

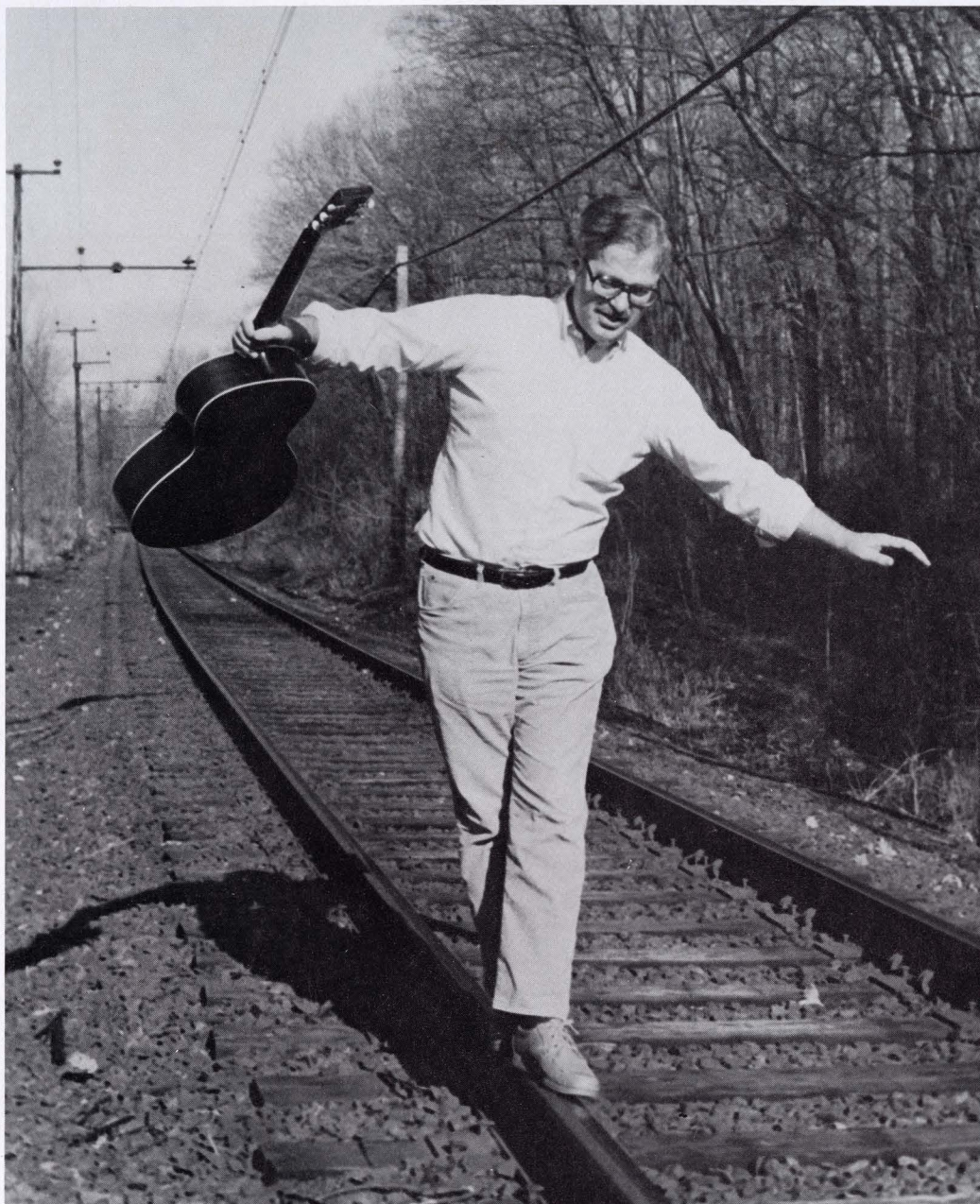
THE SECRET LIFE OF JERRY RASMUSSEN



FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS



FSI-101



THE SECRET LIFE OF JERRY RASMUSSEN

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Recorded by Sandy Paton
Cover photo by Sandy Paton
Back photo by Barbara Scribner
Jacket design by Walter A. Schwarz/
Silver Lining Productions

During the day, conservatively clad in sport coat and tie, Jerry Rasmussen masquerades as the mild-mannered director of the Stamford (Connecticut) Museum, quietly arranging for displays of regional geological formations or exhibits of the work of contemporary artists. In the evenings, however, a miraculous transformation often occurs: donning blue jeans and plaid shirt, he swaps his briefcase for a Guild D-50, and swiftly descends into the musical world of the coffee-house as... Super-Singer/Songwriter... the folksinger's songmaker!

