 million child slaves that still exist are not relevant.

THE WORLD CAN WAIT

This song was born from a very lazy guitar intro that cried out for a song about doing nothing which is a subject I am not as familiar with as I would like to be. Take a few minutes out, close your eyes and listen. Ideally, you

should be laying on the grass and looking up at the sky, but failing that, a comfy sofa and a glass of wine will do.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF HEROES

I wrote and performed this song at my father's funeral in 2013. He was not only a World War II hero for his part in the liberation of Italy but also for getting through the rest of his life with undiagnosed PTSD and survivor guilt. He still woke up screaming in the middle of the night in his mid-sixties. He was a wonderful role model, always insisting that his children behaved honourably and with social awareness, but without judging us if we didn't match up to his high standards.

There is a reference in the song to the man who saved his life and those of many other but sadly never survived himself. You can read more about him at www.nemojames.com/a-hero-unknown.

My parents met in Milan at the end of the war, and as far as I am concerned, my mother is also a hero for bringing up four children in such difficult circumstances.

THEY WON'T COME ROUND AGAIN

They say if you remember the sixties, then you weren't there. An amusing aphorism but I have known plenty of people who not only remember them but even now have a hard time letting them go.

THE WRONG QUESTION

Thomas Hobson was a livery stable owner born in 1544. When customers came to him to buy a horse, he gave them two choices, you can either take the horse nearest the door, or you can take nothing. In other words, you have no choice.

Over five hundred years later, those in authority still use the same technique to get what they want. Your town council wants to dig up a park, and in its place, they give you the choice of an office block or a shopping mall. Everyone wants to keep the park, but that is not one of the choices. People hate the shopping mall slightly less than they hate the office block, so they vote for the shopping mall. When complaints are made, those in authority say they are only doing what the people voted for.

THIS DAMN DAM

This song came to me during a short break in Amsterdam. I was standing in a market which has been there for hundreds of years, trying to choose between 5000 different varieties of tulip bulbs. It occurred to me that if it had it not been for the actions of a brave young boy preventing a dam from bursting, that market would have once been underwater. Nobody knows the boy's name, and some say he never even existed. In one way or another, he did exist, and he would much rather have been at home with his family than stuck there with his finger in a hole.

THIS TOWN

Working in clubs and bars, you get to strike up a lot of conversations with people from all walks of life. When the first line, "It's good to see you back here, my old friend," came to me, it reminded me of a conversation I had with Michael, a man who had sailed single handily around the world. He returned home after a year and went to his local pub. An old friend came over to speak to him, and the conversation went something like this, "Hello Michael. I haven't seen you for ages. Where have you been?" "I've been sailing around the world." "That's nice. Did you see the football yesterday?"

Michael was a popular man, and despite being wealthy and adventurous, he was not the type to lord it over others. If anything, he told me he felt a little envious of their contentment.

THOSE DAMN PIPES

In the 1980s, I had a residency for a few weeks in a restaurant near Trafalgar Square called *The Caledonian Rooms*. It was a huge venue with a Scottish theme. It was hell. Every night, coachloads of tourists were dumped at round tables in front of us, and they were all given a *party horn*. They sound like kazoos, and when you blow into them, a paper tube flies out, creating one of the most irritating noises known to man. Imagine hundreds of those being blown at the same time while you are trying to play music.

Just before *the addressing of the haggis*, a Scottish piper walked slowly to the front of the stage and continued to play for five long minutes. In the open air, and especially in the distance they can be quite magical, but when the distance is only one metre, they have a tendency to enter each ear and explode somewhere in the centre of your head.

TOO MUCH STUFF

If you are tidying up and come across an object you have had for years but have absolutely no idea what it is, or what it is used for, what do you do with it? If you are one of those people that put it back in the box because you never know when it might come in handy, then this song is dedicated to you.

While I was writing it, I was reminded of a sentence from the book *Cider With Rosie* by Laurie Lee. The mother was a hoarder, and the son said it wasn't until he left home aged eighteen, before he knew what it was like to sit on a chair without having to remove a pile of newspapers from it.

