

ALL NEW

is a collection of 28 songs written by two old friends (Tom and Cathy) in weekly songwriting sessions on Zoom as the isolation of the COVID pandemic took over. They happen to be talented old friends.

From female outlaws of the old west to country love songs, adventures with Celtic and bluegrass music, and songs for community singing, ALL NEW shows the practiced art of songwriting at its best.



Tom Paxton
& Cathy Fink
Marcy Marxer

ALL NEW: TOM PAXTON, CATHY FINK & MARCY MARXER

TP or *CF* denotes who wrote the notes. No note means no one, just kidding.

We have been dear friends since the early 1980's. Tom laughs when he says that Marcy and I turned him into a wedding singer as he graciously sang his song "You Are Love" at our wedding in 2012. But just as Pete Seeger was both mentor and friend to Tom, Tom has been the very same to us. We've collaborated on many projects, from Tom's GRAMMY winning and GRAMMY nominated albums, to co-writing songs that have appeared on Cathy & Marcy albums, singing at benefit concerts together, and simply being there for each other. The physical isolation of the pandemic opened a regular Wednesday morning songwriting session for Tom and me. We showed up nearly every Wednesday, mostly on Zoom, for over two years. Even as we are putting this recording out, we are writing new songs weekly. It makes us feel alive, gives us voice, and depending on the song, hopefully gives voice to others.

One of our focuses was to write a lot of "Community Songs" with strong choruses that others can sing together (*Freedom of Forgiving, Now, Not Then, Grateful, Friends Like These, To The Ones Who Gave It All, We're Still Here*). For a few weeks, we were obsessed with female outlaws and heroines (*Pearl of Arizona, Stagecoach Mary, Eleanor Dumont*). We love telling stories (*Dry Times, Rust on the Rails, Dreams of Home*), and we both love a good country tear-jerker, even if it ain't our own story (*Perfect Strangers*). What about those illegal happy country love songs (*With You, Since You, I'm Still in Love With You*)? Some songs fit no category other than our whim

of the day (*Grandpa Danced The Charleston, Something's In The Air, Good News*).

Writing every song is its own adventure. Bringing the song to life is another adventure.

We rehearsed twice a week in January 2022 with Kimber Lukider (fiddle, mandolin, harmonies) and Alex Lacquement (bass, harmonica). Marcy's versatility graces this project with guitar, washboard, cittern, mandolin, resonator guitar, cello banjo and harmonies. She was also a constant sounding board for our weekly writing. As the song says, we are grateful. So, here's to friends who have become family, and here's to a batch of songs that are "All New." *CF*

All Songs by Tom Paxton & Cathy Fink, Bristow Songs, SESAC/2 Spoons Music, ASCAP ©2022

MUSIC MADE BY

Cathy Fink: vocals, banjo, guitar

Tom Paxton: vocals, guitar, kazoo

Marcy Marxer: vocals, acoustic and resonator guitars, mandolin, washboard, cittern, cello banjo, banjo-uke

Kimber Ludiker: vocals, fiddle, mandolin (*Friends Like These, Stagecoach Mary*)

Alex Lacquement: bass, harmonica (*Stagecoach Mary*)

Produced by Cathy Fink, Marcy Marxer, Charlie Pilzer

Recorded January 2022 at Tonal Park, Takoma Park, Maryland

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Mastered by Randy LeRoy at Tonal Park

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Songs and the Stories Behind Them

Many were recorded live in a small studio concert, others were recorded in the same room with the same vibe.

All New

The day we wrote this song full of word play and tossing vocals back and forth, I immediately knew it was the title song of our project. *CF*

Old dog, new trick
Old guitar, new pick
Old nest, new birds
Old form, new words
Can anything be all new?

Old feet, new shoes
Old trouble, new blues
Old river, new stream
Old wish, new dream
Can anything be all new?

Chorus:

My love for you is all new
I've never loved like this before
Each day I fall in love again
Each day I love you more

Old acquaintance, new friends
Old fashions, new trends
Old rigging, new rope
Old memories, new hope
Can anything be all new?