Yet, even after his true identity has been revealed, Jerry remains a man of many parts, one who moves easily from a banjo-picking singer of traditional mountain songs to a finger-picking guitar player singing a blues from Peg Leg Howell. This album, however, his second for Folk-Legacy, features (with only one exception) Jerry Rasmussen, the songmaker, so I should write of that aspect of the man.

Jerry grew up in Janesville, a community situated on the Rock River in southern Wisconsin, home of the justly famous Janesville coaster wagon. It was then, and may still be, the kind of a town in which families would stroll down to Court House Park on summer evenings to hear a concert performed by the local band, known as the Parker Pen Band except on the one night of every month when all of the players wore their National Guard uniforms. On that night, they became the 32nd Army Tank Division Band, and "little Charlie Beehler took the trumpet solo on The Star Spangled Banner when the night was through."

Jerry remembers Janesville fondly, remembers the visits to his uncles' farms, remembers singing the fine old hymns with his family (when he wasn't surreptitiously listening to his favorite rhythm and blues groups on the Motorola in his room). Many of these memories have found their way into his songs, offering us a picture of

midwestern Americana that is unsurpassed in contemporary songmaking. Urban listeners may well find themselves wishing that they, too, had grown up in such a community.

Other songs, though, are less autobiographic, frequently giving us a glimpse of Jerry Rasmussen, the humorist, who has been compared to Will Rogers by Roy Harris, the English singer, no mean humorist himself.

Sally Rogers describes Jerry as "one of those rare songwriters who notices the mundane in life and then writes a gem of a song about it, capturing kernels of 'The Truth' in the process and making our lives the better for it."

I'll end this with another quote, this one from Tom Paxton: "This album is like a visit with an old friend, so pull up a chair."

Sandy Paton
Sharon, Connecticut
January, 1985

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THE SECRET LIFE OF JERRY RASMUSSEN

This album was a long time coming. It reminds me of a story I heard about a city-slicker who was visiting an old man in a mountain home in the South. He was admiring the beautiful patina on the pine walls of the home, and asked the old-timer, "How did you get such a beautiful finish on those walls?" The old-timer answered, "It's easy, you just nail up the boards and wait fifty years."

Not that it took fifty years to make this album (although at times it seemed like it did). It just took a long time for the music to get whatever patina it may have. That's one of the wonderful things about folk music. There's no real hurry.

The one thing I wanted this album to be was fun: first of all for everyone involved in making it, from Sandy and Caroline Paton, Major Contay and the Canebrake Rattlers, Pat Conte and Skip Gorman to Colin Healy and Jeff McHugh. Most of the time it was. Now I hope that you have a good time listening to it. If you do, then I figure that we've done our job.

Jerry Rasmussen
Stamford, Connecticut

DAVENPORT (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 1, Band 1.

Back before the days of computer dating and singles' bars, courtship moved at a rather leisurely pace. That was particularly true in small towns. In the mid and late 50's, I worked summers at the Fisher Body plant in Janesville, and spent many an hour listening to the exploits (real and imagined) of the young kids who'd come down from little northern Wisconsin towns like Ladysmith and Spooner, drawn to the high pay and Great White Way of Janesville. To them, courtship was pretty rudimentary, and attention to fine details, like combing your hair or putting on a clean shirt, made all the difference. What they lacked in finesse, they more than made up for in brute self-confidence. I wonder how they'd look on a video-tape in a computer-dating file?

*There's a moon out tonight, so won't you
come on over?*

Your momma don't have to know.

*I got a couple of beers in the 'frigerator,
Got the Opry on the radio.*

*We can sit on the steps and watch the
stars come out;*

Only be you and me.

*Or we can go cavort on the davenport,
And no one will ever see.*

*I'll be sitting here waiting in my
rocking chair*

*While you're walking on down the road.
I put out the cat, I got my dog tied up,
I got the lights turned way down low.
I got a part in my hair, I got my shoes
shined up,*

*I even wore my brand new shirt.
So, honey, don't be late, 'cause I can
hardly wait,
You know I rushed right home from work.*

*When the evening is over, then I'll walk
you home,*

*Or at least down to the corner store.
Everyone will be sleeping, even Murphy's
dog*

*Will be curled up on the kitchen floor.
And old Mrs. Johnson'll have her blinds
all drawn,*

*So we can wave as we walk on by,
And then it's one long kiss, 'cause it
will have to last*

Until I see you next Friday night.

(repeat first verse)

THE LAST MISSISSIPPI RIVER STEAMBOAT

(Rasmussen, BMI)

Side 1, Band 2.

