



A Day Gone By

The second song I wrote (1978) while still a very young man having his first long distance love affair.

This song was remarkable only in that it came to me one day while driving to work. Complete with lyrics and music- I only had to write it down.

We tried for a "dobro" sound on the electric guitar solo, which is what I really hear for this song.

Vic Hansen- electric guitar, electric piano
David Gross- backup vocals

Verse 1

Well there's this girl I hardly know, and I love her even though,
She's far away, an' it sometimes feels, she's there to stay.
Now I know she ain't no fool, and she's not just being cruel,
She's got some things, she's got to find, the answer to.

Chorus

Yes, the stars that shine at night, are a cold and lonely sight,
And she could change it all, if she were here.
She'd say: "John, well we were wrong, you know it hurt, to wait so long,
But now we know, the pain was just, a day gone by".

Verse 2

Now I know, that anyday, she'll be here, and here she'll stay.
Well that's the way, I know she feels, it oughta be.
But right now, my heart is full, of the emptyness 'round me,
An' I don't think that, that she'll get here, a day too soon.

Chorus

Yes, the stars that shine at night, are a cold and lonely sight,
And she could change it all, if she were here.
She'd say: "John, well we were wrong, you know it hurt, to wait so long,
But now we know, the pain was just, a day gone by".

Chilly Cold Wind (It Rains Here)

My first Oregon "rain" song. Evidently it's a sort of a musical tradition around here.

I was going to call this "It Rains Here", but David Gross, who did such a great job on this song, started calling it "Chilly, Cold Wind", and he's right- it is a better title.

This song might be my favorite composition for several reasons. First it's the only truly three chord song I've written (they are harder to write than I thought), second, it manages to use more word imagery than I am usually capable of (I really like the twist in the lyrics at the end of the chorus) and, finally, it's not in straight 4/4 time. Each line in the verse and chorus are the same rhythm, but there are always just 11 beats per line, if you count it out.

Played with key of G chords, capo on the seventh fret.

David Gross- backup vocals, acoustic guitar lead

Becky Dorsey- fiddle

Jerry Gleason- snare drum

Verse 1

Chilly cold wind, blowing in my window,
Chilly cold wind, blowing in my door.
Did I hurt you? If I did I'm sorry,
Please forgive me, like you did before.

Rain coming down, just listen to the weather,
Rain coming down, there's a whole lot more.
Chilly cold wind, blowing in my window,
Chilly cold wind, blowing in my door.

Verse 2

Leaves falling down, gathered in my driveway,
Leaves falling down, gathered up so high.
Let me hold you, and say I'm sorry,
Let me hold you, will you let me try?

Sky's getting dark, just listen to the wind blow
Sky's getting dark, cause the day's gone by.
Leaves falling down, gathered in my driveway,
Leaves falling down, gathered up so high.

Chorus

It Rains Here, some of the time, some of the time, but not all year.
She cries here, once in a while, once in a while, even when it's clear.
Dry up, pretty little darling, dry up, all of your tears...
It Rains Here, some of the time, once in a while, even when it's clear.

Since I Been Gone

My first song I wrote in Eugene, after we'd been here about six months while living in a rental and trying to decide if we really wanted to stay. Not too suprisingly, it's closely related to the "going away" songs of which I had already written a few examples before leaving Berkeley.

The closest thing to a "rock n' roll" tune on the CD, but I thought it just begged for a pedal steel sound.

Jerry Gleason- E9 pedal steel

Verse 1

I've been wonderin', ever since we left the Bay,
Did we run away? Are we gonna stay?
Cause here I sit, askin' what the hell am I,
A doin' here? Almost half a year,
Since I, since I been gone. Am I, am I gonna stay long?

I've been thinkin', all about the friends we had,
That we left behind, Often on my mind.
Cause life unfolds, just not in the way that I,
That I thought it would, Thought I understood!
But now, now I realize. That I, gotta improvise

Bridge

Looking out over this town,
A clean gentle rain comin' down, and I wonder,
This time next year, will my home be here?