Bridge:

There's no fool like an old fool
And I need to make a new start
Like polishing an old jewel
There's new love for an old heart

Old bike, new gear
Old calendar, new year
Old sorrow, new love
Old hands, new gloves

Old dog, new trick
Old guitar, new pick
Old nest, new birds
Old form, new words
Can anything be all new?
Can anything be all new?



Pete's Shoulders (The Power of Song)

Certainly no folk singer of my generation would deny owing a huge debt to Pete Seeger. He'd been out there singing those songs for decades before we picked up our first guitar or banjo. He literally wrote the book on how to play the five-string banjo (Dave Guard from The Kingston Trio freely admitted that that was how he learned to play it). His history of playing for the union-organizing movement and the peace marches of the '40s and '50s gave him enormous street cred with us and Lord! He knew more songs than anyone. He was a Lincolnian figure to me and an avatar who never let us down. Pete once sent me a copy of one of his songbooks, nicely inscribed, and when I sent him one of my own I wrote on the title page, "To Pete, on whose aching shoulders I have stood for 50 years..." *TP*

As a folksinger, songwriter, traditional music lover, banjo player, kids musician and activist, I can't think of anyone else whose shoulders I have stood on in all of these things. Pete sent notes and cards of constant encouragement to me and to Marcy. Pete attempted to purchase one of my banjo albums by mail. Of course, I sent the album and told him his money was no good in our house. Pete gave us a path to using the power of music to help one person at a time, with the belief that one song and one person at a time can change the world.

We're still trying. *CF*

Chorus:

We've been standing on your shoulders Pete for oh, so many years

I'll tell you it's amazing Pete, the view you get from here

You can see humanity in countries near and far

You can see the world, Pete, no matter where you are

One voice with a banjo on the corner of a street
Sings a song of hope and change with a melody so sweet
When we hear a thousand voices start to sing along
Then we get a chance to feel the power of a song

(Chorus)

Someone says the Hudson's not as clean it could be
All along the river people say that they agree
The struggle is a long one and it's filled with storms and gales
But the victory is the greater as Clearwater hoists its sails

(Chorus)

Like Aunt Molly Jackson, like Woody and Joe Hill
Your songs have fueled our truth to power, and they always will
There's a banjo ringing somewhere and a yodel in the air
And they tell us we've got work to do with the power we all share

(Chorus)

Trump Lost, Biden Won

And that, my friends, is the truth. *TP*

One fine truth beneath the sun
Trump lost and Biden won.

When The Big, Bad Books Go 'Boo!'

Don't like the book? Don't read it. Don't like the TV show? Change the channel. Banning books means denying someone else a chance to read the books he/she wants to read and that is what they do in autocratic countries – the communists and fascists of the world. Banning books is just a step away from burning them, which they did in Germany in the '30s, and we know where that went, don't we? *TP*

I have a book, a dangerous book,
That no one ought to read.
It's full of sex and murder and death
Omnipotence and greed.
Some people want to ban my book
And rip it from the shelves,
Though they've been known to read this book
Out loud among themselves.

Chorus:

When the big, bad books go 'Boo!'
God knows what they might do,
You'll know your kids
Have hit the skids
When they quote Huck Finn to you.
When Toni Morrison writes,
Good people lie awake for nights,
Oh, the worst will happen to you,
When the big, bad books go 'Boo!'

They've read it to their children,
They've read it to their kin.
They've never thought that reading it
Could ever be thought a sin.
Of course, the Bible tells us
We should love our neighbors well,
While in real life we often tell them
They should go to Hell.

(Chorus)

The more fine books you ban,
The more your kids will scan.
The messengers you shoot,
Will be forbidden fruit.
And the children will find out,
What the books you ban are about,
And wonder, Why the rage,
Over words upon a page?