This song is based on an actual event, described in the *Janesville Gazette*. When I read about it, the confrontation between the steamboat and the bridge at Fort Atkinson tickled me. You see, at that time, boats had the right-of-way over bridges. That may seem impractical now, but river travel was still more important than road or rail travel back then, and the laws reflected that. When I read about the owner of the bridge having to take out the "bents," I had to track down a book on the architecture of bridges. Bents are horizontal elements of a structure that spans a river, and would most likely be the lowest beams of the bridge.

This song was a great deal of fun to write; not just because it was such a delightful story, but because the melody turned out to be so unpredictable, and the rhyme scheme so demanding. Sometimes I snuck by, rhyming Fort Atkinson with "Cap'n say," and once in a while I just grazed a rhyme. As long as you don't stop to think about it, you probably won't notice the mistakes.

*On the Fourth of July in forty-four,
We saw the last Mississippi River steamboat
Coming up the river from Illinois,
Everybody come a-running when the whistle
blowed.*

*And the kids on the bank, they all waved
their handkerchiefs,
Hoping that the whistle would blow,
And somebody said, "They're going to head
up the river,
Oh, Daddy, don't you think I could go?"*

*All aboard for Jefferson, better get on
board;
It won't be long before the whistle blows.
Almost every able-bodied resident,
Waiting just to try to get on board.
We'll be steaming around the bend, we won't
be back again*

*Much before tomorrow night.
And the people on the river say they can't
remember when
They've seen such a beautiful sight.*

*Won't be long before we're to Fort Atkinson,
I can see it right around the bend.
Standing on the deck, I heard the Cap'n say,
"It won't be long and we'll be gone again."*

*But coming up ahead, we're coming to a
bridge,
We're riding just a trifle too high.
Well, you'd better call the Captain,
'cause we ain't going back.
They're just going to have to let us on by.*

*Standing on the shore was all Fort Atkinson,
Waiting for the boat to turn around.
Well, you better call the owner, tell him
get on over,
'Cause he's going to have to take a timber
out.
And he'd best not hesitate, we don't intend
to wait;
We've got you outnumbered two to one.
Well, we must have made some sense, 'cause
they took out the bents,
And we steamed on up to Jefferson.*

(repeat first verse)

TASTE OF SIN (Rasmussen, BMI)

Side 1, Band 3.

Skip Gorman: fiddle

This song just grew: some might say like a mold, but it had a mind of its own right from the beginning. The first two lines came between the wash and rinse cycles of a rather ordinary load of laundry, with no clue why a "nice night" might not have been as nice as it first seemed. A couple of days later, the rest of the first verse came, and I realized that I had a Kenny Rogers song gone berzerk. I still didn't know where the song was leading me until I found the bone in the back seat and realized that another dog had crept out of my subconscious and plunked itself down, right in the middle of the song. (I write a lot of songs with dogs in them.) I could see that there wasn't any way to get the dog out of the back seat, so I figured that I'd just have to build the rest of the song around him. Then I understood why that "nice night" had gone so wrong.

This is a country song that you'll never hear on a jukebox, but it's probably as realistic as all those songs about picking up a Dolly Parton look-alike in a bar that you've heard country singers do. It just wouldn't do much for someone's image to sing this song... it doesn't seem to have much to do with those blow-dried \$100 haircuts, the shirts unbuttoned to the waist, and the gold necklaces that real country singers wear.

It was a nice night; at least I thought
it was nice.

And it was the right time; at least I
thought it was right.

All I wanted was a taste of sin,
But when I started, the roof caved in.
If they only had told me, if I only had
known,

Well, I would have changed my whole way
of thinking,
A long time ago.

She said she was lonely, and it was Hell
back home.

And she said she was tired of being left
alone.

Well, I knew all about it, 'cause I was
feeling the same.

I had no reason to doubt it, she was
playing my game.

And when she asked me to take a ride in
her car,

Well, how was I to know that it would ever,
ever go this far?

Sitting in the back seat, with a day-old
bone,

And a partly-grown poodle she couldn't
leave at home,

'Cause he would only get lonely, and all
the neighbors complain,

But we'd be fine if I'd only softly whisper
his name,

'Cause he was really quite friendly, he
wouldn't do me no harm.

So there I sat, the poodle in my lap, the
woman in my arms.

And every time I kissed her, the dog would
growl.

And I would have loved to kick him, but I
didn't know how,

'Cause she looked so lovely, sitting there
in the dark,

But when I moved in closer, the damned
thing barked.

And just because I gave him a little twist
of his ear,

Well, she threw me out the door and she
said, "Well, you can walk from here."

Walking down the highway, afraid to hitch
a ride,

But if you remember, it was a lovely night.
Watch the new moon rising on the crest of
the hill.

I guess it isn't surprising, well, I'd had
my fill.

And all those songs on the jukebox, well,
they sure ain't me,

And if I hadn't pulled the dog's ear, God
knows where I'd be."