TWO EYES ARE NOT ENOUGH

My father liked to travel above all else, so when I was very young, I asked him what he would do if my mother died before him. I asked him if he would go on a world cruise to get over it. "Definitely not," he said, "these things have no value if you are not sharing them." His answer didn't mean much to me at the time, but many years later, I understood exactly. A trouble shared is a trouble halved, a wonder shared is a wonder doubled.

VANITY FAIR

I suppose this title must have been a flashback from the novel by William Makepeace Thackeray. I read it while doing a very unpleasant three-month gig in Bahrain, so escaping into this excellent book was most welcome. It is not particularly about domestic servants, but I find any book of that period brings the haunting *Upstairs Downstairs* kind of life to mind.

WALK THIS WAY

The first line of this chorus had to be "Walk This Way" so Monty Python immediately sprang to mind. Despite being nearly fifty years since the *Ministry of Silly Walks* sketch was first broadcast, it is still going strong, and some countries even hold silly walk festivals every year. It occurred to me how great it would be to hold a *Worldwide Silly Walk and Dance Competition*, inviting the public to make videos of their silly walks and offer cash prizes to the fifteen winners.

I created a Kickstarter campaign to raise \$3000 dollars for prize money. It was a spectacular plan that could have united the world in music and laughter, but the campaign was a spectacular failure.

I paid \$160 to a company that assured me they could raise between \$15,000 and \$50,000 in pledges for the project. I managed to raise the

grand total of \$1. The company was so impressed with the idea and so surprised at the lack of interest that they took the project over. They got their experts to design a new campaign and were so sure of themselves that not only did they do the relaunch for free, but they told me if they didn't raise the money, they would give me back my original \$160. They created a very impressive campaign, but again it only raised \$1.

Even with my track record, that was a pretty grim result, but in the words of the Monty Python team, "Always look on the bright side of life."

WEAVE A LIFE OF LOVE

Until recently, I have never bought a painting in my life, as coming from a modest background, it always seemed such a wild extravagance. In later years, it never occurred to me to buy a painting, and when it did, I never saw anything I particularly liked. Then in 2017, we were browsing around a community arts centre in Sri Lanka, and I saw a batik painting of an old man weaving a straw mat. I liked it for the reason that many would dislike it, depending on whether the viewer sees a glass empty or half full. I see a man who although poor, is content with his life, has brought up a loving family and has pride in his humble but essential work. Others see him as a miserable old man, neglected by his family, who slaves away to earn just enough for them to exist.

To Federika's surprise, I bought it, and it now has pride of place in my studio. It also gave me the subject for this song and a cover for the album *Weave*.

WHAT AM I TO DO

The old chestnut. If you discover the partner of a good friend is having an affair, what should you do about it? It could blow over, your friend never finds out, and they both live happily ever after, in which case telling them would have caused unnecessary pain. Or it could all blow up, your friend finds out you knew and feels betrayed. I was only faced with this dilemma once, and fortunately, fate stepped in before I had to decide what to do.

WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT YOUR TOWN

In 1995, I spent nine months working in Madeira and loved everything about it. The climate, the scenery, and most of all, the people, who despite earning very little, were always happy and intensely proud of their country.

The manager of the hotel was a very efficient and ambitious German who was driven nuts by the attitude of his staff. One day he came to me

fuming because the barman had refused to work on his day off. He had just told the young barman that he was a good worker, and if he only put in more time and effort, he would be promoted and earn more money. Apparently, the barman had just shrugged his shoulders and said he was perfectly happy as he was, and what good was more money, if he saw less of his wife and children.

As for the inspiration for this song, I asked a waitress if she had travelled to any other countries. She looked at me as if I was crazy and said, “Why would I go anywhere else when I live in Madeira?”

WHEN HE CALLS

I once heard a great line from a country song, “When my ship finally came in, I was waiting for a train.” Unfortunately, I have no idea what the song was or who wrote it.

I was nineteen and getting offers from lots of bands. I was out most of the time, so my brother used to get annoyed at having to take so many messages for me. One day he shouted at me, “This is the fourth time this man has left a message and you still haven’t called him back. This is the last time.” I took a quick look at the message which had a phone number and the words, “Call Peter Gabriel,” written on it. I called him and he told me he had seen me playing somewhere and had taken my number. He thought I would be perfect for his new band and asked if I would go along to see them. I must have had a dozen similar offers that week so I politely rejected the offer.