Since You

It happens; don't try to tell me it doesn't. You'll meet more than one person in a lifetime who will bring you up short and change your way of thinking - sometimes permanently. Usually, the change is for the better. Usually. *TP*



Chorus:

Since you my dreams are changing
And there's better days ahead
And things that used to frighten me
Now make me smile instead
The darkest clouds have parted
And the sun is shining through
It's amazing how my world has changed since you

I was getting good at being hard to get along with
I was fine with being grumpy and depressed
Then you had to show your face
I smiled each time I saw you
Till your company was what I love the best

(Chorus)

It was rocky roads and gravel, my bare feet upon the ground
A stony frown had stretched across my face
There was no way I'd be changing
Now just look at what I found
A goofy smile shows up to take its place

(Chorus)

Perfect Strangers

The original seed for this song was a line I had, "You're the worst of my bad habits." As the story came to us, a bar singer tells their sad story to the perfect strangers in the audience. It's always amazing when a character appears and tells a sad story and we write it down and sing it. *CF*

I quit cussin' every Sunday
It's not all that hard to do
You know the sun it keeps on rising
And I'm still in love with you

I quit drinking every Monday
I stop smoking every night
You're the worst of my bad habits
And that's a losin' kind of fight

Chorus:

And the weary world keeps turning
We do what we have to do
I'm singing to these perfect strangers
That I'm still in love with you

And if you walked into this room now
And you heard me sing this song
I think you'd know my heart is broken
No matter who's been right or wrong

I play these three chords in my sleep now
They play themselves when I awake

It's just another silly habit
It's just another bad mistake

Chorus:

And the weary world keeps turning
We do what we have to do
I'm singing to these perfect strangers
That I'm still in love with you

Chorus:

And the weary world keeps turning
We do what we have to do
You're the worst of my bad habits
Now, what am I supposed to do

I'm Still In Love With You

I love this song. It should really be done by a full bluegrass band. I've loved bluegrass since I saw a concert in Fall of 1960, by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs and their band. (The opener was Joan Baez.) The combination of super-fast playing and high harmonies was irresistible. I'd love to hear them sing this one. *TP*

It was still cloudy when the morning said howdy
I guessin' they're here to stay.
I'm in a mess with the IRS
They're coming to see me today.
Things are hard in my back yard

But, one fine thing is true
I'm still in love with you.

My GMC is through with me
The axle broke in two
My boss is mad 'bout some trouble I had
With some posh country clubbers he knew.
Everything's wrong with my little song
In the key of How Do You Do?
And I'm still in love with you.

Bridge:

Saying goodbye to the cloudy days
That's what your best music does.
A song you can dance to
Maybe romance to,
It's always perfect, because...

My troubles, I find are all in my mind,
They're nothing to ruin my day.
They run off and hide like a carnival ride,
When I face 'em, they scurry away.
You're here to guide me when you're here beside me.
You' eyes tell me yes, it's all true
And I'm still in love with you.



Dry Times

Nothing funny about drought and we have a few that are measured in years, now.
Part of the climate change, probably, and scarier for that reason. TP

Refrain:

It's been dry

It's been dry times

Year in, year out

Drought follows drought

Not a cloud in the sky and dry, so dry

Lord if you'd be kind

See if you could find

A little rain

The climate's done its worst

The land is choked with thirst

And a lot of pain, a lot of pain

Fortune teller's charm

When I married this old farm

Said I'd succeed

But folks born and raised

And lived here all their days

Are stuck with weeds, dry weeds

(Refrain)

Bridge:

Lord you know we're poor
We do what we must
But it's hard to watch these crops
Turn brown in the dust

So we're packing up real slow
Don't know where we'll go
Or what we'll do
Starting over will be tough
But I think we're strong enough
For something new, so new

(Refrain)

Dreams Of Home

Cathy brought me the first draft of this song and it struck a huge chord with me, and before I knew it I was in the middle of it writing away. It brought back memories of being new to Greenwich Village in 1960, excited to be there, working at The Gaslight and the other Village coffeehouses, meeting new people and making friends with other musicians. And of how, some nights, I'd have periods of depression and doubt, wondering how it was going to play out and missing my life in Oklahoma. A lot of that went right into this song. *TP*

Chorus:

Dreams of home
They're all I've got to get me

Through the night ahead.
City streets
I hear shouts beneath my window
I hear every word some passing stranger said.
Then I turn my thoughts to everyone
Who's ever been a friend
Till I'm quieted and don't feel so alone.
I get through these city nights
With dreams of home.

First thing out of high school,
Just a crazy kind of kid
It was nuts to join the navy,
So, of course, that's what I did.
But it really hit me heavy my first night out at sea.
I was thinking of the home place
And it all came down on me.

