

Songs from Dave Gustafson

- This is a first draft of an electronic song book that I plan to leave behind, primarily for my family and friends
- Most of these are songs that I have written, although pages 4-6 are covers of songs that have become daily favorites
- Some of the other covers that I love to play include:
 - [Michelle](#)
 - [God Only Knows](#)
 - [Here There and Everywhere](#)
 - [I'm Only Sleeping](#)
 - [Blowin' in the Wind](#)
 - [She Belongs to Me](#)
 - [Shelter from the Storm](#)
 - [Simple Twist of Fate](#)
 - [Mr. Tambourine Man](#)
 - [Dear Prudence](#)
 - [Blackbird](#)
 - [Rocky Raccoon](#)

Gettin' Back (take 2)

completed September 2024

Since I called you in the Garden
You were hidin' from Me
Until you left Me hangin'
To My death upon a tree

But I'm gettin' back
I'm gettin' back
World, I'm gettin' even with you now

I fasted in the desert
And confronted your king
He tempted with the power
To rule everything
But I rebuked him then and there
Just as I say to your face
Repent and be forgiven in these
Last hours of grace

'Cause I'm gettin' back
I'm gettin' back
World, I'm gettin' even with you now

I don't want to feel revenge
Don't want to cause no pain
But you know that you'll be gettin' singed
By all that fiery flame, yeah

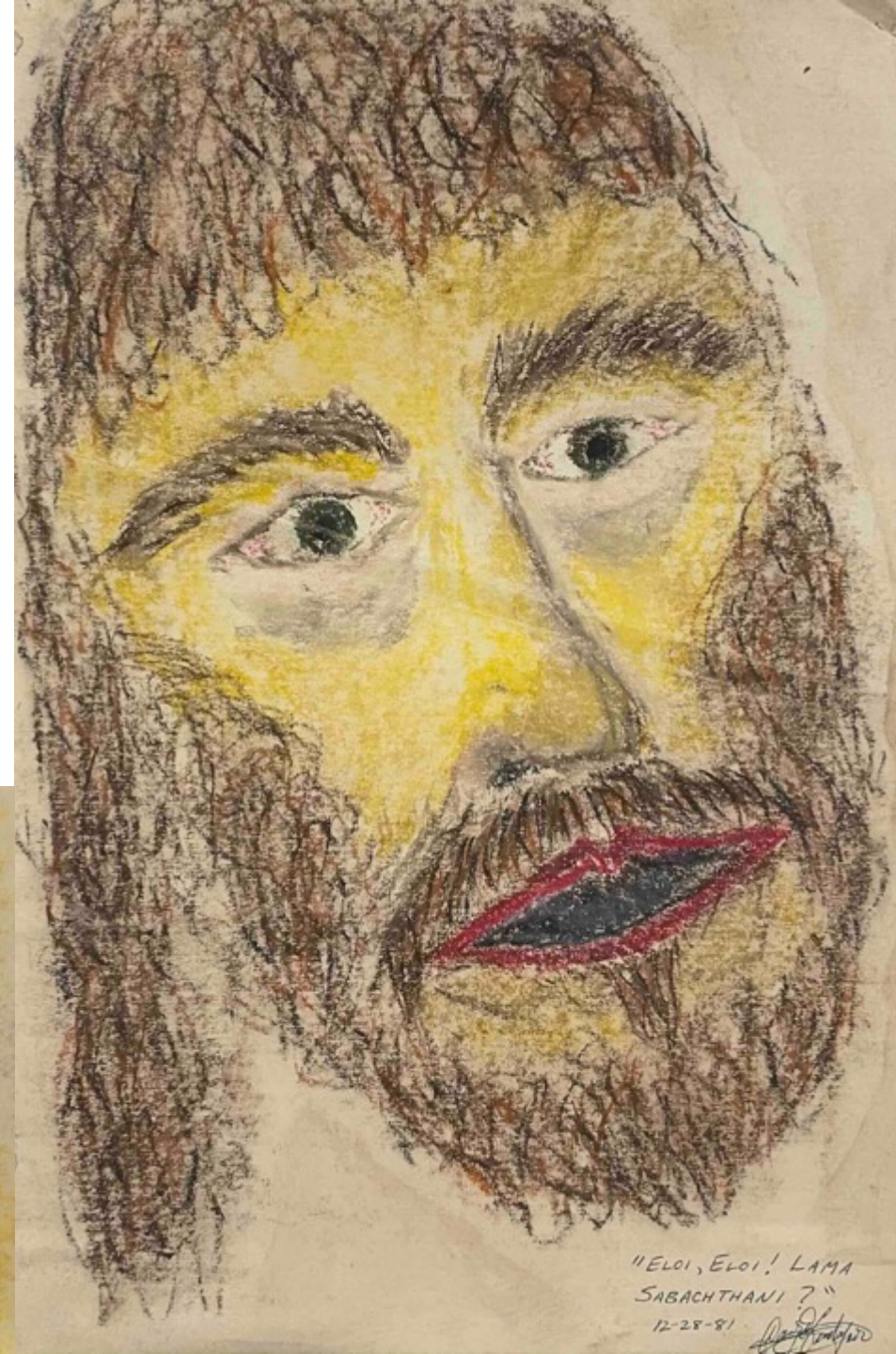
'Cause I'm gettin' back
I'm gettin' back
World, I'm gettin' even with you now

Somewhere in the distance
I can see your fate
Tremblin' before Me
'Cause you waited too late
What a shame to know
That you will never see
What ya' could've had
By simply prayin' to Me

'Cause I'm gettin' back
I'm gettin' back
World, I'm gettin' even with you now

The lyrics are a complete re-write from the original version (1980), written from the perspective of a jilted lover (penned months before I became a follower of Christ). Starting in late 2023, I realized that some instrumental lines that I had been writing might dovetail nicely with the riff of the older song.

