

FSI-60

*"Ballads and Butterflies"*

# JOAN SPRUNG



**FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.**

SHARON, CONNECTICUT 06069



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*with Bob Emery, Ed Trickett, Gordon Bok,  
and Sandy and Caroline Paton*

*Recorded by Sandy Paton  
Notes by Joan Sprung*

Singer, songwriter, poet, guitarist, mother (of three), woman — Joan Sprung is all of these and, for many, she is also a deeply sympathetic friend. In her music, she moves with remarkable ease from the traditional ballads, through early country music and turn-of-the-century sentimental pieces, to some fine contemporary songs, many of which are her own. Each is sung with unquestionable authority. While there is strength in Joan's singing, there is tenderness, too. In her writing we find wisdom and humor and love.

All of this is to say that we respect Joan as an artist, admire her as a woman, and cherish her as a friend. This is her first solo album and we are pleased that she chose to make it for us. Listen — and you will understand why.

*Sandy Paton  
June, 1976*

## Side 1

THE TRAVELLING SHOW (Sprung) - 3:47  
TIME GLIDES ALONG (Sprung) - 2:29  
BUTTERFLIES (Sprung) - 4:28  
I'M AFRAID OF THUNDERSTORMS (Sprung) 3:40  
WHEN I'M OLD (Sprung) - 2:47  
LITTLE BLACK BOY (Blake/Emery) - 3:53  
FARE YOU WELL (Wheeler) - 2:27

## Side 2

THE SWEET SUNNY SOUTH - 3:40  
ONE MORNING IN MAY (trad./Rooney) - 4:53  
JULIA GROVER - 2:19  
SHE IS MORE TO BE PITIED THEN CENSURED - 3:24  
SWEET WILLIAM - 2:42  
THE DREAM OF A MINER'S CHILD - 4:07  
FOND AFFECTION (trad./Rooney) - 2:28

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Sharon, Connecticut 06069



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JOAN SPRUNG

An Appreciation

A small, dark-haired young woman steps out onto the stage of a coffee house. She speaks softly to the audience and then begins to play a strong, catching introduction on her large guitar. Whatever the song, you are drawn in quickly, and then realize you are hearing something special. She brings the words and music to you in a way which makes them fresh and new, even though the tune is very familiar. Few performers are so fully aware of the songs they sing or interpret them with such depth. The songs she writes are filled with an understanding of people and their needs, with her own deep feelings coming through. Her expression catches you up and you are part of the song, sharing every bit of it.

This is Joan Sprung, folksinger, songwriter, and warm, sensitive human being. You will leave her performance with a good feeling, remembering the exceptionally fine sounds of the guitar and mountain dulcimer, and the unusual, rich, deep voice, as well as seeing in your mind the sparkle in her eyes and smile, which includes everyone with whom she comes in touch.

All this is why we love to spend an evening with Joan. She lives in a little Connecticut town called Sandy Hook, with one delightful six-year-old daughter, Robin, who helps her write songs. An older daughter, Andrea, is majoring in theater at college. Her son, Marty, is a fine musician and plays with a bluegrass group in Boston called Northern Lights. The small house is filled with exciting music, lots of books, and wonderful smells of good things cooking. We have often left her doorstep with happy feelings of an evening made memorable with good singing, comfortably full of homemade bread and soup, and the warm feelings you get from being with a very special person.

*Dallas Cline*

The Barn Coffee House

Connecticut Folk Arts Center  
Ridgefield, Connecticut



"BALLADS AND BUTTERFLIES"

JOAN SPRUNG

It's hard to say specifically what led me back to the old songs, but I'll try.

One influence was my grandmother, a classically trained concert singer, who lived with us while I was growing up. Her native language was French and, as a result, so was mine until the age of four. I'd climb into her lap, when I was little, and she'd sing me French folk songs. I can still remember some, but because my uvular "r" was a source of great hilarity in kindergarten, I refused to speak, let alone sing, anything but English after that.

My mother could sing harmony and my Aunt Vera played the piano, so music was frequently happening at our house. As a singer, my father was a very good doctor; nevertheless, he and I always used to render "Show Me the Way To Go Home" in the car together.