Bridge:
I'm always wondering and wandering there
Back where my heart always goes
The days before I left are haunting me now
I've learned what my already knows.

(Chorus)



Something's In The Air

There's fun in whimsy. As these lyrics unfolded between us on Zoom, I heard the Irish-like melody as a further invitation to spring. Especially during the pandemic's days of isolation, spring offered the outdoors, flowers, hikes and life renewed. *CF*

Chorus:

Something's in the air makes the whole world want to sing
It's not the end of winter, it's the promise of the spring

Winter's long and grumpy
And it gets into our bones
Fingers cold and frozen when we try to use our phones
Ice upon the windows and it's drafty by the door
And the unexpected morning thrill when bare feet touch the floor

(Chorus)

Promise me a garden
Promise me a dance
Promise me a picnic like the ones they have in France
Promise me the sun will shine for all the world to see
I'll fiddle you a promise that'll bring you back to me

(Chorus)

Who needs a long and gloomy winter
Who needs another day of snow? (2X)

Slush, sleet, damn it all repeat
Snow, ice, clogging up the street
Hardly see a neighbor and we can't get to the store
Spring's around the corner and I'm telling you for sure

(Chorus)

The Freedom of Forgiving

Something good happens when people sing together, in unison or in harmony. For a few moments, we have one collective purpose. We make a collective sound and with or without religion, we are offering a collective prayer. Early in the pandemic, as we were all finding our ways of coping, a friend of mine said, "I'm learning to give people a pass on dumb stuff right now since we're all in a new place." I thought that was wise. I realized I also had to give myself the occasional pass and work on more forgiveness. Thanks Tom for joining in. *CF*

Chorus:

Give me the freedom of forgiving
And the peace that it will bring
Let the anger that I've clung to fade away
Let me live within the moment
Let the spirit within me sing
With the freedom of forgiving every day

Breathing in we're in one moment
Breathing out we're in next
While the sun will rise and set from day to day
We go scurrying and scrambling
We are worrying and rambling
Till who we are gets lost along the way

(Chorus)

There's a labyrinth to walk here
Taking one step at a time
And with each step letting old resentments go
We can name them, we can frame them
We can let them melt away
Like the final fading patch of winter snow

(Chorus)

Forgiveness is a blessing
Forgiveness is a prayer
Forgiveness, a reminder we are there
With ourselves and with each other
There is love enough to share
With the freedom of forgiving in the air

(Chorus)



Stagecoach Mary

I have a fascination with women of the old west. Stagecoach Mary Fields (1832-1914) is fascinating. She was the first African-American woman to carry mail on a Star Route for the US Post Office Department, and she accomplished that feat at the age of 60. She was a drinking, smoking, gun-toting gal who delivered mail, worked at a convent and won the hearts of folks in Cascade, Montana.

Read more: <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/stagecoach-mary-fields> *CF*

Born into slavery free at last
Went to Montana and she moved fast
She knew what she was doing and she took no lip
With a rifle on her shoulder and pistol on her hip

Driving her stagecoach down the trail
First black woman to deliver the mail
Thieves, wolves, bandits, bad weather
Didn't faze Mary she was gonna deliver

Chorus:
Get out the way for Stagecoach Mary
Don't think twice it's good advice
She is six feet tall and she's tough
And that's always been enough
So get out the way that's best for you
Stagecoach Mary is a-coming through

One thief was bold enough to call for a duel
Anyone could tell him he was being a fool
They counted to ten and turned around
Mary shot him where he couldn't sit down

She had a hot temper, she was quick to blow
But the poor and the hungry knew where to go
The local saloon was filled with men
Stagecoach Mary fit right in

(Chorus)

She drank and smoked and cussed a streak
Never turned the other cheek
But the kids all loved her, animals too
And if you treated her square, she'd be a friend to you

Mary was held in such high esteem
Became the mascot of the baseball team
The people of Cascade loved her so
They buried her in style when it was time to go

(Chorus)

The Pearl of Arizona

There are many accounts of Pearl Hart (1871-1955), and for you fashion-minded folks, John Fluevog designed a pair of high-heeled shoes to honor this Canadian-born outlaw, Wild West performer, mother, and subject of much pulp western fiction. For us, she was a character with character, and Tom came up with "The Pearl of Arizona" as a title. Marcy plays cello banjo, and we intersperse the fiddle tune "Durang's Hornpipe" in the arrangement. *CF*