 YouTube



"ELOI, ELOI! LAMA
SABACHTHANI?"
12-28-81

I Could Die Happy

written July 2024

It's not that I want this to end
It's not that I need more to start
But hours spent alone with a friend
Bring joy to the core of my heart
I'll treasure each moment
And with every breath
Give thanks to the Lord
And never fear death
I could die happy
Here in this place
Surrounded by beauty
Wherever I gaze
Yes, I could die happy
With you at my side
With no prayer unspoken
And nothin' to hide
I could die happy

The years slip away just like sand
But our fate has been bound to the Rock
We clung when He offered His Hand
And now in His footsteps we walk

With mercies unending
Rained down from above
We're cleansed from our sin
And we're bathed in His Love
I could die happy
Now that I'm free
Death has been stripped
Of its hold over me
Yes, I could die happy
With you at my side
With no prayer unspoken
And nothin' to hide
I could die happy

These mountains will quake
Sent tumblin' down to the sea
But no force can break
The embrace that He has around me

And so as we turn the next page
Whatever the future may bring
We'll be loved to the end of this Age
And of His Glory we'll sing

I'll treasure the moments
We shared on that hill
Together in nature
With all worry stilled
I could die happy
Now that I know
How we are loved
Wherever we go
Yes, I could die happy
With you at my side
With no prayer unspoken
And nothin' to hide
I could die happy
I could die happy
Yes, I could die happy

A friend and I were hiking in the mountains, and these words ("I Could Die Happy") suddenly burst out of my lips as we arrived at this beautiful rocky spot (at right) to eat the meal she'd brought. The song was then completed within a couple days.

3



Make You Feel My Love (B Dylan)

recorded December 2024

When the rain is blowin' in your face
And the whole world is on your case
I could offer you a warm embrace
To make you feel my love

When the evening shadows and the stars appear
And there's no one there to dry your tears
I could hold ya' for a million years
To make you feel my love

I know ya' haven't made your mind up yet
But I would never do ya' wrong
I've known it from the moment that we met
No doubt in my mind where you belong

I'd go hungry, I'd go black and blue
I'd come crawlin' down the avenue
No, there's nothin' I wouldn't do
To make you feel my love

Storms are ragin' on a rollin' sea
And on the highway of regret
Winds of change are blowin' wild and free
You ain't seen nothin' like me yet

I could make you happy, make your dreams come true
There is nothin' I wouldn't do
Go to the ends of the Earth for you
To make you feel my love
To make you feel my love

YouTube



Hallelujah (L Cohen*)

recorded December 2024

I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do ya'?
It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth
The minor fall, the major lift
The baffled king composing Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew ya'
She tied ya' to a kitchen chair
She broke your throne, she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

There was a time you let me know
What's really goin' on below
But now you never show it to me, do ya'?
But I remember when I moved in you
And the holy dove was movin' too
And in our bliss we shouted Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I swear that I've been here before
I know this room, I've walked this floor
I used to live alone before I knew ya'
I've seen your flag on the marble arch
But love is not a victory march
It's a cold and it's a lonesome Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Well, maybe there's a God above
But all I've ever learned from love
Is how to shoot at someone who outdrew ya'
It's not a cry you can hear at night
It's not somebody who's seen the Light
It's a dark and broken Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

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I did my best, it wasn't much
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool ya'
And even though it all went wrong
I'll stand before the Lord of Song
With no word on my tongue but Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelu-Y'shuah



* with tiny tweaks from Dr. Dave

Till There Was You (M Wilson)

recorded December 2024

There were bells on a hill
But I never heard them ringing
No, I never heard them at all
Till there was you

There were birds in the sky
But I never saw them winging
No, I never saw them at all
Till there was you

Then there was music
And wonderful roses
They tell me in sweet fragrant meadows
Of dawn and dew

There was love all around
But I never heard it singing
No, I never heard it at all
Till there was you

Then there was music
And wonderful roses
They tell me in sweet fragrant meadows
Of dawn and dew

There was love all around
But I never heard it singing
No, I never heard it at all
Till there was you
Till there was you

 YouTube



ЮЛИЯ О [YuleA O]

recorded December 2024

Hey, Юлия А
What d'ya say?
How 'bout today?
My Юлия
He, Юлия Е
Never could see
All you could be
My Юлия

Straddlin' this precipice
And waitin' for the right time
Strugglin' with avarice
And prayin' for divine signs

I, Юлия I
Just gotta sigh
When you go by
My Юлия
Oh, Юлия О
Time passes slow
Till we can go
My Юлия

Fumblin' for words to say
To help convey this feelin'
Soarin' like a bird of prey
Who's trapped beneath the ceilin'

You, Юлия U
Know what to do
When I am blue
My Юлия
Why, Юлия Y?
Couldn't we try
To reach for the sky?
My Юлия

Loved with everlastin' grace
He's workin' on my wish list
Sprintin' at a faster pace
As we approach the finish

Oh, Юлия O
Time passes slow
Till we can go
My Юлия O

*The Russian name (pronounced "Yulia")
is a creative device from 2024 that is
intended to protect the anonymity of the
true inspiration for this song. The song
itself has remained largely unchanged
over the years, except for the rhythm of
the opening chord in each verse.*



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Dawn

written June 2018

Here before Dawn has yet to appear
A forest of song caresses my ear
A chorus of angels chases the night
And summons the morning's shimmering light
I look to the East, I gaze at the skies
And soon I can see her sparkling eyes
With visions of her sweet smile
Still lingering