Another input was a number of old country "78's" which we somehow came by. They would probably be collector's gems, had they not broken, one by one, over the years. They put the sound of fiddles and banjos in my head.

George Margolin was a printer from New York City, a friend of my parents, and my special friend for many years. He had the distinction of being the very first to play folk songs in Washington Square in New York (a mecca for city "folkies" during the 50's and 60's). He'd bring his guitar on his visits to my home and hooked me on that sound at the age of six or seven. For me, this music lived!

We moved from the country in Morristown, New Jersey, to Connecticut. I played autoharp and then guitar in my teens, then eventually married and co-produced Marty, Andrea (Andy), and Robin. Throughout the years, I continued to pick up songs from recordings, books, and best of all, from people. I began to sing them in schools, coffeehouses, and concerts, was a summer camp music director, and taught guitar. (Still do.) While a member of Roger Sprung's "Progressive Bluegrassers", I got to travel and sing at bluegrass and folk festivals.



What mostly put and kept me on the track of folk music, however, was the songs themselves. They tell great stories of very *human* beings and can be related to on that level even though we may not happen to be miners' children, farmers, or royalty. This empathy, plus an intensity and a sense of immediacy, is brought forward out of the past, making traditional music relevant, enduring, and universal (not to mention happy, sad, and fun!).

The songs that I write are my way of documenting a feeling, an event, a conviction. So, occasionally, I take a fragment of my living (or someone else's) and put it down in words and music. Good for registering delight, exorcizing pain, blowing off steam.

Music is another kind of "magic penny" for me. It can only go on being alive and exciting as long as you give it away. I feel very unproprietary about the songs I do. They're only personal insofar as they are filtered through my "paintbox" and, of course, become tinted with my favorite colors on the way. How you perceive and interpret them is unimportant, as long as they keep being sung.

The songs that I share with you on this record are not mine; they are ours. I hope you love them, too.

I am grateful for the help I had in making this album. There are very special and dear-to-me people lending vocal, instrumental, and moral support.

Sandy Paton has infinite (well, nearly) patience, genius, and good taste in his engineering and editing and putting together of Folk-Legacy records. In addition, from him came the inspiration for the ritual we performed at the end of each evening of recording: the Ice Cream Orgy (with fudge sauce on top!). He adds his silky voice to "Time Glides Along."

Caroline Paton's warm, loving hospitality for the whole week made me feel utterly "at home." The beautiful high harmony on "Travelling Show" is Caroline.

I can't not mention the rest of the Paton household. David and Robin Paton are two of the neatest people in the world, and Lee Haggerty is a kind and good friend. They all routinely work their lives around recording sessions.

Bob Emery impressed me with his sensitive, blending voice and fine guitar work, as well as with "The Little Black Boy" for which he wrote the melody. He has an amazing knack for following every nuance of my singing in his harmonies. I am so pleased that he let me use his song and considerable talent for this album.

The magic in Ed Trickett's music is almost perceived, rather than heard, and surpasses technical skill on an instrument or mere "prettiness." His singing voice is gentle, with worlds of intensity just underneath, and his creative instrumentation makes playing music together a privilege for me.

Gordon Bok's beautifully resonant harmony contributes a lush dimension to several songs on this album. I'm thankful for his being "there" with helpful suggestions and good company. His comment on leaving was: "Good singing party, we had!"

And so we did!

Joan Sprung

## THE SONGS

### Side 1, Band 1. THE TRAVELLING SHOW

My stepfather was amusing us one day with a silly song and explained how he'd learned it as a boy from a travelling show. "Old Man" Henry's troupe of actors used to tour the rural towns in upstate New York around 1910 with a melodrama and a comedy routine, and his nostalgia, as well as the story, made me feel that it needed to be a song.