Refrain:

She was the pearl of Arizona
With a heart as big as all the Wild West
The secret to success she said was
Always stick to what you do the best

An outlaw needs a gun
So of course our Pearl said "Whoopie I'll get two
If one will stop a stage,
Just imagine what another gun could do"

To do her outlaw thing
She had to cut her hair and dress up like some toff
The second girl to rob a stage
And the first one not to get her head blown off

So rob a stage was just the thing
That Pearl and sweetheart Joe Boot did

They left the victims meal money
And headed for the desert where they hid

(Refrain)

The posse found them easy
The next morning they went up before the judge
He asked her to please guilty
But our Pearl, she just would not budge

"I refuse to come before a court
Of law that I'm accused of breaking
A law that's passed by men alone
And one that women had no part in making"

They threw her in a jail
With forty men and not one gal
Then they let her out as somehow
She managed to be carrying a child

Now our Pearl goes down in history
For her words and deeds of 1899
She robbed a stage and gave'm back
A couple bucks and everybody's fine.

(Refrain)



Eleanor Dumont

Completing our trilogy about wild and lawless women of the west is Eleanor Dumont (1829-1879), card dealer, gambler, prostitute and madam. It was a distraction from COVID for sure, and we wanted another bluegrass song. *CF*

Eleanor was a beauty with great sex appeal.
She spoke with an accent that wasn't quite real.
She showed you no mercy when she dealt the cards.
She sent you home broke with her fondest regards.

Chorus:

A tip of the hat,
A glass of champagne,
She welcomed them all
As their pockets she drained.
With talent and charm,
And a great sleight of hand,
And the only thing missing
Was her very own man.

Then came the moment when her heart took flight.
She fell head over heels for a man named McKnight.
When trouble came, it came like some great avalanche.
He swindled her out of her money and her ranch.

(Chorus)

Then, shattered and broke, she would not face defeat.
She would not let Jack win oh, so tidy and so neat.
She waited till dark, in the heat of the night,
And then with her six-gun, put everything right.

(Chorus)

From town to town she wandered as lost.
The price of love had too high a cost.
She lived on her own terms and then died the same.
She cashed in her chips with red wine and champagne.

(Chorus)

Now, Not Then

Still in our “Community Song Book” mode, we thought a round would be really fun.
This is quirky, and as we hoped, fun. Hope you’ll learn it and sing it with friends. *CF*

Now, not then
And certainly not way back when

Yesterday’s paper wraps the fish
Tomorrow is an idle wish

Breathe in, Breathe out,
Chase fear, chase doubt
We’re here, right now, ah...

Good News

On April 8, 2021, we were discussing the barrage of bad news everywhere. That's the majority of what gets reported. We simply wanted to remind and rejoice that good news happens every day. Tom said, "I have an idea. Good news." Off and running. Made it a swing song with three-part harmony. We hope to inspire you to look for good news, small and large, right under your nose! *CF*

Wondering about this grin I'm wearing?
Lookin' like I'm over the moon
Got good news and it's worth sharing
That's why I wrote this tune

Chorus:

There's good news lemme tell ya brother
There's good news today
You tell me one and I'll tell you another
Good news is on the way

My team won the pennant
No one gave these boys a chance
But there they were on television
In a club house victory dance
Meanwhile in my neighborhood
Grandbaby came to play
She took steps one, two, three, four
Giggling all the way

(Chorus)

The heroes came down Broadway
The cheers were loud and gay
Confetti filled the city sky
The bands began to play
Meanwhile in my neighborhood
We gave a mighty shout
When Jim came home from the hospital
And everyone turned out

(Chorus)

Bridge:

There's good news between the lines
Good people wanna make the things fine
Good things happen all the time
There's good news on the way

(Chorus)

With You

Something about a love song duet is so satisfying. Nothing confusing about it; they're as old as music and tons of fun to sing. *TP*

Chorus:

When I'm sad I long to be with you
Never could be wrong to be with you

I stand taller by your side
Trusting you to be my guide
I will be so satisfied with you