I knew it as soon as she stepped on the scene
Here was the woman revealed in a dream
Serene in a confidence fastened to Truth
Veiling a glory of permanent youth
I pray to the Lord, "O, how could it be,
That You have provided this gift unto me?
For I'm just an ungrateful child
Still lost in sin"

Long after time has ceased to make sense
No longer trapped in these temporal tents
The logic of all of Your Love will be known
I will bow down at Your Radiant Throne
And when I look up, without any word
I'll know all the pleas of my heart had been heard
That You made the two of us one
To worship You
Together
And to gather
Together

I had been playing the basic chord progression for several months, but didn't have any words until a very magical moment that occurred at the Gustafson Family Cabin (on Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho) in June 2018 (the photo at left was taken there at the dawn of the Summer Solstice of 2018). As noted in the song, it was indeed just before dawn and I was sitting on the lower deck, marveling at the chorus of birds who were singing out ahead of the sunrise. The remaining words then came easily over just a few minutes. Any Led Zeppelin fans will recognize a slight lifting from "Kashmir," both in the line "caresses my ear" and perhaps even in the vibe of the chord progression itself. Yes, I have listened to that song too many times!

 YouTube



Last Gasp of Breath

written October 1983

With my last gasp of breath I breathed a word that she barely heard
Over my laughter, echoin' ever after in her mind

With the grace, face and touch of an angel in danger
Tryin' to find me, tryin' to hide me in her heart

With her backpack and pencils, the paper chase is her savin' grace
Searchin' for knowledge, but why in a college?

When it's here, it's everywhere
Don't ever think that I don't care
And right when you least expect it
That's when you're well protected heart gets torn apart

I phone home to ask if we'll ever be in heavenly
Love, liftin' us, a gift to us from above

Love is here, it's everywhere
Don't ever think that I don't care
And right when you least expect it
That's when you're well protected heart gets torn apart



I had just arrived in Modesto (CA) for my first job after getting my Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Washington (Seattle). I had mostly left behind two relationships, each of which had become quite close, albeit in very different ways. As seems to be my fate, feelings for both of these women still lingered despite the thousand miles from Modesto to Seattle. This song started with the chord progression and the words came quickly, the primary lyrical trick being the presence of repeated rhyming words at the opening of each verse. This song is probably my favorite among the 230 or so that I have written. Within only a week or two, I met my first wife, and so began a >20-year period of very few songs, amidst the competing interests of work and family.



Right Next to You

written November 1980

I've never felt this way
I never knew that a woman could reach me like this
I don't know what to say
I've never been so affected by one little kiss
And when I look in your eyes I seem to feel that the
world's gonna' turn out all right
You make me fantasize, you make me want to be
with you baby tonight
Don't ever ask me how I know
Don't ever ask me I just don't know why

You're like a mystery
You're like a book that I read and I never put down
And in my history
I've never ever seen such a woman around
And when I look in my soul and I see all my dreams
come into view
Well there's a shadowy goal that I'm hopin' to reach
when I reach out to you

Don't ya' hear what I'm sayin'?
Don't ya' know that it's true?
Don't ya' know what I'm feelin' when I'm right next
to you?
When I'm right next to you
Don't ever ask me how I know
Don't ever ask me I just don't know why

I'm just a molecule
I'm just a polymer matrix forged by the sun
But when I get to you
I guarantee that you'll never have had so much fun
And when I look in your eyes I seem to feel that the
world's gonna' turn out all right
You make me fantasize, you make me want to be
with you baby tonight

Don't ya' hear what I'm sayin'?
Don't ya' know that it's true?
Don't ya' know what I'm feelin' when I'm right next to
you?
When I'm right next to you

I met Sue in late September 1980, just as I turned 22 and was starting grad school at the University of Washington (Seattle). We had a first date on November 7, and I was immediately smitten, as accurately described in this song. However, as has often been my fate, the feelings were not reciprocal. She became involved with another guy for a year or so. But after that ended, Sue and I ended up becoming almost inseparable for much of my final two years in Seattle, albeit on a 99.9% platonic basis. We both went on to enter new relationships that resulted in marriage and kids shortly after I left Seattle. But I still remember those days very fondly – we thoroughly enjoyed our times together – and this song captures that feeling for me. Of my songs that my younger brother Steve has heard, it has always been his favorite. One final note, I am a scientist, so that helps explain the odd words at the beginning of the third verse!



Killing Time

written December 1980

I'm only killin' time, until I see your smile, and I guess
That I've been doin' fine, although it's been a while, since I felt
Your hands caressin' my face, and I melt
When you intrude on my space, and I sense
Your presence in my mind
We'll weave our thoughts in silent rhyme

I'm only tryin' to be as honest as I can
I never want to see you with another man, and I guess
That's why my heart is on fire when I see
You stare at him with desire, and it's just
Genetic jealousy
To know it's him as well as me

I'm only tryin' to say a simple word or two
To save this precious day and give it all to you in a song
That's comin' straight from my heart, and it's wrong
For us to ever depart, from the path
That's given us this chance
To take our part in nature's dance



This photo is actually from Stanford, rather than Seattle, where this song was written. I believe it is the last song I wrote before December 26, 1980 – the day when I was miraculously filled by the Holy Spirit and became a life-long follower of Jesus. Up until that day, my songs had been almost entirely devoted to the topic of unrequited love, of which this is a rather typical example. The song contains somewhat clever poetry at certain points, but it's missing both a bridge and a proper chorus – and so is not among my best attempts. I guess I would conclude that it is still complete.