Verse 2

So here I am, wakin' to a cold bright day,
But the sun is warm, yes we're through the storm.
Got to get up, soon I will be on my way,
An workin' here. Almost half a year,
Since I, since I been gone. Am I, am I gonna stay long?

(I Know That) She Loves Me

The only song I've ever written that's not about cryin', dyin' or going away! Written, fittingly enough, for my beautiful wife, Barbara.

I did spend some time working on the lyrics, but this is one of those tunes where both the verse and chorus melody just suddenly came to me one morning upon waking.

I like the fact that every verse starts on the four chord and every chorus starts on the fifth chord. The high capo on the fifth fret creates a sort of dulcimer sound, I like to think.

Cathy Page- violin

Verse 1

How do I explain, all the love I see?
And thank her for, the things she's done for me.
I hope I have the chance, to tell her what I know,
That I know something, something that's hard to show...

Verse 2

How could a woman like her, give her love so free,
Why does she waste her time with me?
I don't know, I'm just glad she cares,
But I know something, something I want to share...

Chorus

That's right, I know that, she loves me, she loves me more each day.
I know she wants me every night, that's just her crazy way.
That's why, I know that, she loves me, she loves me with all her heart.
She knows I feel the same 'bout her, and that's the sweetest part.

Verse 3

It's hard for me to say, just what makes her stay,
But it's nice to see her here, as I turn gray.
As the years go by, I'll sit and wonder why,
How it is, she never said good-bye?

Verse 4

The hardest work I know, is to build a love that grows,

One that will bring you to your knees.
The future is unknown, but we have nothing to fear,
'Cause I know something, something that's mighty clear...

This Is All That There Is

My only existential angst song (I promise). It came about when my daughter Jennifer and I started working on our family tree and it soon became apparent to both of us that most of the time the only information we could obtain about an individual consisted almost solely of a name, a date born, date died and in some cases, a marriage date.

If we were especially lucky, we might find a faded picture, invariably with a stern and unsmiling face gazing out upon us. It seemed so sad to both of us that this person's life could be reduced to just their name and a couple of dates.

Now, maybe they didn't do anything particularly interesting or exciting but I'll bet they all had at least one small thing that distinguished them in some way- but the truth is, we'll probably never know.

Alison Rust- treble recorder
David Helfand- mandocello
Jonathan Seidel- darbuk (drum)

Verse 1

Today my daughter brought to me, an old family photograph.
The faces look so melancholy, did they, once laugh?
I hold a picture in my hand, an ancestor of mine.
What they did and how they lived, has been lost, to time.

Verse 2

Have you thought of what we're here for? Have you had the time?
Pay the bills and run those errands, don't fall, behind.
Still I wonder what I'm here for, how to make my mark.
Once the thoughts of those who knew me, are all cold and dark.

Bridge

I see the stars at night, wheeling overhead, they have no voice to ask:
Is, this all? Is, this all, that there is?
My friends are gathered round, as we sing and play, our music fills the air,
This, is all. This is all, that there is.

Verse 3

Life can be short, life can be long, am I just wasting time?
One life to learn, one chance to give, meaning to mine.
'Cause I won't live forever, it's true, soon I'll be dead and gone.
But that's ok, 'cause once I leave here, there'll still be, another dawn.

Bridge

I feel the sunlight shining on my face, it never wonders:
Is, this all? Is, this all, that there is?
I watch my children laugh, as they run and play, their voices call to me,
This, is all. This is all, that there is.

Lovin' You's The Only Thing For Me

The very first song I ever wrote. Your basic, simple love song. It's only point of interest is that it's in the key of A (actually key of G and played at capo II) but it contains an unusual change to a C natural major chord in the refrain.

Works in a strange sort of way by using harmonies containing a lot of fifth and minor seventh intervals.