This is not some crazy dream
Some childish wish, some pale moonbeam
This is something else and it's all new
Feelings never felt before
Fill my heart with something more
Till it overflows with thoughts of you

Drinking from the same wine glass
Toast our future, leave the past
Every color has a richer hue
Fortune came my way and now
We're together and somehow
Every day's a better day with you

(Chorus)

No one promised, no one swore
That I would reach that golden shore
No one said my dreams would all come true
Life is hard for folks like us
We do without, we miss the bus
We never ever find a love like you



I will take the bumps and blows
Face the rains and driving snows
It won't matter if you're here with me
I was lonely for so long
Every chance for me was wrong
Till the laughing gods gave you to me.

(Chorus)

Me Too

In the 1980's, women bluegrass musicians would ask me for song suggestions that came from a woman's point of view. While a few Nashville press folks made fun of my feminist songs, it appears the country-related genres are beginning to make up for lost time. This song tells so many stories that need to be told. The more we sing about it, the more power we give to women who need to speak up. And be both believed and honored. *CF*

I used to be willing to hide the scars
Wear turtleneck sweaters in the back of the car
But thanks to my sisters who spoke out true
I'm able to say, "Me too."

Chorus:

"Me too" means you're done having power over me
"Me too" means the sisterhood is strong and free
"Me too" means we're taking our place in this world
"Me too" "Me too" "Me too"

If I spoke up before it was silence to your ears
I'm just a little person who has suffered through the years
But thanks to my sisters who spoke out true
I'm able to say, "Me too"

(Chorus)

In the office or the coffee room, your hotel or your home
Your powers have dissolved, you'll find that you're alone
We'll walk away and shout your name for everyone to hear
The time has come to wash away our fear

From small town America to Hollywood's big screen
And kids sold as slaves that we have never seen
The door has swung wide open and together we're strong
We carry each other along

(Chorus)

Grateful

On June 5, 2021, we lost one of our dearest friends and a beautiful songbird, Grace Griffith. Grace lived with Parkinson's for over twenty years, diagnosed young and gradually losing her independence and eventually her life. Grace's recordings are exquisite spiritual adventures in Celtic and folk styles. She was a muse and she was amusing. She was also generous and partially responsible for the world hearing the music of her friend, Eva Cassidy. In writing a

song that honored Grace, we wanted to create something that worked universally for anyone that you would like to honor. Please share this song. *CF*

I've been lucky in the love that's come my way
And the friends I've made are the kind of friends who stay
Some are with me now and some have travelled on
Their love is with me yet though they have gone

Chorus:

And I'm grateful
For the love that will not die
I'm grateful
As years go slipping by
I'm grateful
To be able to sing this song
My gratitude to you is ever strong

There are times when my loneliness has won
And others where you were the only one
To lift me up and make me smile again
I can't tell you what it means to have a friend

(Chorus)

And I hope that I have done the same for you
Made you better when you were feeling blue

Acting like a fool to make you smile
You showed me how to go that extra mile

(Chorus)

To The Ones Who Gave It All

As if we could ever adequately thank the ones who laid it all on the line for the rest of us and paid the ultimate price. If they all got the statues they deserve we'd run out of places to place them. Heroes, mostly nameless, but heroes just the same. *TP*

Chorus:

Though their names may not be written
In stained glass or marble wall
We will be forever thankful
To the ones who gave it all
To the ones who gave it all
To the ones who gave it all
We will be forever thankful
To the ones who gave it all

In the angry years we've lived in
Daily life could be like war
Danger always riding shotgun
And death knocking at the door
Brave young people took their chances
Crossing bridges side by side

Walking miles and miles for justice
And some brave young people died

(Chorus)

First responders who gave everything
While others didn't see
What their bravery could cost them
What the final price could be
And if it came to death
So that another soul might live
They would give their final breath
They gave all they had to give

(Chorus)

When something needed doing
They always called on you
Yes would always be the answer
You would always see it through
Though they never took your picture
Or publicized your name
You were there each time it counted
You're a hero all the same

(Chorus)



Rust on the Rails

Just lettin' the song tell this story. *CF*

The wind in the jack pines keeps on blowin'
But it feels like a different wind these days
It sounds like the wind I know from always
But it seems to call for different ways