 YouTube



I Know

written January 1977

Wrapped inside a roll of yellowed newspapers
Set aside where no one ever goes
But I know, I know, I know
I know, I know, I know

People say ya' look like you are searchin'
But all they see are mirrors in your eyes
But I know, I know, I know
I know, I know, I know

There's feelings in your heart I've never touched
There's words you've longed to say but never found
But I know, I know, I know
I know, I know, I know

I know what ya' mean without ya' sayin' anything
I know what's in your mind by all the love that's in your eyes
And, I know, I know, I know
I know, I know, I know



I wrote this song at Stanford, where the photo was taken. I believe this song was the favorite of the young woman about whom it was written. She had become my love interest after I graduated from high school in Spokane – and remained the long-distance object of my affections during all my years at Stanford – at the great consternation of my parents. However, I'm pleased to say that I've remained friends with her and husband, who is a pastor. She also gave me a Bible in 1981, one that served as my companion every morning for more than 40 years, until it finally succumbed to the ravages of time a couple years ago.



I Wish that I Could Look at You

written August 1976

I look out on the morning
I wonder how you've been
My eyes dance off the dew drops
I feel the eastern wind

I look out on the sunrise
I wonder how it feels
To know that when the Earth dies
You'll be shinin' still
I wish that I could look at you

I look up towards the treetops
I wish that I was high
'Cause when ya' finally drop me
I know I'll need to fly
I wish that I could look at you

It's not that funny, but watch me laugh
I want all of you and not just half

I look out on my lifetime
I see that it has turns
I'm stranded in the desert
You know the hot sand burns
I wish that I could look at you
I wish, I wish, it could be true



It was nearing the end of summer 1976 in Spokane, in the final weeks before I was to head off to Stanford – leaving behind a relatively new and passionate relationship with a young woman of whom my parents disapproved. It was indeed early morning and I sat alone on the patio, looking eastward and towards the nearby treetops as this song was written. I had written a couple dozen songs by this time, but this was probably my best effort up until to that point. Some of the words still haunt me, especially coming from a 17-year-old kid. The drawing is a "psychedelic 60's style" self-portrait, created at age 12.

 YouTube



The COVID Blues

recorded January 2021

Wearin' a mask in public
Fearin' the latest news
Wishin' they'd change the subject
I'm tellin' ya' what I got
I got the COVID Blues

Never been so frustrated
Bring me a barrel-o-booze
But I can't barely taste it
I'm tellin' ya' what I got
I got the COVID Blues

Needin' to keep my distance
From everyone that I see
Buildin' up my resistance
Prayin' on bended knee

I frantically search for wisdom
On which of the shots to choose
Get jabbed or get sent to prison
I'm tellin' ya' what I got
I got the COVID Blues

Lord, how I'm feelin' desperate
Dreadin' the bitter end
But maybe there'll be a respite
Comin' around the bend

And so as I leave you wond'ring
Whether I've blown a fuse
I'm certain of only one thing
I'm tellin' ya' what I got
I got the COVID Blues

I'm tellin' ya' what I got
I got the COVID Blues



It was quite early in the COVID Pandemic when I and two friends bravely gathered in a backyard to light a fire and enjoy a sip of wine together. I had brought my guitar along, with the basic chord progression recently written, but no words. I began composing the lyrics on the spot, and my friends encouraged me to use the nickname for COVID ('Rona, short for Coronavirus). A few months later, I got together with some musician friends to create a demo (complete with video!). In early 2025, I changed the words and name of the song to "The COVID Blues," based on feedback from NSAI (Nashville Songwriters Association).



 YouTube



Make Us Wise

recorded May 2021

Let us grow in wisdom and power and love

Break open my heart

Focus my eyes

Lord, set me apart

And make me wise

Though lawlessness spills

All over this place

Lord, harness my will

To seek only Thy face

When floodwaters crest

Then slowly subside

Lord, into Thy rest

Please let me abide

Till righteousness reigns

And we claim the prize

Lord, ease all our pains

And make us wise

When floodwaters crest

Then slowly subside

Lord, into Thy rest

Please let me abide

Till righteousness reigns

And we claim the prize

Lord, ease all our pains

And make us wise

Lord, ease all our pains

And make us wise



The words to this song first came to me in early 2021, as I was making another of the long COVID-era drives from St. Louis back to my home state of Washington, where I was expecting to settle for the last phase of my life. The Lord had other plans, however, and I ended up moving back to St. Louis in July 2024, just 4 years after trying to move away. I hate the weather in St. Louis and it just keeps getting worse! But it's been a great place for building many strong friendships, several of whom are very musically talented. Some of them joined me in front of this historic home to create a bluegrass version of this song, which has become a personal favorite.

 YouTube



Be Reconciled

written July-September 2021

How can all o' you be so stupid?
How come everything's such a mess?
How're you so quickly deluded
Trustin' every word of the press?

You're fallin' for the schemes of the devil
Don't ya' know he lurks in the church?
He'll tinker with yer' thinkin' and then he'll
Leave ya' all alone in a Lurch

Be reconciled
Come as a child
Rest in His embrace
Glory in His face
Of love for us
Amen

How could I be so apathetic
Not to notice all of her pain?
Shelter-less and so unprotected
Shiverin' alone in the rain

Neither can I know all the sorrow
That bigotry and racism wreak
Help me, Lord, to make a tomorrow
Where selfless love is all that I seek

Be reconciled
Come as a child
Rest in His embrace
Glory in His face
Of love for us
Amen



St. Louis **Reconciliation** Network
race relations made new



Back in 2012, after a series of conversations with local leaders of St. Louis, including a past mayor, I formed a new non-profit, the St. Louis Reconciliation Network (STLRN). Its mission is to heal the broken race relations of the region by harnessing the potential collective power of its diverse faith communities. STLRN remains active to this day, now under the leadership of Brandon Wilkes. This song arose as a candidate "theme song" for when the group gathers. That idea still hasn't quite caught on, but perhaps it will someday, if the song were to be recorded by a proper group.