*They came into town in a wagon, don't you know,  
Hold on to your dreams till the day is done,  
Old Man Henry and his Travelling Show,  
Then they hitched up their horses and the show's all gone.*

*'Way back then, it was good to be alive,  
Hold on to your dreams till the day is done,  
Turn and touch the memories of a golden time,  
Then they hitched up their horses and the show's all gone.*

*We'd wait a whole year to see the actors in a play;  
More beautiful than real, and it was over in a day.*

*Forgot all the hard times, forgot that we were poor;  
Laughed till we cried and our sides got sore.*

*We were lost in the magic and the color and the shine;  
Then they packed up and moved on to the next town on the line.*



Side 1, Band 5. WHEN I'M OLD

When my grandmother was an old lady, she lived much of the time in the past. She could recall, precisely, whole conversations with her sisters as a child and events that had happened fifty years earlier, but had trouble remembering what she had done the day before. The past was a stable, warm, and safe place to live in.

*You run your fingers through your hours,  
Search for scraps of sun and flowers,  
Humming bits of songs that you once knew.  
Busy with the bygone days,  
Recalling happy memories,  
Regretting that the time so quickly flew.*

*Those years gone by all seem so fine,  
You wish you could turn back in time  
And do the things you've done before again.  
To see the warm familiar places,  
Comforting and friendly faces —  
The present is less real than what was then.*

*I wonder if I'll grow so old  
And lonely that the past is golden  
And the future's promise disappears.  
You tightly hold to what is sure,  
Old memories are quite secure,  
And thinking of them soothes away the fears.*

*When I'm old,  
When I'm old,  
Will I be just like you?*

Side 1, Band 6. LITTLE BLACK BOY

I heard Bob Emery sing this with his band, "Northern Lights." He had edited William Blake's poem (from *Songs of Innocence*) and had given it a melody, resulting in this beautiful song.

*Mother taught me underneath a tree,  
Sitting down before the heat of day.  
She took me on her lap and she kissed me,  
And pointing to the East began to say:*

*We are put on earth a little space,  
That we may learn to bear the beams of love.  
This black body and this sunburned face  
Is but a cloud and like a shady grove.*

*Look on the rising sun, there God does live;  
Gives his light, and gives his heat away.  
Flowers and trees and beasts and men receive  
Comfort in morning, joy in the noon day.*

*When our souls have learn't the heat to bear,  
Clouds will vanish; we shall hear his voice:  
Now come out from the grove, my love and care,  
And 'round my golden tent, like lambs, rejoice.*

Side 1, Band 7. FARE YOU WELL

I remember hearing Honey and Burt Knopp of Westport, Connecticut, sing this gentle parting song, years ago. It was written by Billy Edd Wheeler. The words in the last verse ("And God hath made...") are quoted from the cornerstone of Berea College in Kentucky.

*So fare you well now, my good people,  
Wherever you are, wherever you go,  
Wherever you come from, wherever you're travelling,  
I know your name.*

*I have seen you in my travels,  
North and south, east and west.  
You love freedom, man and woman,  
And I know your name.*

*They call you father, they call you mother,  
They call you sister, they call you brother,  
They call you rich boy, they call you poor boy,  
And I know your name.*

*And this I know:  
God hath made of one blood  
All the nations of mankind  
To live as brothers on this earth.  
So fare you well now,  
Farewell, brother,  
Fare you well.*

Side 2, Band 1. THE SWEET SUNNY SOUTH

This song was made relatively well known by Charlie Poole and his North Carolina Ramblers. It is my all-time favorite "home" song.



Take me home to the place where I first saw the light,  
To that sweet, sunny South, take me home,  
Where the mockingbirds sing me to sleep every night.  
Oh, why was I tempted to roam?

Oh, I think with regret of the dear home I left,  
Of the warm hearts that sheltered me then.  
'Twas my wife and the dear ones of whom I'm bereft,  
Then I sigh for the old place again.

Take me home to the place where the orange trees grow,  
To my cot in the evergreen shade  
Where the flowers on the river's green margins may bloom  
So sweet on the banks where we played.

Take me home, let me see what is left that I knew.  
Can it be that the old house is gone?  
The dear friends of my childhood indeed must be few  
And I must face death all alone.