DREADFUL SHAME (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 1, Band 4.

Colin Healy & Jeff McHugh: harmonies

Back in the 60's, when I was playing music
in Greenwich Village, you weren't considered
much, if you didn't write protest songs. At
that time, though, I was too busy trying to
sound like an old 78. After protest songs
became less fashionable, I decided it was about
time that I wrote one. I'm usually about six
years behind the times.

Actually, you can blame this song on a
friend of mine, Mike Litt... (address provided
upon request). He made an off-hand comment
one day that no one was writing protest songs
anymore, so I dredged up all of my minor
irritations and got them off my chest. I'm
not convinced that this song will make the
world a better place to live in, but, at least,
it's fun to sing.

Old Aunt Addie, she's lived too long,
The neighbors all complain,
Walking all around in an old print dress,
She hardly even knows her name.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame, Lordy,
Isn't that a dreadful shame?
The old folks are messing up the neighbor-
hood.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame?

Bill, he's small and built for speed;
His car is just the same.
They caught him doing 50 in a 25 zone;
Now the judge says he has to pay.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame, Lordy,
Isn't that a dreadful shame?

He had to pay good money, just because he
broke the law.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame?

Down on the farm, the government pays
If you don't plant nothing at all,
And then they try to tell you that the crops
have all failed
And the price is going up in the fall.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame, Lordy,
Isn't that a dreadful shame?

When a man can make a living doing nothing
at all,

Isn't that a dreadful shame?

Down on the corner where the kids hang out
To listen to the radio,
At two in the morning they act real mean
If you ask'em just to keep it down low.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame, Lordy,
Isn't that a dreadful shame?
The kids can't have any fun anymore.
Well, isn't that a dreadful shame?

Some are too young, and others too old,
And most are too blind to see.
You'd think with all of these people that
are living 'round here,
There'd be a few as nice as me.

Well, isn't that a dreadful shame, Lordy,
Isn't that a dreadful shame?
Out of all these people, not a one
like me.
Well, isn't that a dreadful shame?

COAL MAN BLUES (traditional)
Side 1, Band 5.

This is an old Peg Leg Howell blues, distorted beyond recognition by the passing of years and a faulty memory. It's played in the key of F. I knew that I'd find a use for wrapping my thumb around the 6th string of my guitar, sooner or later.

Woke up this morning 'bout five o'clock,
Cooked me some eggs and a nice porkchop,
Drank a cup of coffee, read a magazine,
I had to run pretty fast to catch the 5:15.

Well, let me tell you something that I seen:
Coal man got run over by the 5:15.
Cracked his head and it bust his ribs.
Say, did the coal man die? No, the coal
man lived.

He's the hard coal and the stove wood
man,
He's the hard coal and the stove wood
man,
He's the hard coal and the stove wood
man,
You better run and get your bucket
just as fast as you can.

Well, let me tell you something that I know:
Coal man got run over by the 4:44.
Cracked his ribs and it bust his head.
Say, did the coal man live? No, the coal
man's dead.

(chorus)

Well, he sells it to the rich and he
sells it to the poor,
Sells it to the rich and he sells it
to the poor,
Sells it to the rich and he sells it
to the poor,
And he sells it to the nice brown that
lives next door.

(chorus)

(repeat first verse)

TONIGHT Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 1, Band 6.

As Robert Frost once wrote, at some point in his life, everyone comes to a fork in the road. He never said anything about *both* roads being dead ends, though. One night, back in 1962, I found myself marooned in the Cozart Hotel in Clinton, Missouri, in a \$4 a night room right next to the railroad tracks. When the "Katie" line freight trains would roll by, the Clorox bottle holding the plastic flowers would dance around on the dresser. Night life was a little slow in Clinton, so there wasn't much to do except sit on the bed and play guitar. And bay the moon.

When I was living in the city, they said
I belonged in the country;
When I was living in the country, they said
I was much too slick.
So here I am in a hotel room,
Sitting and picking out a country tune,
And if I was a dog, I'd bay the moon tonight.

A couple of beers and a seat right by the
window;
The guy downstairs said he'd give me a
room with a view.
But down on the street I can't see a soul,
And nobody's calling on the telephone.
It looks like I'm going to be staying
alone tonight.

Whoever said I would've been better off
at home was right.
At least I would've had you to get me
through the night.

So, I guess I'll just pour me another beer,
And sit and take it easy in the easy chair,
'Cause I ain't going anywhere tonight.

(repeat first verse)



"They'll all be listening to a ten-pound radio..."

TEN-POUND RADIO (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 1, Band 7.

