

Song Lyrics

SIDE ONE

1) All Your Heart (A Song for Men)

While I was in college (1968-1972), I became involved in the Peace and Civil Rights Movements, as well as the burgeoning Women's Movement. New York City was a hotbed of radical activity and unity among the young. As my consciousness was raised concerning the plight of women in American society, so did my understanding of men's complicity in the situation.

Love with all your heart
Trust with all your soul
Live with all your strength
And all of your mind
We've learned our lesson well
The ways to control
All those around us
But we oppress ourselves as well
Keep our feelings inside
To play the actor's games
Only to lose ourselves
And still remain the same

For centuries we've turned our backs
To the peaceful signs
Consumed ourselves in righteousness
And never turned around
Kept our feet on solid ground
But haven't learned to grow
For the deaf will not hear
The loudest of sounds

Yes, we've learned our lessons well
All but how to change
To step to a different beat
Than our fathers and theirs
To learn more gentle senses
To really trust and love
To share our greatness
From a place that is right

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2) If I Had the Time

I think we often fail to recognize our profound commonality, our dependence upon each other, and the inevitable realization that human beings will survive and prosper only if we work together unselfishly and negotiate our differences without violence.

If I had the time
 And if I had the way
 And if I had a song to sing
 I could change the world today

Like the new wood grows on an old oak tree
 Or the first real spring rain
 As the newborn springs from its mother's womb
 We form our link in life's chain
 We sow our seeds, and we reap the grain
 Feel the joy and suffer the pain
 Of our lives

We all drink from the same cup
 My life is in your hands
 And we share our souls on the common ground
 We walk upon each day
 And I'll tell you once again
 Though I know that you know it's true
 I am you

No rivers flow without a source
 No life without a cause
 We are one small part of one small world
 And we play our hand so strong
 Yes, we play our hand so strong
 We play our hand so strong
 We are strong

Now I know we see through the same eyes
 The thin thread by which life does hold
 And I know there's time to turn it around
 But only if you'll agree
 And I hope what I see in you
 Is the same thing you see in me
 See in me

3) Untitled #2

Folk music legend Pete Seeger had some nice things to say about this song. We shared a stage at a small concert in some Upstate New York town (the name of which I forgot) in the early 80s.

I'd rather be a dreamer and a searcher of the soul
 And spend my time on making rhymes than letting myself grow old
 I'd rather see my lifetime as a chance to find out why
 And to find out how my life was meant to be

I'd rather see the children all running fast and free
 Than being like their parents, sittin' and watchin' TV
 And I'd rather leave this world just a little less undone
 With folks to carry out the work that we've begun

I'd rather be a freedom fighter than die on foreign soil
 I'd rather work for peace than live through a nuclear war
 And have to wonder why, what was it all for
 What we'd give to have a world the way it was before

I'd rather see the Earth as the fountainhead of life
 And rise to meet the cause against those who would destroy
 All the beauty and serenity, it is ours to protect
 Yes, I'd rather learn to give not just to take

I'd rather see the women as free as they are strong
 Teachers and life-givers, singers of the peaceful songs
 And I'd rather see the men just a little less like men
 And remember from whose bodies they were born

I'd like to see all the hatred all piled up in one place
 And set on fire by people of every race
 To burn up all the differences we thought we'd had before
 And decide to live in peace forever more

I'd rather carry on the hope to live than refuse to forgive
 The wasters and war-makes, peddlers of the dead
 And to know we share a common home
 And the spirit of one soul
 So we can live our lives in peace as we grow old

I'd rather be a dreamer and a searcher of the soul

4) Hey Children, Listen to Me

This song is by the immensely talented songwriter and actress, Elizabeth McCommon, my then close friend with whom I performed quite often.

Hey children, listen to me
No more apples on the apple tree
Hey children, pass the word
No more looking for the early bird
Hey children, spread it around
An end to war it must be found
Hey children, spread it around
An end to war it must be found

Hey children, raise your voice
Don't act like you ain't got no choice
Hey children, sing it again
"Tell me what they've done to the rain"
Hey children, hear what I say
Or someone's gonna blow you to Judgment Day

Hey children, clear your mind
Or you know Armageddon's not far behind
Hey children, clear your head
I know that you don't want to have to wake up dead
Hey children, clear your soul
And don't you forget what you've been told
I said, hey children clear your soul
And don't you forget what you've been told

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5) A Song for Forgotten Heroes

While on tour, especially in large cities, I would often perform free concerts at Veteran's Administration hospitals on my nights off. I met a Viet Nam War veteran at the Boston VA hospital at one of these concerts and was inspired to write a song about him and the many other disabled Viet Nam vets I'd met in other hospitals. I first recorded this song in concert a few years later. The audience was stunned and silent. This was an appropriate response. It is a tragedy that such a disturbing song as this needed to be written.