WHEN IT’S OVER, IT’S OVER

My father was born in 1920 and grew up in a slum in Lambeth, South London. Grandfather Nemo was more interested in playing cards than earning a living, so my grandmother struggled to bring up their five children. Being the youngest son, my father was by far the favourite, so one day as a special treat, his mother took him to the theatre. It was the start of a lifelong love affair, and as hard as things were, she always managed to find the money to pursue his passion.

My parents regularly went to the theatre until my mother’s poor health prevented her from going, and I took her place. Dad and I used to go regularly to the Duke of York theatre in Brighton until shortly before he died aged ninety-three. In his later years, he found it difficult to get up and down from his seat when people wanted to get past, so he reserved a box which was a surprisingly reasonable price. He insisted on having lunch out

and a glass of wine before the play, so he always slept through the first half of the performance, but it didn't deter from his enjoyment of the outing.

HEY HEY

I do all my songwriting on summer mornings sitting on the terasa. In the late afternoon, a group of us meet there to play bridge, but sadly, each year there are fewer of us. On the day this song was born, there weren't enough of us to make up a table, so I sat in my usual place reading. The sun started to go down and the line, "Hey hey, it's the end of the day," came to me. The song started to fill up with all that was happening around me, and I had a lovely feeling of preserving that magical moment. Even the church bell rang to tell me it wanted to be part of the song.

WINNERS ALSO CRY

In the 1990s, I did a pub gig in Sussex, where the publican turned out to be the British and Commonwealth title fighter, Billy Aird. He was a nice man and very interesting to talk to. During his boxing career, great things were expected of him, and if it were not for some very suspect points decisions against him, he might have gone all the way. Apart from bad luck, it seemed that he allowed his private life to distract him. At the time of his title fight against John Gardner, he owned a pub and a sports shop. He told me that during the weigh-in, he was "worrying about the sandwiches for the next day."

People often asked him if he regretted being distracted at such an important time of his life, and he said, "No way. Some of the boxers I knew became champions but ended up much worse off than me."

A BACHELOR'S LAMENT

I separated from my first wife in 1989 after being together for twelve years. I never had any trouble meeting women, so at first, I relished my newfound freedom, but it wasn't long before I remembered that I was a one-woman man. I wrote this song in a tiny house in Arundel in mid-winter on a particularly gloomy day. A few weeks later I met Federika.

WHO IS SHE

This song was inspired by the film *Paris, Texas* in which a man disappears for four years and on his return, discovers his wife is working in a peep show. He pays to go in and watch her, but she doesn't know it is him. The

song takes over from there with the conclusion that no matter how long we live with someone, we never really know them.

A RAT RACE

It was 1989, and I had just made the final break from my first wife. I left Derby at 2 a.m. and drove to Heathrow airport with no idea where I was going or what I would do. With guitar in hand and a suitcase by my side, I looked up at all the possible destinations and made a shortlist. Gstaad, Italy, Los Angeles, Spain or India. The previous year we had gone on holiday to Los Angeles, and I loved it, but this was not a holiday. I needed to consider my future in either squash or music, although I was open-minded should anything else come along. I eventually decided on New York. I loved how everyone in Los Angeles was so happy and friendly, so I assumed New York would be the same, only with more opportunity. I couldn't have been more wrong.

On my arrival at JFK airport, I booked and paid for a hotel room and asked a taxi driver to take me there. After an hour of going round in circles, he told me he couldn't find my hotel so dumped me at a different hotel. He charged me a fortune, and as he didn't speak English, there was not much I could do about it. The hotel looked ok, and I was too tired to argue.

