

Tracks

Background: Every city seems to have a set of train tracks that divide the town, often on socioeconomic and racial lines. Historically in the US this is true, and the cliches “across the tracks” or “the other side of the tracks” became common euphemisms for this phenomenon. My hometown has it, although it’s not that pronounced. It was more subtle, but it was there. The further you came on our side of the tracks, the less money there was, the more blue collar it became, and the more racially diverse it was. Most of the people we knew were “normal”, meaning not all that fancy, but not unsophisticated either. Most went to college, if that means anything.

There were these small houses built in rows in neighborhoods after WWII to provide inexpensive housing for returning veterans. In general, the houses, cars and lifestyles were modest. The further you went on the other (west) side of the tracks, the more you got into lavish houses, rich private schools, luxury cars, and wealth. We played sports against some of those kids and saw them show up to games in their parents’ BMWs and Mercedes, wearing nice sweat suits and leather Adidas shoes at a time when that wasn’t common, at least not on our side. I don’t recall if we were impressed, jealous, resentful, or indifferent. But it was noticeable.

I live in that area now. It feels like I graduated or accomplished something.

We never really felt like we were missing anything - we were private school kids ourselves, albeit at somewhat more modest, parochial schools - but we weren’t rolling in it either. Vacations and material things were mostly modest by the standards I see now. Times change.

So, there’s some truth to this song, and some embellishment from this writer’s personal experience for effect, but it’s not pure fiction either. I imagine it is closer to the truth for others.

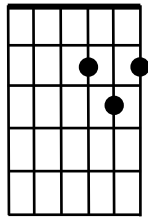
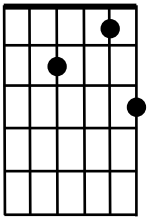
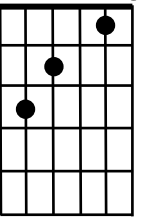
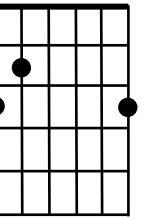
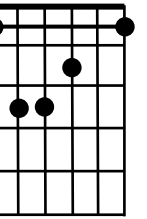
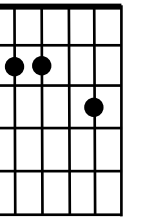
Written: 2023

Tracks

Arr.	Key	Time	Tuning	Tempo	Style	Capo
1	Em	4/4	Standard	130	Folk, Acoustic Rock	2

Arrangement	1
Intro	Em7 G D Am7
Verse	Em7 G D Am7
Chorus	G D Am7 Em7 G D Am7 Cadd9
Bridge	F C G D F C G D

Chords Used in this Song

D	Am7	C	G	F	Em7
* O O 	* O O 	* O O 	O O O 		O O O 

Tracks

Verse

Em7

Every town has its tracks

G

Dividing the ups from the downs

D

The north from the south

Am7

The smiles from the frowns

Em7

The north half tends to prosper

G

While the south side rots

D

If that's where you grew up

Am7

You were the have nots

Verse

Em7

But it never felt like that

G

Never thought of it that way

D

I Never wanted any privilege

Am7

We just went about our day

Em7

We had each other's backs

G

That was more than enough

D

Kept our heads held high

Am7

Especially when things got rough

Chorus

G

Across the tracks

D
Over the divide
Am7
Where real lives lived
Em7
And real lives died
G
Across the tracks
D
We were taught to believe
Am7
Said we'd never go back
Cadd9
But you never really leave

Verse

Em7
Running next to the Pike
G
Splitting the east from west
D
Downtown to all points north
Am7
Our side felt second best
Em7
Pass all those small houses
G
Built after World War Two
D
The same exact model
Am7
Row after row fills the view

Verse

Em7
All those heroes came home
G
After fighting the last great war
D
Raised a lot of good people there

Am7
Who didn't ask for anything more
Em7
Some of their sons came home
G
Shell shocked from Vietnam
D
You could tell who they were
Am7
From the tracks running up their arms

Chorus

G
Across the tracks
D
Over the divide
Am7
Where real lives lived
Em7
And real lives died
G
Across the tracks
D
We were taught to believe
Am7
Said we'd never go back
Cadd9
But you never really leave

Bridge

F
The crossbuck warns its presence
C
The gate arm blocks the path
G
Signal lights blare a warning
D
To stay out of the train's wrath
F
The box cars ramble on