Side 2, Band 2. ONE MORNING IN MAY

This version of "The Nightingale" is Jim Rooney's tune,  
along with words slightly "folk-processed" by me over the years.  
The song goes under many names with various tunes in the Anglo-  
American tradition. This has a most sensual melody, even without  
the sexual innuendos in the lyrics. The story, ever familiar, has  
a charm which never becomes trite. Everybody loves a seduction!

One morning, one morning, one morning in May,  
I spied a young couple a-making their way.  
One was a maiden, a maiden so fair;  
The other a soldier, a brave volunteer.

"Good morning, good morning, good morning to thee.  
And where be you going, my pretty lady?"  
"Oh, I'm going walking because it is Spring,  
To see waters glide, hear the nightingale sing."

They hadn't been standing a moment or two,  
When out of his pack-sack a fiddle he drew,  
And the tune that he played made the valleys all ring,  
And it sounded more sweet than the nightingales sing.

"Now," said the soldier, "it is time to leave o'er."  
"Oh, no," said the fair maid, "play a tune or two more!"  
So he keyed up his fiddle all on the high string  
And he played her the same tune right over again.

"Now, handsome soldier, you must marry me."  
"Oh, no, pretty fair maid, that never can be,  
For I have a wife and children twice three.  
Two wives in the army are too much for me.

"I'll go back to London and stay there a year,  
And often I'll think of you, my little dear.  
And if I return, it will be in the Spring,  
To see waters glide, hear the nightingales sing."

Come all you fair maidens, take a warning from me.  
Never place your affection in a soldier so free,  
For he'll love you and leave you without any ring  
To rock your little baby, hear the nightingales sing.

Side 2, Band 3. JULIA GROVER

I found this in Eloise Hubbard Linscott's *Folk Songs of Old New England*. It was collected in Maine, but Tony Saletan says it may also be found (with an additional verse) in a Florida folk song collection. It is definitely a frolic tune. "Frolic" is an old-fashioned word that few people use and, sadly, fewer do, but if you listen to the harmony in the chorus, you'll hear Ed and Gordon "frolicking."

As I was going to the mill one day,  
I met Miss Julia on my way.  
She 'spressed a wish that she might ride,  
And up jumped Julia by my side.

Sit down there, Miss Julia Grover,  
Play on your banjo, I'm your lover.  
Going to the mill with Julia.

Julia jumped into the cart  
And that's what made the oxen start.  
The oxen started and the cart tipped over,  
And out went me and Julia Grover.

Julia, the chick of the old blue hen,  
Flew at me in a fury then.  
She scratched my face and tore my hair,  
And that is all that made me swear.

Side 2, Band 4. SHE IS MORE TO BE PITIED THAN CENSURED

This is a classic. Pure schmaltz now, but in its day it was more than likely held forth as a grim warning to young virgins against the evils of exploitive men and wild living.



In an old concert hall in the Bowery,  
 'Round a table was seated, one night,  
 A crowd of young fellows carousing.  
 With them, life seemed cheerful and bright.  
 At the very next table was seated  
 A girl who had fallen to shame.  
 All the young fellows jeered at her weakness,  
 Till they heard an old woman explain:

She is more to be pitied than censured;  
 She is more to be helped than despised.  
 She is only a lassie who ventured  
 Down life's stormy path, ill-advised.  
 Do not scorn her with words fierce and bitter;  
 Do not laugh at her shame and downfall.  
 For a moment, just stop and consider  
 That a man was the cause of it all.

In a little old church 'round the corner,  
 All the neighbors were gathered one day,  
 And the parson was preaching a sermon  
 O'er a soul that had just passed away.  
 'Twas the same wayward girl from the Bowery  
 Who a life of adventure had led.  
 Did the clergyman laugh at her downfall?  
 Oh, no! He asked for God's mercy and said:

She is more to be pitied....

#### Side 2, Band 5. SWEET WILLIAM

I remember reading in *Dr. Doolittle*, as a little girl, a description of the animal crew and the good doctor on board a ship. Polynesia, the parrot, hummed a sad sailor song — perhaps this was it. My source for this version was A. K. Davis' *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*. The ballad is also known as "Lost Willie", "The Sailor Boy", etc., in various other collections.