I'm your bright young man who went to war
 As our fathers have done before
 To fight for honor and freedom
 And I did what I was told
 And I gave of my body, and I gave of my mind
 But tell me what do I have left, now that they've taken my soul?

I fought your war with my arms
 I fought your war with my legs
 I can't say it was in my soul
 But I left many a dead man cold

Now you'll find me on the welfare line
 My eyes stare down to the ground
 For how many jobs can I apply?
 We have no work they say

And I never hung out on the street before
 Always had something to do
 For these holes in my arms I've paid so
 With my health and wealth and shame

Will you come to see me at the hospital?
 Come anytime, I'm always there
 Don't feel funny if I don't look the same
 I don't think the same no more
 What will I do without my arms
 What will I do without my legs
 And I cannot see how this can fit
 Into God's plan

What happened to the boy who went to war?
 Where's the honor and freedom now?
 And what about the men we left behind?
 It's too late to help them now
 And I cry so much these days
 And I don't always know what for
 But nothing has changed my life so much
 Since I went away to war

6) The Only Truth

This is a song for my father, who contracted Alzheimer's disease just about the time I was finishing college (1972). I was remarkably close to my dad, and this song is one of many I wrote for him.

He was almost fifty years when he found out most his fears
 And he set out to lay them all aground
 And you know he never had the time to turn himself around
 But time and time I'd often hear him say

He said the only truth is finding who you are
 And the only time is time spent searching for a path
 You'll know who your friends are by looking in their eyes
 And you'll find out for sure by and by
 That the only truth is a friend

I knew him all those years
 While he taught me to see and hear
 So I could find out what was my life's work
 You know he never had the time to see it all come true
 The time to see it grow in his own son

But life has funny ways
 And time can slip away
 And we wonder just who we've got inside
 And the peaceful seeds that he had sown
 Had borne such bitter fruit
 And his life passed as quietly as it began

All that I am now and all that he has been
 Is no more than a whisper in the wind
 So, if you're waiting on tomorrow
 So you'll be homeward bound
 Just look around and see what you've got now

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SIDE TWO 7) Blue Ridge Mountain Home

I've written more songs about my son, Jesse, than for anyone else. Jesse and I were living alone in the Blue Ridge Mountains at the time (it was 1981, and he was five), and this song is a snapshot of our life at the time. Even though we were on tour about five months each year at that time, our life at home was easily as stimulating and satisfying.

It's early in the morning, and I can't get out of bed
 Blankets piled high, they cover over my head
 There's ice inside the windows, frost inside my shoes
 It's another winter morning in my Blue Ridge Mountain Home

Twilight's fading quickly, and a morning sun will shine
 And the smell of buckwheat pancakes to a little boy of five
 Lulls him out of sleep, and down the stairs he glides
 We're sitting at the table, so glad to be alive

Little boy be free, someday you will see
 That the world outside our windows was made for you and me

I wonder as I start to do my morning chores
 How the world can look so simple to this little boy of mine
 His dreams are filled with wonder, his days are met with joy
 As he runs along beside me as I haul our water home

Little boy be free, someday you will see
 That the world outside our windows was made for you and me

As I watch him wander in the forest now alone
 I can see that he is thinking about making this world his home
 And being in the moment, a place right out of time
 I know it won't be long now that he'll need my hand to hold

Little boy be free, someday you will see
 That the world outside our windows was made for you and me

Later, we're inside, and our day's work is done
 I'm sittin' by the fire, just singing out my songs
 He's singing there beside me, right there where he belongs
 These days he knows the words, and his voice is getting strong

So, I will keep on working for what I think is right
 Sometimes you know it means putting up a fight
 And someone always asks me "What are you fighting for?"
 And I think about an answer, and it's coming to me more and more

Little boy be free, someday you will see
 That the world outside our windows was made for you and me

8) Carolyn's Morning Song

While moonlighting as a private tutor in Floyd, Virginia while not on tour, I became a speech tutor to a young boy whose mother, Carolyn, had found herself alone at 19, taking care of her two small children.