 YouTube



Back in Your Heart

written March 2023

Lilting and lovely
Songbirds above me
Serenades summon me
Back to Your arms
Foolishly wand'ring
Life left me longing
Aching to feel You right
Here in my heart

Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
I belong

Golden and glist'ning
Colorf'ly christ'ning
Autumn's first inkling
Is etched in the trees
Then I remember
Winds of December
When I surrendered
My life unto Thee

Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart

Silent and sparkling
Snowflakes are falling
Blanketing all in a
Shimmering sheen
Still in this silence
Solemn reliance
Upon all the love You have
Lavished on me

Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
I belong

Hillsides are flow'ring
Springtime abounding
All bursting forth in a
Garland of green
Buds on the fig tree
Portend a myst'ry
Hidden in history
Now all revealed

Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
Back in Your heart
We belong



Listen Up!

written January 2023

Listen all you lovers of Jesus
Don't ya' know you're part of the story?
He has promised never to leave us
We are seated with Him in glory
Raised to make Him real
For all the world to see
How true love's gonna' feel
For all eternity
Eternity
Eternity

Listen all who frolic in darkness
Can't you see it's all an illusion?
Fraught with perils planted to harm us
Conjured by the con of confusion
Who seeks only to destroy
Lying with each breath
A convoluted ploy
To deny the second death
The second death
The second death

"Listen all you angels in heaven
Can't you hear the clamor that's rumblin'?
Time to sound the trumpets of seven
Then to gather all who still love Him
Sweep across the plains
Clear to every shore
For everyone who's named
To live forever more
Forever more
Forever more"

Painting by McKendree Robbins Long, Sr.

 YouTube



Cold Blows the Wind

written December 26, 1980

Cold blows the wind tall stand the trees
Let it begin as I fall to my knees
God, how could I ever change what I feel?
How will I know when her love becomes real?
You seem to know what the world's going to do
Tell me right now if her love isn't true

When I'm alone and I see where you are
That's when I know that we've come pretty far
You're in control of what you're going to be
You have become someone special to me
What could I do to become something more
Than all your friends that you let through the door?
But you don't let them know what you're really about
And I know that you know but there must be some doubt
In your mind but I know you'll be mine

Cold blows the wind tall stand the trees
Let it begin as I fall to my knees
God, how your world has impressed me with time
Now I can see what you've blessed to be mine
What could I do to be sure who it is?
What will it take to erase the mistakes
That you made when you faked? Now all you can do
Is be true and I know we could break any rule
If you knew what I knew and I do



I grew up in a very liberal, secular home. Christianity and Christians were a household joke. My only exposure to the Gospel in our house (albeit somewhat tainted) was the album "Jesus Christ Superstar." A neighbor had given me a copy of the New Testament as a high school graduation gift, which I thought was very odd. I never opened it. At least not until more than 4.5 years later, when the Holy Spirit suddenly came upon me during a lengthy run in Seattle. As soon as I got home that day, I desperately searched for the book, and then read it in its entirety, suddenly believing that every word was true. The date was December 26, 1980. I began sharing this good news with my family, who were convinced I had gone crazy, eventually having me committed against my will to a Mental Hospital for 10 days in March 1981. Alas, the doctors reported back to my father (an attorney) that I had simply become a Christian and there was nothing they could do. But the entire incident caused me to be very cautious about openly sharing my faith until many years later, after my father died (August 2000). Anyhow, I wrote this song on the first day of my new-found faith. The two Bennett prints shown here were on the walls of our family home as long as I can remember. I inherited them after my mother passed away (January 2022).



Hallelu-Y'shuah

written February 2006

I will praise the Lord with all my heart
Blessed be His holy name
For all this time that we are still apart
To the nations I'll proclaim

Hallelu-Y'shuah
Hallelu-Y'shuah
Hallelu-Y'shuah
Hallelu-Y'shuah

ישועה



Real Whirlwind

written July-August 2007

"Lord, Lord, ain't it gettin' hot down here?
Ain't seen rain now for what seems a year
What I'd give now for a single drink
Don't it make you wanna stop and think?"
Stop and think
From the dust
He pounds the dust
Unto the dust he goes
He breathes the air
Assails the air
Unto the air he sows
Sowing uncounted millennia of solar beams to the air
Reaping the real whirlwind
Reaping the real whirlwind
Reaping the real whirlwind

"Ain't no problem far as we can tell
Man can't turn earth to a living hell
Let's go party while we're still alive
Rev that engine into overdrive"
Overdrive
Filled with pride
Puffed up with pride
In his pride denies

Conceived in sin
He lives in sin
In his sin he dies
Sowing uncounted millennia of solar beams to the air
Reaping the real whirlwind
Reaping the real whirlwind
Reaping the real whirlwind

"Lord, Lord, ain't it gettin' hot down here?"