Jerry Rasmussen: harmonies

In my small-town, Midwestern view of life, every street in every big city had a rhythm and blues group singing on the corner. It was only by a quirk of fate (and geography) that I wasn't there to sing bass. Folks in southern Wisconsin were more likely to be dancing a polka or a schottische, and "Lady of Spain" was the all-time, number one song on the hit parade.

But my appetite was different, and I'd lie on my bed at night with my Motorola propped on my stomach, using my arms and legs for antennae, to listen to WFOX in Milwaukee. They played the real stuff... the Penguins, the Crows, the Eldorados... all the music that was "covered" by the Crew Cuts, Pat Boone, and the Diamonds. When I'd go down to the record store to buy my weekly record, they'd always try to foist a Pat Boone or Perry Como "cover" on me. My record collection was always a few weeks behind, because I had to order every record I wanted. That's when I first started writing songs. My first one was "Foam Rubber Dice"... had a darned nice bass part, from what I can remember.

I owe a very special thanks to Pat Conte for being so enthusiastic about this song when I entrusted him with hearing it first, and to Sandy and Caroline for having the courage (and common sense) to let me record it the way I heard it inside my head.

*It wasn't all that long ago,
When we listened to the radio.
We all knew the songs by heart
And everybody sang their part.
And every corner had a group;
We sang "Searching" and "Alley-Oop."
And even though those days are gone,
I still like to sing those songs.*

*Now when you walk downtown at night,
Underneath the street lamp light,
Any kids you're like to see,
They won't be working on their harmony.
Oh, no, they'll all be listening to a
ten-pound radio,
And even though they know the song,
They never even sing along.
Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no,
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no,
No-oh-oh.*

(repeat first verse and chorus)

*Say, does anybody know whatever happened to
Johnny Otis?
Or Otis Williams and the Charms?
Or Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs?
Or Amos Otis?*

*Or what about Shirley and Lee?
Or Mickey and Silvia?
Or Jan and Arnie?
Or Donnie and Marie?*

*Or what about the Crows?
Or the Penguins?
Or the Ravens?
Or the Dogs...*

UNCLE JIM (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 1.

Like a lot of my uncles, my uncle Jim was a farmer. As a kid, going out to visit my cousins on one farm or another was always a lot of fun. Being company, I didn't get stuck with all the back-breaking work of running a farm. Even then, I'd notice my uncle Jim or Ross, depending on which uncle I was visiting) putting in some mighty long hours. Maybe the hard work made the nights, sitting around listening to the radio or reading, all that much more appreciated. This song is a patchwork of my memories and those of my mother when she was growing up on a farm, with my dad's *Reader's Digest* and Prince Albert thrown in for good measure. Buster was my mother's dog. She likes dogs, too.

*Old Uncle Jim, he said, said to his son, he
said,
Wake up, Howard, 'cause it's almost dawn.
The snowdrifts have covered up the old
haywagon,
And we'll have to dig our way out to the
barn.
And the cows will all be waiting for the old
milk pail,
And it won't be long before the rooster
crows.
So, we better hop to it, 'cause there's no
one else to do it,
And the sky is turning cloudy and it looks
like snow.*



INTERIOR OF STAR BILLIARD (now STAR RESTAURANT & TOBACCO BAR)
Pat Bruni (left front), former owner of Star Billiard, with
Frank Stratton, current owner of Star Restaurant & Tobacco Bar.
Photo courtesy of Frank Stratton. (Tell him Jerry sent you.)

After all the work was done, down by the
cow pond,
The kids'd all go sliding through the old
corn field.
Waiting for the bell to call them home to
supper,
And racing old Buster down the hill.
And Jim would just be finishing the
evening chores;
He'd be working by the backyard light.
And, even though it's late, you know the
stock can't wait.
You've got to get 'em bedded down for a
winter's night.

Old Uncle Jim, he sits, sits in his chair,
he sits
Reading Reader's Digest for the fourteenth
time,
Puffing on a bowl of old Prince Albert
And sipping on some elderberry wine.
And the kids are all sitting 'round the
Motorola,
And they're listening to their favorite
show,
Just swapping dares to be the first
upstairs,
And then trying not to shiver 'cause the
floors are cold.

(repeat first verse)

PLANTER'S BAR (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 2.

Early one morning in the summer of 1982,
when I was home visiting my family, I walked
down to the "Star" to pick up a paper. Even
though there wasn't much happening, so early
in the day, there was an old codger sitting
on the steps of the London Hotel, watching
the street. For some reason, he stuck in my
mind, and I started to think about how much
the town must have changed in his lifetime,
and how the town had been taken over, at
night, by the kids. Now that the main drag
is one-way, the kids race down Milwaukee
Street and back up Court Street to Court
House Park. The old-timers call them
"Circuit Riders." Most of the old bars have
either been torn down, or taken over by the
Circuit Riders. Even Star Billiard is gone
now... moved across the street and gone
respectable as the Star Restaurant and
Tobacco Bar. But you can sit at a front
table and get a good view of the street
while you nurse a cup of coffee, and it's
still a good place to run into old friends.
If you stop by, say hello to Frank for me.