I was surprised at how reasonably priced the hotel was, and when I took a walk outside, I realised why. I was constantly pestered by men trying to sell me a wide variety of drugs and women and the atmosphere was terrifying. The next day I explored the city and was walking down a side road when I saw an elderly woman driver make a silly mistake. A policeman shouted at her "Watch what you're doing, you asshole!" I then went to a shop to buy a laptop. I was charged extra for the operating system which I didn't know was already built-in, a memory module that he never installed and software that I later found out was not genuine. Finally, I had lunch in a restaurant where I was so scared of the waitress. I accepted her recommendation through fear of my life. The next day I booked a one-way ticket to Los Angeles.

I have to say that my brother thinks New York is the best place in the world so I must have just been unlucky.

I NEVER LEARNT TO DANCE

I once heard a very old woman being interviewed on the radio. She was a delight to listen to. At one point she was asked, "Is there anything you regret in your life." She thought for a while and then answered, "I wish I

had eaten more ice cream. I spent my whole life watching my figure and it's only now I realise how unimportant it was."

MADEIRA NIGHTS

In 1995 I spent nine months working in Madeira, one of the best gigs ever. The problem for an unknown songwriter is that people need to hear a song a few times before they get to like it. I don't usually have that luxury but in Madeira I worked in a hotel bar so most of the guests came in every night for a week or two and so got to know my music. Most of them bought at least one album and many bought all seven and are still in contact with me twenty-five years later.

LOVE IN YOUR HEART

Sometimes things go so wrong that their memory leaves a warm glow in our hearts.

It was 2015 and for a laugh I thought I would apply to the TV program *Britain's Got Talent* and one of my videos got me through the first round. I was well aware that mine was not the kind of talent they were searching for and that I had no chance of getting through the next round but I thought it would be a fun and an interesting experience. Rather than rush back the same day I treated myself to a night in a hotel.

Driving from my mother's house near Worthing I hadn't even reached the outskirts of London before I needed to pee. By the time I had got to Streatham High Street I was so desperate, I emptied my water bottle and was preparing to pee into it. The problem was, the traffic was horrendous, and the pavements jammed solid with people so I was afraid if I took out my Hampton for a pee I might get arrested for flashing. I had to do something as I was in real physical pain. I passed a pub and turned up the next side road and parked on a single yellow line. I literally ran to the pub and back which took no longer than five minutes. On my return there was a traffic warden on a moped writing out a ticket. I was not causing an obstruction and had only been a few minutes but there was no reasoning with the warden as he slapped me with a £120 parking fine.

I was staying at a hotel connected to the audition venue and suspected there might be a problem with the GPS when it informed me with great authority that I had arrived at my destination when I was in the middle of an underpass. It was a nightmare finding the venue without GPS so instead of relaxing before the audition, I had to get changed quickly and rush there.

As expected, there was a lot of waiting around and I got to meet some very interesting people. I knew I was hopelessly outclassed when I saw my

competition included two chickens that played keyboards and a dancing pool player. There was also a man whose talent was to make the most disgusting burping noises, but I felt the need to distance myself from his rehearsal area. Unsurprisingly, he went all the way through the audition process and even got onto the TV show.

Finally, I was shown into a small room where an attractive young woman asked me to sing while they filmed me. I was supposed to sing two songs but ended up singing four. This is the song that seemed to grab her attention as I suppose the sentiment behind it would play well with their audience.

I was given the usual “don’t call us, we’ll call you” speech and spent the rest of the day wandering around looking at the other acts waiting to be auditioned. The atmosphere alone made the trip well worthwhile.

On the way home the next day I thought I would visit one of my favourite childhood haunts *The Imperial War Museum*. I was surprised to find so many empty parking meters outside and at £5 it seemed a reasonable parking charge even if the last time I was there it only cost 50p. Then I discovered it was £5 for half an hour so it ended up costing me £30.

A few days later I received a fine through the post for driving through London without paying the congestion charge. I had assumed the charge was only for central London and didn’t know it included Tower Bridge. If I had seen any notices around, of course I would have gone online and paid, but there was nothing. That fine was £60, and the hire car company also charged £60 administration so the grand total for the audition was close to £400.

That was six years ago, and they still haven’t got around to calling me.

LITTLE TIN BOX

Tin boxes used to be great for organising your finances back in the days when we could actually touch money. I only ever remember budgeting once in my life. I had different boxes for different outgoings so when the time came to pay a bill, all I had to do was go to the relevant box. It would have been the perfect plan if I didn’t have to put money into the box before I could take it out.