Chorus:

Rust on the rails where a coal train used to run
Black smoke used to drown the sky
Boarded up windows means this poor old town is done
I can see it's done but Lord, I don't know why

No more whistles blowing through the station
No more tickets take you where you please
No more dark trips a mile underground
Almighty dollar brought us to our knees

The coal companies made a lot of money
The miners and their families paid the price
Now we're starting over and it's hard as hell to do
You can say it once and I will say it twice

(Chorus)

A crazy man will do the same thing over
Thinking this time it'll work out fine
This town bet its soul on the promise of king coal
Now we're stranded at the end of the line

(Chorus)

We're Still Here

As you get older, loss becomes a daily part of life. Where's the comfort? Sometimes, it's in singing with each other, acknowledging the loss and our desire to keep the memories alive, often through our actions and work. *CF*

You're gone
I need time to take that in
I pick up the phone and just like that, you're gone
What now?
I'm still here with a life to live
One that always included you, but now you're gone

So, what's next?
I need to catch another breath
And hold the hands of friends who loved you too
Because we're here
And since we're here we must go on
We'll take you with us in our hearts, but we must go on

Chorus:

We're still here with work to do
With love to give and life to live
And your memory will not be left behind
We're still here with songs to sing
Songs of peace with sweet release
Thoughts of you who were the giving kind

Your love
Your love has left us stronger
Your smile was like a beacon in the night
There is peace
Peace beyond the grief and hardship
There is peace in holding close to your love

(Chorus)

Is This Thing On?

Well, is it? I can't tell. I'm sitting here hitting keys and will they ever translate into something folks can read? I dunno. I'm still not sure. Is this thing on? *TP*

Is this thing on?

Hello

I'm doing something wrong again

I'm trying to talk to my friends

Grandkids gone, I'm on my own
I could pick up the telephone
But their advice was "cut the chord"
And now I'm left with this machine, Oh Lord
Is this thing on?
Hello

Is this thing on?
Hello
Speaking louder doesn't seem to work
I'm feeling like a clumsy jerk

Hold this thing down and press on that
Gets nothing done in nothing flat
Tapping harder goes nowhere
I'd like to tell you I don't care
(But) Is this thing on?
Hello

Ethernet? I haven't got there yet
Wi Fi? It sounds like Sci Fi
Hands free? Not me



Is this thing on?

Hello

I thought party lines were bad

But this thing simply makes me sad

It doesn't seem to suit my age

And now no matter how I rage

It stares at me with darkened screen

And when it beeps I want to scream

Is this thing on?

Hello

Problems like these this with me are annual

I guess I'm gonna have to read the manual

That would be fine

But the manual's online

Hello

Grandpa Danced The Charleston

If I told you that most songwriters are wacko, would it astonish you? I didn't think so.

People ask where song ideas come from, and I reply that I haven't a clue where they come

from – I'm just glad they arrive! I was out for a walk along the Potomac River in Alexandria,

and as I rounded a corner on the waterfront the title of this song popped into my head. Why?

Why not? The more I thought about it the better I liked it and when I brought it to my next

session with Cathy, so did she. *TP*

Tom came to me with the title of this song. I heard the jazz band right off. Marcy plays banjo-uke

and Grandpa takes off. And Tom's vocal is really a nod to his old friend, Dave Van Ronk. *CF*

All the folks at sunset tower
Were in for a surprise
A quiet man sat in the corner
And he never caught their eyes
Always dressed like Dapper Dan
But never played the part
Until he heard the banjos
And the party got its start

Chorus:

Grandpa danced the Charleston
At the age of eighty two
He was kicking up his heels
He was doin' the skiddly-do
The old folks home was rockin'
Like it never rocked before
Grandpa's knees were knockin'
As he spun around the floor
All the grey haired grannies
We're out there doin' it too
When Grandpa did the Charleston
At the age of eighty-two

Life at Sunset Towers
Was a slow-paced kind of thing
The most exciting sound you heard

Was to hear the doorbell ring
Grandpa at the table
Had his head down in his tray
Till someone dropped the needle
On the platter that fine day

(Chorus)