Tell him Jerry sent you.

Used to be I'd walk downtown,
Down to Planter's Bar.
Half the guys I knew those days,
They didn't own a car.
But, if you knew the reg'lars,
They were just like family,
And it was "How the hell you doing, Roy?"
And "Have a drink on me."

And now they tore old Planter's down
To build another bank,
And no one ever walks downtown
To have a couple drinks.
And when you walk into a bar,
Nobody says hello,
And it's getting so it's hard to find
A friendly place to go.

And now they ride the circuit
From Main to Court House Park,
And stop to have a couple beers
Down at the Bear Trap Bar.
And when the fights and music spill
Out into the street,
As I lie here on my bed,
I find it hard to sleep.

I never thought I'd end up living
In a hotel room,
Lying half-awake all night
And sleeping until noon.
I guess I'll walk down to the Star
And get a bite to eat,
Maybe see someone I know,
Or sit and watch the street.

(repeat first verse)

32ND ARMY TANK DIVISION BAND (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 3.

Colin Healy & Jeff McHugh: harmonies

Thursday nights, during the summer, we'd
usually end up sitting out on the front lawn
in our lawn chairs. It was an easy way to
spend a slow, sociable evening, because there'd
be a fairly steady flow of neighbors, out for a
walk, who'd stop and talk for awhile. It would
not be long before someone would say, "Well, we
got to get going... going to the band concert,
you know." That was enough to get us up and
going, too. We'd put the lawn chairs up on the
porch and head down to Court House Park. The
next block down, we'd stop for a minute to talk
to some folks sitting out in their lawn chairs,
and when we'd say that we were on our way to

the band concert, they'd put *their* lawn chairs on their front porch and head on down, too. It never occurred to me that if that first couple who started out for the band concert had gotten sick, or been away on vacation, maybe no one would have gone to the concert that night.

The band that played was the Parker Pen Band, except for one Thursday a month when they all wore their National Guard uniforms and were miraculously transformed into the 32nd Army Tank Division Band. In those days, being in the National Guard was looked upon as a sure-fire way of staying out of the war, but the 32nd Army Tank Division was called up in World War II and became part of the infamous Bataan death march. Two thirds of the young men who went over did not survive the march.

Little Charlie Beehler crept in here, in the chorus, in honor of the historic role he played in Wisconsin history. He was the trumpet player in the first all-girl (almost) band in Wisconsin. His name has been changed to protect his descendants.

*Every Thursday evening when the sun went down,
We'd be sitting in a big lawn chair.
And you could hear the band playing in
Court House Park,
'Cause it's just a half a mile from here.*

*They'd play a few marches from Sousa's band,
And a Viennese waltz or two.
And little Charlie Beehler took the trumpet solo
On the Star Spangled Banner when the night was through.*

*Walking to the park, we'd be marching to the music,
And I can still hear it yet.
It was the 32nd Army Tank Division Band,
So we always tried to keep in step.*

(chorus)

*Wave at Uncle Ernie, he's playing in the band,
And the kids are all playing tag.
And I'll buy you some popcorn at the corner stand,
'Cause it only costs a dime a bag.*

(chorus)

*When the band was done playing, then we'd walk back home
And go riding on the front porch swing,
Or watch the kids catching fire-flies in the yard,
Or listen to the crickets sing.*

(chorus)

(repeat first verse)

POPPA WAS A PREACHER (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 4.

Colin Healy & Jeff McHugh: harmonies

For some reason or another, most of my uncles who weren't farmers were preachers. That's probably why the first two lines of this song came out the way they did. Just as I spent many memorable weekends visiting my uncles on the farm, I also have some fond memories of visiting with my uncle Walt who was a preacher. And then there's my uncle Ralph, my uncle Harold, my uncle... But Uncle Walt got this song going.

A couple of summers ago (we say a "couple few" in Wisconsin), we had a big family picnic down along the river, and Uncle Walt sang the grace. His voice is so low that he makes me sound like Dennis Day, and everyone had to sing an octave above him. He sang "Old 100," and I thought it was a great way to bless a gathering. The first couple few lines of this song came flowing out a couple few weeks after the picnic. So, even though it's not titled "Uncle Walt," this one's for him.