LIVING IN THE STREET

Inspired by the book “Down and out in London and Paris” by George Orwell.

BUT FOR NOW

I wrote this song after the birth of my first granddaughter.

THESE WALLS

I love Croatia, its people, food, weather and just about everything else except the language, which is a nightmare to learn. I also love the music, and in particular *Klapa* which is an acapella choir singing traditional songs, sung with great emotion and always perfectly in tune. The tourists love it, but they will listen to an entire Klapa concert and not understand a single word. I thought it would be nice to have a song in English which welcomed tourists and said how proud Croatians are of their city of Dubrovnik. With that purpose in mind, I wrote this song in the hope that one of the many local klapa choir would sing it.

FIRE IN THE DESERT

It was just after the Gulf War in 1991 that I worked in the Hilton in Dubai which most of the time was full of American servicemen and women. They were a fantastic audience, and I wrote this song with them in mind.

FOREST OF FIRE

When I started songwriting seriously in 1989 this song was on my first album cassette and I gave Federika a copy on the night we first met. Weeks later she still hadn't said anything about the cassette, so I naturally assumed she didn't like my music which I had no problem with. I had some fantastic reviews from some folk magazines and some lute warm from others. It's what you sign up for if you share your creations with others. A few weeks later I was amazed to find out that Federika had sat up half the night listened to my music and even more surprised to find that this was the song she liked most of all. When I asked her why she never said anything about the cassette she said, "I didn't want to appear too keen."

WE COULD HAVE BEEN FRIENDS

Julie and her husband from New York were staying in one of our apartments and told us this story over lunch one day.

Their neighbours had a dog that was barking all hours of the day and night. Julie had mentioned it discreetly a few times but understood that not

much could be done about it. They certainly weren't friends, but they had a cordial enough relationship. One day her neighbour was out at work and their dog got out and was running up and down the very busy street. The neighbour wouldn't be back for hours so there was no doubt that the dog would either be run over or cause a serious accident. Julie felt she had no choice but to call the authorities who arrived straight away and took the dog.

When her neighbour returned, Julie explained to her what had happened and her neighbour went mad, shouting abuse and saying she had always hated the dog and wanted it to be taken away from them which couldn't have been further from the truth. In the short time that Julie stayed with us I could see she adored animals. The dog was retrieved from the pound with nothing more than a warning but for years later, the neighbour never spoke to Julie which made living there very stressful.

By coincidence, a few weeks later I was watching the great film *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* and was struck by the line "We could have been friends." It made me think of Julie and wonder how many relationships are destroyed by nothing more than a misunderstanding.

THE FLOWER

In 1975 I started playing classical guitar seriously and became very interested in writing for it. In 1979 I wrote a graded series of pieces for students from beginners to advanced. EMI published it and were very enthusiastic about the project. All was going well until it was reviewed by Classical Guitar Magazine. Like any writer, I have had my share of good and bad reviews, and it is something you just have to live with, but it is when an attack is personal that it is hard to accept. The reviewer wrote the entire series off saying "he had first-year students that could have written better pieces." It was an absurd claim. A year later a well-known classical guitarist raved about the series in a smaller magazine and said he would be recommending them to his students but by then I had lost heart. You can download the free sheet music and watch the videos at www.nemojames.com/classicalguitar

SOMEBODY STOLE MY HOLE

Anyone doubting that inspiration is passed down to us by some supernatural force might like to explain to me why this crazy title came to me as I was on my way to the terasa for my afternoon swim. I hadn't been thinking about holes, been anywhere near one, or even eaten polo mint.

SIMPLE RULES OF LIFE

It was fun writing this song which started with the line “don’t stand up.” I had to come up with my own sixteen commandments.

From the album *Field of Dreams*



LYRICS FOR THE FOLLOWING SONGS HAVE NOT BEEN INCLUDED IN THIS BOOK.



I WONDER

For me, one of the greatest joys in life is sitting in an open-air café and watching the world go by. In my defence of my idleness, a lot of my songs were written and conceived in cafes and the one time in my life I did do any serious studying, it was done in a café in George Street, Hove.