Ever Near

written April 2008

It is true, I am certain
That not one sparrow falls
Apart from Him, behind the curtain
Who decrees all in all
And He knows when you're hurtin'
Of its cause He is clear
So come bring every burden
To the One ever near
He is near, ever near
Jesus is ever near

In a world of sin unbounded
With cruel death at every turn
Hope might seem to be unfounded
Just a dream falsely learned
Though fierce winds may swirl around you
And your heart is clenched with fear
Don't despair for He has found you
He is now and ever near
He is near, ever near
Jesus is ever near
He is ever near
He is ever near
He is ever near

 YouTube



No One But Jesus

written May-September 2005

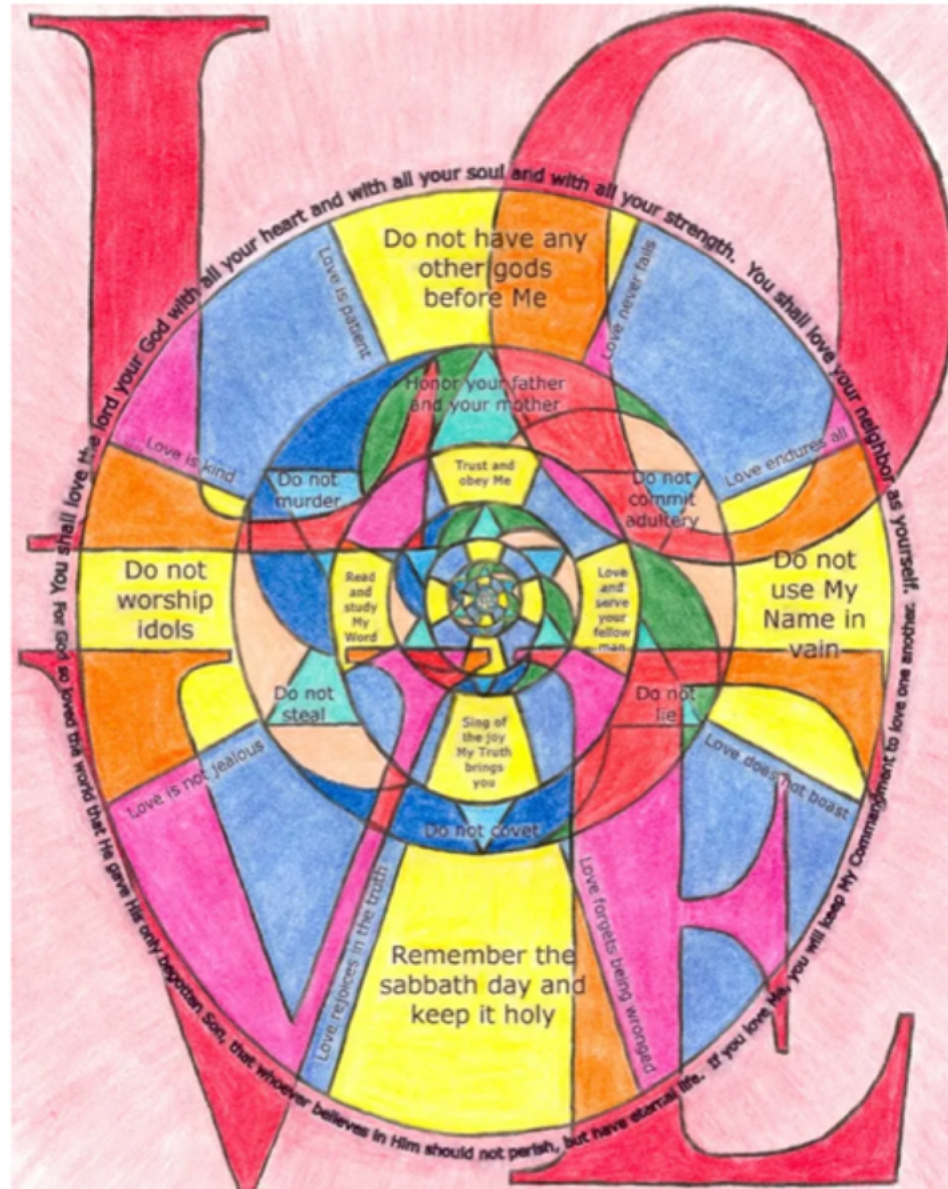
No one but Jesus, Jesus, will we serve
No one but Jesus, Jesus, made this earth
Higher than any name, lifted above
No one but Jesus, Jesus, earned our love

The Prince of Peace, the Blood of the Lamb
That covers the sin of the world
The Lord of Lords, the King of the Kings
The stone that's the seed of the pearl

No one but Jesus, Jesus, is the Way
No one but Jesus, Jesus, hears us pray
Seated upon the throne, gleaming and white
No one but Jesus, Jesus, is the Light

The Word made flesh, the First and the Last
The One with the stars in His Hand
His two-edged sword, His Eyes of fire
The Beginning of all that was planned

No one but Jesus, Jesus, is the Truth
No one but Jesus, Jesus, our living proof
He struggled like any man, acquainted with strife
No one but Jesus, Jesus, gives us Life



The music for this song came first, during the spring of 2005. I eventually added the words toward the end of the summer. This was the period in my life when I began playing in church, and I envisioned this song as potentially being a contender for playing during Communion, rather during a time of the full Congregation singing along (primarily due to odd nature of the two bridge sections). That hasn't happened yet, but I still hope that it will someday.