*Poppa was a preacher down in Kankakee,
Where the soil was black as coal,
And the only job he ever had was planting of the seed,
And the harvesting of the soul.
And when we got together 'round the table every night,
He always sang the grace.
And I can hear my momma singing high harmony,
While my poppa sang the bass.*

*And we sang "Old 100" and "Walking in the Garden"
And "A Closer Walk with Thee."
And there never was a song that my poppa didn't know,
And he taught 'em all to me.*

Every Sunday morning, while the other kids
were sleeping,
I'd be up at the crack of dawn,
Trying to put a polish on my old brown
shoes,
And getting all my best clothes on.
And I could hear my momma, she'd be down
in the kitchen,
And she'd start to sing a song.
And, if it wasn't Poppa, it'd be my little
sister,
And she'd start to sing along.

(chorus)

Momma played the organ at the 10 o'clock
service,
And my sister sang in the choir.
And Poppa'd give his sermon 'bout the
degradation,
And the brimstone and the fire.
And me, I was an usher, with a white
carnation,
And I'd help to pass the tray.
And I'd smile at all the ladies in the
congregation,
Every time they'd look my way.

(chorus)

(repeat first verse)

OLD BLUE SUIT (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 5.

Mark Farrell: fiddle & harmony
Tom Legenhausen: banjo
Pat Conte: slide guitar
Bill Dilloff: harmony

Once upon a time, in a land called Southern
Wisconsin, all suits were blue. No decree, or
anything... that's just the only color there
was. There was no such thing as a summer-
weight suit, or new "fall fashions." Pants
had cuffs (for capturing lint), and a suit
was an investment: something you bought and
lived with for most of your life.

When it came time to have my high school
graduation picture taken, I realized that I
didn't own a suit... or even a white shirt
or tie. We borrowed one of my uncle's blue
suits (about 43 sizes too big) and bought a
white shirt and a maroon tie. (I'm not sure,
but from what I can remember, ties only came
in red or maroon.) Figuring out how to tie
the tie was too big a mystery for me and my
dad, so we had to import my brother-in-law,

Ed, to show us how. Ed grew up in Milwaukee,
so he knew about more sophisticated things
like that. He stood behind me and looked over
my shoulder into a mirror, and taught me how
to tie my first tie. Taught my dad, too, while
he was at it. As far as I know, my dad still
has his same suit... probably the same tie,
too. Times change pretty slowly in Janesville.

When he was a boy, just sixteen years,
Bursting at the elbows, wet behind the ears,
Poppa called him in and he sat him in a chair,
Saying, "Son, I think it's time you had a
suit to wear."

It was his old blue suit, the one he
used to wear,
With the pants all shiny and the cuffs
worn bare.
He never had much, but he always bought
the best,
And in his old blue suit today, they're
laying him to rest.

Every Friday evening, driving in to town
In his '37 Chevy with the top rolled down,
Waving at the ladies, he'd give his horn
a toot,
Sitting there a-beaming in his old blue
suit.

(chorus)

A wedding or a funeral, a party or a dance,
You better brush the jacket, don't forget
to press the pants.
Polish on his shoes, Vitalis on his hair,
And he always looked his finest every time
he'd wear...

(chorus)

Down at the feed store, only yesterday,
Everyone was talking 'bout how he passed
away.
And when he meets Peter, on the Golden Stairs,
I guess I don't have to tell you what he'll
wear.

(chorus)

CAROLINE (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 6.

... as in street. I grew up on Caroline
Street, long before I ever heard of Folk-Legacy
or Caroline Paton. The street name always had
a nice ring to it... like it was a contraction
of Carolina. Three blocks down from our house

was open country: the Janesville Sand and Gravel pits, with miles of open fields and small clumps of woodland to hunt in. Getting your first shotgun was a time-honored ritual, as important for a boy growing up as getting your first long pants, or (later) your first blue suit. When I got my first shotgun, we didn't have a car, so my dad's friends had to put up with me tagging along with them. As far as I can remember, none of my father's friends had a real first name. They were probably all named Clarence or Mortimer or Elmer (like my father). But I knew them as Bones and Skinner and Hump and Boo. My dad was Rassy to everyone but me. I wrote this song as a Father's Day present, and crammed as many of my dad's friends into the car as I could, still leaving enough room for me and my dad. It's a good thing they all had short nicknames.