I see the sun coming up in the morning
 And it lights up my life like it lights up this room
 But I'd best be getting on with my day
 They say nineteen is pretty young to be a mother of two
 But I guess that's the way my life goes
 And their father's look in their eyes was all he left behind
 What I'd give just to see him just once more

I will sing this sweet song in the morning
 And I'll dance around this room all alone
 Because someday I know things will be going my way
 You can't stop dancing when the music won't play
 My life's too short to pine, self-pity is a waste of time
 This one life is all I'll ever have

I've got me some work at the factory
 They give me low pay, but I guess it's okay
 It's better than getting welfare
 This house gets pretty cold when the winter winds blow
 And the woodpile is getting mighty low
 We've been alone two years, and I still shed some tears
 For the dreams that have passed me right on by

And I know how they talk at the factory
 That a woman is unfulfilled without a good man by her side
 And these thoughts keep going through my mind
 But I think I'll take a chance, try to make it on my own
 And I'll find out the answers by and by
 And if all my human pride could be seen on my outside
 You'd know that I can make it on my own

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9) Jesse's Song

Jesse's mother was living in Upstate New York when we found out she had become seriously ill. I needed to find a way to tell Jesse, who was four at the time, of the potentially tragic situation. It took me days to be able to play this song for him without crying.

Oh, Jesse. What are we going to do about Mama?
 She's so sick, and I'm so tired
 I'm really sorry this has all come around
 Don't want to let it get us down
 Oh, Jesse. What are we going to do about Mama?

Oh, it isn't the kind of thing that you plan for in life
 The best laid plans often turn to strife
 Whose to say where we go from here
 I'm on a path, but it's not to clear

Well, I guess it's just the two of us now
 I know we'll make it, but I don't know how
 You know what I'm like, and you know I'm strong
 But I really haven't been a father too long

Oh, Jesse. What are we going to do about Mama?

I know you're gonna need me more these days
 And that's okay, I'll never be far away
 I'm gonna need help just like you
 But taking help is so hard for me to do

Oh, Jesse. What are we going to do about Mama?

And then someday I'll try to tell you why
 Making sense out of life will make you cry
 And why the acts of god can cause us pain
 And make our sunny days turn to rain

So, when you ask why, try to understand
 That's what I ask, too, but I don't know of who
 So, sit on my lap, and we'll sing a song
 Let's sing real loud, it'll make us strong

Oh, Jesse. What are we going to do about Mama?

10) Rosa (A eulogy for Rosa Judith Cisneros)

Dr. Rosa Judith Cisneros (1938-1981) was an Episcopalian who worked for social justice in El Salvador, especially as a champion for women's and children's rights. She was murdered on the steps of her home in San Salvador by government soldiers.

Rosa, Rosa, Rosa
The blind will not see
The deaf will not hear
The mute will not speak for Rosa

She was the savior of the poor
She was the campesinas' friend
For the women she would work

No more, no more, no more
Brothers, will you come?
Sisters, will you come?
Fight with me for Rosa

Rosa, Rosa, Rosa

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11) Little Bit of Death

Elizabeth McCommon wrote this song, one which we sang in concert quite often. Unfortunately, the harmony on this cut did not match the inspiring vocals Elizabeth could create live. The song tended to offend people with its aggressive lyrics, but at the time, it seemed like no one was interested in social change (the Reagan years). The lyrics certainly reveal the frustration of many of us working so tirelessly for social change.

Little bit of death in the soup today for lunch
 But don't worry dear, that makes us one of the bunch
 And there is just a little death in the sky today at noon
 But don't worry dear, it's gonna blow away soon

Just a little dying in the media today
 Just a little bit of death, but the death won't go away
 And there is just a little death in the faces on the boat
 But don't worry dear, I think they'll manage to float

And there is just a little death in the freedoms that we prize
 But don't shoot 'em dear, till you see the whites of their eyes
 Just a little dying in the jungles of Brazil
 Just a little bit of death from a little oil spill

And there is just a little death in the games the children play
 In the songs we hear them sing and in the words we hear them say
 And there is just a little death in our futures, everyone
 But, don't worry, dear, if our dying's begun
 No need to cut and run; miracles have been done
 Gonna pray for one
 Don't you know I'm gonna pray for one

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12) Inside and Outside

Falling in love helps you learn more about yourself than about another.

Inside and outside, inside and out
You're inside and outside of my soul
Coming on inside me, like an old forgotten song
And the memory of a place I've been before

I've realized that the sun won't shine down everyday
Things don't always turn out like you plan
But I'm still not tired or scared of being alone
There's so much work to do on one's own

Well, I think that life is just a moment at a time
The sweet taste of new wine everyday
And though our footsteps disappear just as fast as we move on
There's smoke that will linger when a fire is gone

It seems like our paths are crossing once again...
The most I can give you is my song
Would you like to chase a rainbow or take a quiet walk with me
Look around and see what we will see

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