YouTube



Calling Us Back

written November 1999

Whispering through the trees
Beckoning me back home
Answering all my pleas
Proving that we're not alone
He's calling us back
He's come for us now
I don't know when
And I don't know how
But He's calling us back

Wrapped in a milky haze
On a November morn
Sunlight knifes through my daze
Carving a radiant form
He's calling us back
He's come for us now
I don't know when
And I don't know how
But He's calling us back

Steering His mount on high
Destined to set us free
Flashing across the sky
Shining for all who can see
He's calling us back
He's come for us now
I don't know when
And I don't know how
But He's calling us back
He's calling us back
He's come for us now
I don't know when
And I don't know how
But He's calling us back

 YouTube



Come with Me

written October 2001

We are tossed on the ocean
We are lost out at sea
On a raft built by martyrs
From a Land we can't see
And the oars will get heavy
As we row through the gale
And our hearts filled with sorrow
As we pass those who fail
Come with Me
I'll take you by the hand
Come with Me
I'll lead you to The Land
Come with Me

Long ago it was written
And I know it is true
That our hearts were united
Making one out of two
And our love shall continue
Through the blustering storm
Let my words ever comfort
And my arms ever warm
Come with Me
I'll take you by the hand
Come with Me
I'll lead you to The Land

Come with Me
And be holy
Come with Me
And be free
Never doubting
Never turning
Never anxious
No, no, no
Come with Me

Far away in the distance
I can hear trumpets sound
Calling souls from the water
Calling souls from the ground
And they rise in an instant
To be caught in the air
Swept away in a moment
Into Christ's loving care
Come with Me
I'll take you by the hand
Come with Me
I'll lead you to The Land
Come with Me
Come with Me
Come with Me



I recall writing this song in California during a trip for a Stanford Reunion. It was my first air travel after 911, and there are vague allusions to the attack in the first verse. It was a time in my life when I began to hear the Lord's call to visit Israel, where I was finally properly baptized (in the River Jordan, pictured here). I once practiced it with a small church praise band for possible inclusion in a Sunday Service, but I don't believe that ever happened.



Gus

written August 2001

A man of the water brought into this land
To serve as a husband and friend
To serve as a father, and now that he's done
He goes back to the water again
Gus once walked upon earth with us
Gus gave us his love
Gus once walked upon earth with us
But now he looks down from above

A fisherman's adage to rise with the sun
To rest when the river runs high
To fish with all strength till the end of the run
Then soar like an eagle on high
Gus once walked upon earth with us
Gus gave us his love
Gus once walked upon earth with us
But now he looks down from above

So now we're together to honor his name
To comfort our mother, his wife
So let us remember the spirited flame
That burned all the years of his life
Gus once walked upon earth with us
Gus gave us his love
Gus once walked upon earth with us
And now he looks down from above



 YouTube



Mother

completed September 2006

How could I make you see tears that were never shed?
But, Mother, he came to me while I lay on my bed
Peacefully sleeping
Then he came weeping
Begging for me to warn you
“Don’t let her come where this torment is near
I love her too much to let her come here”

What if it’s just a dream bouncing around my brain?
No need to cause a scene or make fundamental change
In your behavior
Or long for a savior
I’m sure that it’s just a story
Meant to delude all the masses to flee
Herded like lemmings, they leap to the sea

But if it’s really true, why could you take the chance?
Confess what you need to do, join in this joyful dance
Playfully singing
Church bells a-ringing
Smiles all around the throne room
“Well done, My servant, come meet your friends
Here where the wonder never will end”



 YouTube



Keeping My Eyes on You

written January 1978

Every time I've tried to tell you
You have turned away
Still I feel that I should let you stay
Take your choice to leave my life
Or keep your heart with me
But all the time, I'm keeping my eyes on you, my love
Keeping my eyes on you

Every day I try to give you
Everything I should
Understanding life has made it good
Take a star of happiness
And let it be your sun
And all the time, I'm keeping my eyes on you, my love
Keeping my eyes on you

My eyes are always on you
So don't even doubt that I'll always be true

Every word I choose to sing
Is spilling out like love
Every thought is meant to mean enough
Tantalizing tales of wonder
Wait beyond the fringe
And all the time, I'm keeping my eyes on you, my love
Keeping my eyes on you
Keeping my eyes on you, my love
Keeping my eyes on you



 YouTube



Wonderfully Made

written May 2012

I will give thanks to Thee
For I am fearfully
And wonderfully made
I will give thanks to Thee
For I am fearfully
And wonderfully made
You formed my hidden frame
There in my mother's womb
Before I heard my name
You wove me on Your loom
I will give thanks to Thee
For I am fearfully
And wonderfully made
I will give thanks to Thee
For I am fearfully
And wonderfully made

Wonderful are Thy works
Treasured within my heart
Even these aches and hurts
In a body that's torn apart
I will give thanks to Thee
For I am fearfully
And wonderfully made
I will give thanks to Thee
For I am fearfully
And wonderfully made

A temple to house Thy Spirit
Made to be like Thy Son
Oh that we all would hear it
And live as if we were one
We will give thanks to Thee
For we are fearfully
And wonderfully made
We will give thanks to Thee
For we are fearfully
And wonderfully made

One day the trump shall sound
And these bodies will be for naught
But until that glory's found
Let's take care of what we've got
We will give thanks to Thee
For we are fearfully
And wonderfully made
We will give thanks to Thee
For we are fearfully
And wonderfully made



This song has a unique origin. Central Pres Lead Pastor at that time, Dan Doriani, issued a challenge to all of the church's many songwriters to create a new song highlighting the importance of maintaining physical health. I wrote this song within a couple of days and offered it up. Sadly, he went with a submission from someone else, but I've always thought this was worthy of including in a Sunday Service. The picture at left captures a special time when my Grandmother Rita cared for me after the birth of my brother. Her handwritten note on the back confesses that she had over-fed me, partly contributing to her nickname for me, "my little Buddha," as I seemed to her "so solemn and wise for such a small creature."