From the Album *The Minstrel*

MAGIC IN THE AIR

Nothing profound about this song but it does remind me of how often we have an effect on other people’s lives and without ever knowing it.

I worked a summer season on the *Pride of Bilbao*, a ship going from Portsmouth to Bilbao in Spain. I was singing this song one night when Barrie and Pat, a middle-aged couple walked past. They stopped to listen and during my break called me over for a chat and we became friends. We lost contact for many years but eventually met again when Barrie wrote to tell me he had lost his wife and would like to book one of our apartments for a few weeks to help him get over it. It wasn’t until then that I discovered that *Magic in the Air* had become *their song* and Barrie still listened to it, as it brought back fond memories of their lives together.

It is possible that a simple act of kindness you perform today might be forgotten instantly by the recipient or it might be remembered for the rest of their lives and precipitate other acts of kindness. We should never underestimate our place in this world and the positive effect we can have on others.

From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

PLEASE CALL ME

For five years after meeting Federika I had to work overseas to earn a decent wage so it meant us being apart for months on end. As a solo performer, I spent most of my time alone which I never minded but I did miss Federika a lot. Phone calls became a lifeline which is ironical because in every other situation I despise talking on the telephone.

From the Album *A Chair by The Window*

OVER AND OVER

To quote the renowned smarty-pants, Einstein, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results."

We all know people who go from one disastrous relationship to another as if it was their mission in life is to find a partner with the exact same character flaws as their last one.

Or maybe it was George Bush that summed it up best, "Fool me once, shame on... shame on you. Fool me.....you can't get fooled again."

From the Album *The Workhouse Child*

BIG REEL

This song took me back to the beginning of my fishing career. I was eight years old and we were on a family holiday in Devon when my father saw me fishing with a metal coat hanger for a hook and a whole crust of bread as bait. He knew nothing about fishing but suspecting that my fishing equipment might be holding me back he bought me a little hand line and showed me how to use limpets as bait. I sat happily on the rocks for hours without catching anything until I pulled up my line to find a load of seaweed tangled around the hook. As I cleared away the seaweed I screamed with terror when a fish suddenly appeared. My father came to rescue me and explained that it was the fish that was in trouble and not me.

No child has ever been as proud of anything as I was of that fish, even if it was no bigger than my eight-year-old hand. Walking back to our tent I refused to carry anything but my fish and swaggered through the campsite like I had a freshly hunted stag on my shoulder.

From the Album *Weave*

BABY WON'T YOU COME BACK

I take a lot of trouble with lyrics for my song which is why I have always refused to use the word *baby* in any of them. I remember being at a folk concert when a female duo was singing quite a pleasant original folk song when suddenly they broke into the chorus “I love you baby” which was like flicking a switch in me and I couldn’t take them seriously after that.

What is it about this word *baby* that can be found in nearly every song ever written? Take the often-used line “I want you to be my baby.” What does that even mean? “I want you to shit your pants and wake me up at 3 am crying every morning?”

Unfortunately, the first line for this song had to be “Baby won’t you come back” and try as I could, I just couldn’t find an alternative. So please excuse this lapse in lyrical quality control, although I have to say, it was good fun to record and features the excellent John Sanders on piano.

From the Album *Special Days*

Other Books by Nemo James

Just a Few Seconds

The autobiography of a musician whose career takes him from the roughest London pubs, to private parties for the mega-rich and famous. From near starvation, to a jet-set life in Gstaad. From the brink of fame, to the Birdy Song. From market stall trader, to squash club owner. From guitar teacher, to karate teacher. An amusing and heartrending story of perseverance showing how the road to success can lead us down the strangest of paths.

A Single Tear

Tim and Bill are two men connected by silence. For five years, they sit on a remote riverbank without speaking, until one day, a single tear breaks that silence. It is a tear that, for a short time, changes the world.

A master marionette maker and his daughter overcome depression, to join forces with a songwriter, a homeless waitress and a bodyguard, to present one of the greatest shows on earth.

For More Details Visit

www.nemojames.com