Then out of Grandpa's pocket
Came a flask no one had seen
He took a sip and passed it round
All very clandestine
The old folks kept on dancing
They let out all the stops
The party got so crazy
That somebody called the cops

Now you may be wondering
If Grandpa slept in jail
The officer allowed him
to post moonshine as his bail
Get out of here he hollered
Let me see no more of you
But before you leave the station
Let me learn a step or two

(Chorus)



What Becomes of You And Me

Confession. We tried to conjure the Louvin Brothers sound with this one. *CF*

Refrain:

When we're not the people we used to be
What becomes of you and me

We were up on a mountain top
With all the world in view
Now the window shades are tightly drawn
What in the world can I say to you

(Refrain)

East is east and west is west
And dark night follows the day
I turned left and you turned right
And we seem to have lost our way

(Refrain)

No one cheated and no one lied
No one needs to take a side
No one said they didn't care
But the love's no longer there

(Refrain)

Friends Like These

Our "Community Song Book" called to us when we wrote this song. How often do we actually tell our friends how much they mean to us? Add some harmony, banjo & mandolin and we can really celebrate our friends. *CF*

Feels so good to be here
All these familiar faces
Sounds of music floating through the trees
Picnic on the blanket
Good food in the basket
Feels so good to be with friends like these, friends like these

Chorus:

Friends like these are gonna be there
When you need 'em most of all
When the world has brought you to your knees
You might stumble you might fall
But the greatest truth of all
Is you'll never be alone with friends like these,
Friends like these

Here we are together
Out here in the woods
With the redbuds and the maples all around
Kids are picking berries
And life is looking good

And the children's laughter is my favorite sound,
My favorite sound

(Chorus)

We build a little fire
Just to chase away the chill
And the circle brings a song or two to mind
We sing another chorus
Play a fiddle tune or two
And we raise a glass to friends that are so fine,
Friends so fine

(Chorus)

Guild D25

This song is in honor of my first good guitar, a high school graduation gift from my grandparents in 1971. I still own, love and play this beauty. It deserves its own song. *CF*

She's got curvy sides, mahogany tone
She has a style that's hers alone
She feels like a million bucks to me
Though I may see beauty that others don't see

When we tell secrets, we never lie
When we sing together we sometimes cry
Sometimes we laugh at our crazy mistakes
But we don't care, cause them's the breaks

Chorus:

She's got six strings made of steel
Gotta like the way they feel
They pick and pluck and strum and swing
The two of us have a special thing
She's aging with me, along for the ride
She's my trusty old D25

We saw libraries, prisons, and day cares
Coffeeshops, living rooms, closets, craft fairs
Rodeos, picnics, marches and stages
We were naïve which made us courageous

We traveled on train cars, buses and thumbs
We shoulda known better, but we were just plain dumb
Full of a future of wide open roads
And open hearts to help us carry the load

(Chorus)

Bridge:

She's a first-time lover, a friend forever

Whatever we do, we're in it together

And when I am gone and she has to move on

A younger lover will come along.

From a wall of guitars I took her down

And now through hundreds and hundreds of cities and towns

Thousands of songs and new sets of strings

My D25 is a gem that still rings

Her cracks and wrinkles all add to her flair

She's not perfect, she's had some repair

But older is wiser and wiser is sweet

Sweet as an old friend you're happy to meet

(Chorus)

We're Getting Back To Normal

You call this "normal"? Well, okay, compared to most of the time, I guess so. *TP*

We wrote this in the first round of thinking that COVID would be quickly over and we'd all get back to our regularly programmed lives. If "normal" means a daily "new normal", so be it.

We also needed a song with a yodel. *CF*

Chorus:

We're getting back to normal

Feels like we just landed

There's a crowd of people singing in the square

A heavy weight's been lifted

Our attitudes have shifted

With a bright sun shining everywhere

We see children on the playground

Skipping rope and swinging high

Monkey bars are crowded and the giggles multiply

Parents on the benches with their coffee mugs in hand

We're getting back to normal and it's grand

(Chorus)

We've come through the hard times

We're grateful we're still here

It's time we had a party, to raise a glass of cheer

Let's praise the first responders who gave and gave and gave

And showed us what it meant to be brave

(Chorus)

For more info visit:

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