A sailor's life is a dreary life;  
 It robs pretty maids of their heart's delight.  
 It causes them for to weep and to moan  
 The loss of their true love that never can return.

"Father, O Father, go build me a boat  
 That over the ocean I may float.  
 And every vessel, as I draw nigh,  
 Of him I will inquire of my sweet sailor boy.

"Captain, Captain, tell me true,  
 Does my sweet William sail with you?  
 Tell me quick and give me joy;  
 I'll never have any but my sweet sailor boy."

"No, kind miss, he is not here.  
 Your William is dead, I greatly fear.  
 On yon green isle, as I passed by,  
 I helped for to bury a fine sailor boy."

She wrung her hands and tore her hair  
 Just like a maiden in despair.  
 Her boat against the rocks did run.  
 "Why should I live, when my true love is gone?"

"Bring me a chair to sit upon,  
 A pen and ink to write it down."  
 In every line she dropped a tear;  
 In every verse, "Farewell, my dear.

"Dig my grave both wide and deep.  
 Put a marble stone at my head and feet,  
 And on my breast, a turtle dove,  
 To show to the world that I died of love."

#### Side 2, Band 6. THE DREAM OF A MINER'S CHILD

This is typical of the "parlor" type of song, sentimental and/or tragic, calculated to tear your heart out. What do you suppose ever did happen at the mine?

A miner was leaving his home for his work  
 When he heard his little child scream.  
 He went to the side of the little girl's bed;  
 She said, "Daddy, I've had such a dream!"

"Please, Daddy, don't go to the mines today,  
 For dreams have so often come true.  
 My daddy, my daddy, please don't go away,  
 For I never could live without you!"

Then, smiling and stroking his little girl's cheek,  
 He was turning away from her side,  
 But she threw her small arms around Daddy's neck,  
 Gave him a kiss, and then cried:

"I dreamed that the mines were all blazing with fire  
 And the workers all fought for their lives.  
 Just then, the scene changed, and the mouth of the mine  
 Was all covered with sweethearts and wives."



*"Go down to the village and tell all our dear friends  
That, as sure as the bright stars do shine,  
There is something that's going to happen today.  
Please, Daddy, don't go to the mines!"*

Side 2, Band 7. FOND AFFECTION

The tune is by Jim Rooney; the words may be found in Carl Sandburg's *Songbag*. These are "floating" folk verses, put together in a beautiful "lost love" lament.

*The world's so wide, I cannot cross over;  
The sea's so deep, I cannot wade.  
I'll just go hire me a little boatman  
To row me across the stormy tide.*

*I'll give you back your ring and letters,  
And the picture I loved so well.  
And, henceforth, we will meet as strangers;  
But I will never say farewell.*

*There's only three things that I could wish for:  
That is my coffin, shroud and grave.  
And, when I'm dead, please don't weep o'er me,  
Or kiss the lips you once betrayed.*

*The world's so wide, I cannot cross over;  
The sea's so deep, I cannot wade.  
I'll just go hire me a little boatman  
To row me across the stormy tide.*

CREDITS:

TRAVELLING SHOW: Bob Emery, voice and guitar  
Caroline Paton, voice

TIME GLIDES ALONG: Bob Emery, voice and guitar  
Sandy Paton, voice

BUTTERFLIES: Bob Emery, voice and guitar

THUNDERSTORMS: Bob Emery, voice and guitar

LITTLE BLACK BOY: Bob Emery, voice and guitar

SWEET SUNNY SOUTH: Ed Trickett, voice and guitar  
Gordon Bok, voice

JULIA GROVER: Ed Trickett, hammered dulcimer and 1st bass  
Gordon Bok, 2nd Trickett (figure it out)

SHE IS MORE TO BE PITIED: Ed Trickett, voice and guitar  
Gordon Bok, voice

THE DREAM OF A MINER'S CHILD: Ed Trickett, voice and guitar  
Gordon Bok, voice