A sort of blues I guess.

Verse 1

Each day just looks the same, ev'ry night I call your name,
And still, I'm alone with my fears.
Though I often doubt my will, I know I love you still,
And it helps me to know you feel the same.

Chorus

So you just take your time, babe, decide what's on your mind.
'Cause, lovin' you's the only thing for me. Yes, lovin' you's the only thing for me.

Verse 2

Now you're 'causin' me some pain, but sometimes it's got to rain,
And I guess it's just 'bout time I got rained on.
So I sit here patiently, waitin' for my clouds to flee,
And when they do, I know I'll be with you.

Chorus

But you just take your time, babe, decide what's on your mind.
'Cause, lovin' you's the only thing for me. Yes, lovin' you's the only thing for me.

Bridge

So (And) I cry, cry, cry, though I couldn't tell you why, I need you.
And (Yes) another day is gone, guess I'll try to carry on, without you.

Verse 3

Let's hope we'll work things out, try to overcome our doubts,
And help each other with the things we need.

But for now just take your time, and decide what's on your mind,
'Cause I love you, and I know you love me.

Chorus

Now, I been wrong and will again, but on one thing you can depend:
Lovin' you's the only thing for me. Yes, lovin' you's the only thing for me.

Play One More For The Road

My "swan song" for the Point Isabel String Players, the best bunch of folks I ever met or played with.

You know how it is- it's getting late, but everyone's having so much fun that no one wants to leave. So we all promise, we'll play one more song and then hit the road. But after that it's "Ok, just one more" and then another and another.

So who's counting anyway?

The lyrics for the last line of the chorus were provided by my daughter Kimberly, when I was having trouble with the rhyme.

Vic Hansen- electric guitar

David Gross, Jennifer and Kimberly Donovan- backup vocals

Chorus

Play one, one more for the road,
Once more, let your voices soar,
Sing out, sing in harmony,
Join in, let the song begin!

Verse 1

Sometimes we have to go, to another place,
Say good-bye to friends, start all over again.
I can't see how it ends, what the future holds,
But whatever comes, I won't forget the fun!

Bridge

It's time I said good-bye, you know it's gettin' late.
Doesn't seem so long, still I gotta' go. Hey! It's been great.

Verse 2

Someday I'll think about, this time that we have here,
Voices fill the air, with music we all share.
I'd like to find a way, to tell you how I feel,
But let me just thank all, it's really been a ball!

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many musicians that I have played with over the years. Especially the Point Isabel String Players which include Walter Alvarez, Charlie Bond, Sally Senior, Dick White, Charles Kratz, Nancy Crowe and Josh Gallup and also Catherine Matovich and my new friends here in Eugene, particularly David Gross, Jerry Gleason, Jim Dotson, Cathy Page, Alison Rust, Jim Forbes, David Helfand, Vic Hansen and Becky Dorsey.

My special thanks and love to my wife Barbara and daughters Jennifer and Kimberly for their support, encouragement and patience.

Without the help and encouragement of my wonderful family and friends, this CD would not have been possible. I thank you all.

All words, music, vocals and instruments by John Donovan except where noted. Photos of Jerry Gleason and David Helfand used by permission.



The background photo for the cover art is the first Hubble Telescope "deep field" image. It was acquired by pointing the wide field camera at a point in the sky where there were few or no stars visible (actually a dime at arms length sized area within the constellation Ursa Major or "The Big Dipper").

The exposure was taken over a period of 10 days, almost continuously, for a total exposure time of about 180 hours. When the image was processed, astronomers were amazed to see that there was only one star in view (the diffraction spiked one visible just behind my left shoulder).

The remaining objects are hundreds and possibly thousands of remote galaxies. This picture is one of the deepest views of our universe to date which, for me, reveals the awesome beauty of infinite space, time, matter and energy.

This is all that there is. Isn't that enough?