C
The train whistle screams
G
Next stop Summit Ave
D
Been there since 1873

Verse

Em7
We used to count our pennies
G
There wasn't much else to count
D
Except days on earth we had left
Am7
Neither felt like a large amount
Em7
We'd take those pennies
G
Place them on the tracks
D
Watch the train pass
Am7
Squash those pennies flat

Chorus

G
Across the tracks
D
Over the divide
Am7
Where real lives lived
Em7
And real lives died
G
Across the tracks
D
Stuck on our side
Am7

They said we'd make it out
But we always knew they lied

G
Across the tracks
D
Below the ravine
Am7
We left our own tracks
Em7
In the space in between

G
Across the tracks
D
We were taught to believe
Am7
Said we'd never go back
Cadd9
But you never really leave

Tracks

Verse

Every town has its tracks
Dividing the ups from the downs
The north from the south
The smiles from the frowns
The north half tends to prosper
While the south side rots
If that's where you grew up
You were the have nots

Verse

But it never felt like that
Never thought of it that way
Never wanted any privilege
We just went about our day
We had each other's backs
That was more than enough
Kept our heads held high
Especially when things got rough

Chorus

Across the tracks
Over the divide
Where real lives lived
And real lives died
Across the tracks
We were taught to believe
Said we'd never go back
But you never really leave

Verse

Running next to the Pike
Splitting the east from west
Downtown to all points north
Our side felt second best
Pass all those small houses
Built after World War Two
The same exact model
Row after row fills the view

Verse

All those heroes came home
After fighting the last great war
Raised a lot of good people there
Who didn't ask for anything more
Some of their sons came home
Shell shocked from Vietnam
You could tell who they were
From the tracks running up their arms

Chorus

Across the tracks
Over the divide
Where real lives lived
And real lives died
Across the tracks
We were taught to believe
Said we'd never go back
But you never really leave

Bridge

The crossbuck warns its presence
The gate arm blocks the path
Signal lights blare a warning
To stay out of the train's wrath
The box cars ramble on
The train whistle screams
Next stop Summit Ave
Been there since 1873

Verse

We used to count our pennies
There wasn't much else to count
Except days on earth we had left
Neither felt like a large amount
We'd take those pennies
Place them on the tracks
Watch the train pass
Squash those pennies flat

Chorus

Across the tracks
Over the divide
Where real lives lived
And real lives died

Across the tracks
Stuck on our side
They said we'd make it out
But we always knew they lied

Across the tracks
Below the ravine
We left our own tracks
In the space in between

Across the tracks
We were taught to believe
Said we'd never go back
But you never really leave

Tracks

<p>Capo: 2 Verse: Em7 G D Am7</p>	<p>Chorus: G D Am7 Em7 G D Am7 Cadd9</p>	<p>Bridge: F C G D F C G D</p>
<p>Verse Every town has its tracks Dividing the ups from the downs The north from the south The smiles from the frowns The north half tends to prosper While the south side rots If that's where you grew up You were the have nots</p>	<p>Verse Running next to the Pike Splitting the east from west Downtown to all points north Our side felt second best Pass all those small houses Built after World War Two The same exact model Row after row fills the view</p>	<p>Bridge The crossbuck warns its presence The gate arm blocks the path Signal lights blare a warning To stay out of the train's wrath The box cars ramble on The train whistle screams Next stop Summit Ave Been there since 1873</p>
<p>Verse But it never felt like that Never thought of it that way Never wanted any privilege We just went about our day We had each others' backs That was more than enough Kept our heads held high Especially when things got rough</p>	<p>Verse All those heroes came home After fighting the last great war Raised a lot of good people there Who didn't ask for anything more Some of their sons came home Shell shocked from Vietnam You could tell who they were From the tracks running up their arms</p>	<p>Verse We used to count our pennies There wasn't much else to count Except days on earth we had left Neither felt like a large amount We'd take those pennies Place them on the tracks Watch the train pass Squash those pennies flat</p>
<p>Chorus Across the tracks Over the divide Where real lives lived And real lives died Across the tracks We were taught to believe Said we'd never go back But you never really leave</p>	<p>Chorus Across the tracks Over the divide Where real lives lived And real lives died Across the tracks We were taught to believe Said we'd never go back But you never really leave</p>	<p>Chorus Across the tracks Over the divide Where real lives lived And real lives died Across the tracks Stuck on our side They said we'd make it out But we always knew they lied</p>
		<p>Across the tracks Below the ravine We left our own tracks In the space in between</p> <p>Across the tracks We were taught to believe Said we'd never go back But you never really leave</p>