Hide Not Thy Face From Me

written July 2012

Hide not Thy face from me
I'm as lonesome as can be
Though all other souls may flee
Hide not Thy face from me

Lord, I depend on You
No one else can pull me through
Within You all things I can do
Lord, I depend on You

Lift me when I am down
When my sin is all around
Crushing me into the ground
Lift me when I am down

Hear, Lord, when I cry out
And my heart is filled with doubt
Though my fears within me shout
Hear, Lord, when I cry out

Hide not Thy face from me
There's no other God but Thee
Break these bonds and set me free
Hide not Thy face from me
Hide not Thy face from me

 YouTube



Christmas in Jerusalem

written December 2003

On a night not unlike this
A cry rang out unto the fields
For the first time in His Life
His Eyes shed human tears
But they weren't the last
And there won't be a last
Until He reappears

By a flock of wayward sheep
The weary shepherds heard a voice
"Come behold your nation's King
Who's in a manger lain"
And they worshipped Him then
And they'll worship Him when
His Nation He reclaims

And it's Christmas in Jerusalem
Whose exiled Ruler grieves
And it's Christmas here in Babylon
Whose captives shall be freed

From the stars down to the seas
Creation aches to be renewed
On a dark and snowy eve'
The family gathered round
Though it's painful to wait
They patiently wait
For Christmas bells to sound

And it's Christmas in Jerusalem
Whose exiled Ruler grieves
And it's Christmas here in Babylon
Whose captives shall be freed

Whose captives shall be freed



 YouTube



The One

recorded March 2020

The One, The One
The One, The One
The One, from the beginning
The One, here at the end
The One, keeps us from sinning
The One, our dearest Friend
He spoke us into existence
Exploding out of the void
The One, The One

The One, without a blemish
The One, washes us clean
The One, sent to replenish
The One, sent to redeem
The One, put it in practice
The One, shows us the way
The One, giving us access
The One, hears when we pray
Though bruised beyond recognition
His wounds have covered our sins
The One, The One

The One, vanquishing Satan
The One, conquered the grave
The One, might keep us waitin'
But the One is mighty to save
The One, beyond comprehension
The One, bringing Shalom
The One, lessening tension
The One, making us whole
Not one of His promises fails us
Our Comforter here in the storm
The One, The One

The One, never forsakes us
The One, always is true
The One, loving and gracious
The One, cares what we do
The One, created the cosmos
The One, counts every star
The One, sees without flaws so
The One, knows who we are
He disciplines us as Our Father
His Mysteries being revealed
The One, The One

Rap written and performed by JD Brawner

The One, stands in the doorway
The One, knocks at our heart
The One, loves us in more ways
So the One, never will part
The One, holy and righteous
The One, reigns from His throne
The One, ever delights us
The One, calling us Home
He'll come in shimmering glory
To judge the living and dead
The One, The One
The One, The One



Rap written and performed by Torey Harris



 YouTube



The Ol' Gray Wolf

recorded January 2021

He's howlin' out your window
Wanderin' through the wood
Try conjurin' where he's been, tho'
Nobody ever could
You're questionin' all of your senses
Wonderin' if he's real
But there ain't no other consensus
For explainin' just what you feel
He's out there in the darkness
Fixin' to hunt you down
He's hungry and he's heartless
Roamin' from town to town
Every soul laid low
By the ol' gray wolf
Every soul laid low
By the ol' gray wolf

The night is lingerin' longer
Wind sweepin' over the plain
Your veins are poundin' still stronger
As a fear envelopes your brain
Your lungs too tight to be breathin'
You sense him right at the gate
And when you finally see him
Well it's all too little too late
He rushes you in an instant
Claws flyin' over the ground
Sharpened teeth a-glistenin'
Crushin' without a sound
Every soul laid low
By the ol' gray wolf
Every soul laid low
By the ol' gray wolf

He tempted us in The Garden
Takin' us down for the count
But we're forgiven and pardoned
As Jesus taught on The Mount
So why do we live in anger?
And why do we wallow in hate?
Why do we grieve our Savior?
When it's Him we should imitate
Instead we follow The Liar
Fallin' for all of his tricks
Our sins are pilin' up higher
A mess only God can fix
Every soul laid low
By the ol' gray wolf
Every soul laid low
By the ol' gray wolf



 YouTube



Little Miss Livvy

written July 2002

Little Miss Livvy
She's so cute
Little Miss Livvy
She's a hoot
Little Miss Livvy
In her birthday suit
Chasin' down Osama in Afghanistan
If she can't do it ain't nobody can

Little Miss Livvy
She's all right
Little Miss Livvy
She's so tight
Little Miss Livvy
She's outta sight

Little Miss Livvy on the Erie Canal
Fifteen miles on a mule named Sal

Little Miss Livvy
She's so sweet
Little Miss Livvy
Good enough to eat
Little Miss Livvy
She just can't be beat

Little Miss Livvy on the Eiffel Tower
Chillin' in the middle of a cool May shower

Little Miss Livvy
Check her out

Little Miss Livvy
There's no doubt
Little Miss Livvy
Twist and shout

Little Miss Livvy floatin' down the Nile
Pharaoh's daughter can't resist that smile

Little Miss Livvy
She's so cute
Little Miss Livvy
She's a hoot
Little Miss Livvy
In her birthday suit

33



We Like Ike

written October 2023

Hoppin' along
On our hike
Singin' a song
That he likes

Tossin' that disc
With all his might
It goes like this
We like Ike

Strummin' a tune
On his guitar
Knowin' that soon
He'll go far

Cruisin' around
On his bike
He loves to play
We like Ike

We like Ike
Darlin' baby boy
Cute little tyke
Cuddlin' with his toys

We like Ike
Such a lovely child
Made so right
He'll drive the women wild

He's taken the world
By a storm
Now tucked in bed
Safe and warm

Trustin' the LORD
And every night
We'll say our prayers
We like Ike