*Poppa's going to wake me up early in the morning,
When the dew's on the meadow and the stars still shine.
You got to get up early if you want to get going,
'Fore the sun is coming up on Caroline.*

(repeat)

*And we'll be waiting for the horn to blow,
Then it's out to the car and it's time to go.
And you know that I've never been hunting before,
And I can hardly wait until morning.*

*I'll be sleeping with my 20 gauge propped up in the corner
That my mom and dad bought me when I turned fourteen.
I'm getting kind of tired of shooting old pop bottles
Out at the Sand and Gravel with my uncle Dean.
And I've been waiting for the day to come
When I'd line up the sights on my old shotgun.
And when we flush the pheasants, going to get me one.
And I can hardly wait until morning.*

*Be me and my dad and Boo in the front seat,
Bones and Skinner and Hump in the back.
In Boo's old, beat-up '41 Hudson,
But it's just like riding in a Cadillac.*

*And we'll go riding out to Johnson's farm,
Then we'll unload the car in the back of the barn.
And the sun on my back'll be nice and warm.
And I can hardly wait until morning.*

(repeat first verse through "Caroline")

EVERGREEN BAR (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 7.

Skip Gorman: fiddle
Colin Healy & Jeff McHugh: harmonies

Back in the summer of '62, my friend Dick Badger and I decided that we'd do a personal survey of every bar in southern Wisconsin. Dick was just back from Korea, and I was back from New York City. There we were, with the summer staring us in the face and no real prospects for the fall, so we figured that we might as well enjoy ourselves. After the first few nights of scouting around, we found ourselves returning to the Hilltop Tavern in Janesville. The Hilltop was a gathering spot for the boys from the Rambler plant in Kenosha, a few local black-dirt farmers, and a steady group of "reg'lars" from the Fisher Body plant in Janesville.

There was an old electric Gibson (long since gone acoustic) that they kept behind the bar, and anyone who asked could play it. A lot of the guys brought their own instruments, too. The first few nights that Dick and I went out to the Hilltop, we sat and listened to the music and tried to ignore the hostile looks. In the early 60's, having a moustache was greeted with about as much suspicion as you'd get wearing a dress, and most of the hostility was directed at me. One night, Dick talked me into asking to play the guitar. I walked over to the guy who was holding the guitar and asked him if I could play it, and he shoved it at me, defiantly. I played "Freight Train," and all conversation stopped. No one had ever heard anyone finger-pick before. Suddenly, there was a monstrous arm draped over my shoulder and six beers lined up on the bar.

From that point on, I was an honored member of the Hilltop clientele. And when I played, they even unplugged the bowling machine... the greatest of honors. Everything went smoothly for a few weeks, until one night a couple of gone-to-seed former football players from my highschool class walked in the door and started making fun of my music. The song takes it from there.

Over the years, I forgot the name of the Hilltop, and it became the Evergreen Bar. That's called the folk process.

Over in Kenosha, where the Ramblers grew,
They had themselves a tough old crew.
And Friday nights, when the week was done,
They liked to have a little fun.

It's Friday night at the Evergreen Bar,
Picking out a tune on my old guitar.
When you walk through the door, you
don't make no noise,
Or you'll go dancing to the tune of
the Rambler boys.

Buy him a drink, Jim, set him up right,
'Cause the Rambler boys are hot tonight,
And they like their music loud and strong.
They plan to stay here all night long.

(chorus)

A couple old "jocks" from the high-school
team,
Busting in the back door, acting mean,
Laughing at the music and making noise,
And cracking jokes about the Rambler boys.

(chorus)

Grab him by the neck, Jim, out through
the door.
It don't pay to make the Rambler boys
get sore.
Out in the back lot and down on their
knees,
Begging Jim, "Don't hurt us, please."

(chorus)

Just what happened I never could tell,
But I know those boys was scared as hell,
And they never came back to the bar again.
The Rambler boys just sit and grin.

(chorus)

(repeat first verse)

(chorus)

UNTIL MORNING (Rasmussen, BMI)
Side 2, Band 8.

Colin Healy & Jeff McHugh: harmonies

The first time I sang "Evergreen Bar" for
Peter Honig, a fiddler-friend of mine, he ex-
pressed real indignation that I would write a
song with Kenosha in it. Not one to step away
from a challenge lightly, I went home and wrote
another song with Kenosha in it. Worse than

that, I made Kenosha rhyme with morning.
Never mess with a songwriter.

Late in the evening, when the sun has
gone down
And the work is all over, they head into
town
To sit for awhile and to drink a few rounds,
And they won't go home until morning.

The black-dirt farmers from Boscobel
And the Rambler boys from Kenosha.
Just pass the guitar and I'll pick you
a tune,
And we won't go home until morning.

A beat-up old Gibson they keep by the bar,
If you know how to play it, you're welcome
to try.

And your bottle looks empty, it's my turn
to buy,
And we won't go home until morning.

(chorus)

An upright piano and a guitar or two,
In the fall there's a fiddler, when the
harvest is through.
So unplug the juke-box, they'll play you
a tune,
And we won't go home until morning.

(chorus)

(repeat first verse)

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