

Side 1:

- 1- Plutonium
- 2- The Nature of Things
- 3- Livelong Day
- 4- Seasons Changing Colors
- 5- The Shift of The Sands

Side 2:

- 1- A Harvest Song
- 2- The Thing That Fell Into Bill McCarthy's Pond
- 3- Tidewater Sounds
- 4- The Explosion of a Star
- 5- Everything Changed

words and music by Mark Cohen

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Recorded in March, 1979

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PLUTONIUM
sung by
Mark Cohen

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

PLUTONIUM / MARK COHEN

FOLKWAYS FS 5354

PLUTONIUM

NUKE LEAK
AT INDIAN
POINT

s Still Emitting Radioactivity



By SAM ROSENTHAL
A radioactive leak has occurred at Con Edison's Indian Point nuclear power plant — just 35 miles north of the city. The leak — which occurred on Monday — was not revealed until last night, and utility officials first reported it to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. NRC officials first learned of it from a Post reporter. The spill happened while workers pumped "low-level" radioactive waste from the plant, on a day when the weather was clear and the temperature was in the 60s.

Nuclear Accident Is Laid to Failure Of Several Safety Systems at Plant
By DAVID BURNHAM
Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, March 29 — Federal officials today said that the failure of several safety systems at a Pennsylvania power plant over the last year prompted questions by nuclear critics about both the performance of the Government in achieving safe nuclear power and the basic design of the reactor.

sung by
Mark Cohen

PLUTONIUM

April 9, 1979

Dear Moe,

You asked for a bio when I saw you. I don't have anything to add to these songs. These songs can be my bio. Plutonium was written two years ago. The Nature of Things is about how I'd take a sunset over a radioactive glow, of how the opposite of love is not hate but nothingness. Livelong Day's an afternoon's idyll. The Shift of The Sands is taken from a true story. In 1622 a convoy of ships sailed into the Caribbean and sank in a storm. In the last decade Mel Fisher, by going through old records and searching the seas, found the wreckage and the buried treasure, only to lose his sons mysteriously when the boat they were in, anchored above the site, capsized the night before the salvage was to begin. A Harvest Song's a song of a rainy evening. The Thing That Fell Into Bill McCarthy's Pond's another true story. During a recent winter something fell into Bill McCarthy's pond, melted the ice, and began spreading. The National Guard was called out, and no one was saying what it was or what was going on. The Explosion of a Star is taken from indications thousands of years old that observations of a nova, a starburst, led to detailed observations of the heavens from which grew the sciences of astronomy and astrology from which grew much of modern science.

Many thanks again, Moe, and all best wishes --

Mark

PLUTONIUM

They're putting up reactors without a halt
They even got them sitting on the San Andreas fault
There are those who call it progress, it's crazy say some
But everyone'll stay away from that plutonium

Cho: Plutonium will turn you numb
Plutonium will make you dumb

Cause it really is the hot stuff, everybody knows
Makes water evaporate, in the dark it glows
A little bit is strong enough to turn a turbine's gears
And it'll be around for 25,000 years

Cho.

25,000 years, now that sounds insane
25,000 years, where do you complain
But there's no danger say the companies
Just don't think about it none, the safety's guaranteed

Cho.

And they'll pull out all their studies, bring out all their notes
Talk about statistics and cover us with quotes
But still and all when all is said and done
There may not be an accident, but all it takes is one

Cho.

Now I've seen oil tankers ruin shorelines that were fair
And electric generators polluting up the air
So I'd say wait a second even as each second shifts
Beware of utilities bearing gifts

Cho.

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THE NATURE OF THINGS

The tumbleweed rolls through the plains
The earth soaks up the nourishing rain
Winter's snows melt into spring
It's all a part of the nature of things

The wheatfields rise from the soil
Sown by the good farmer's toil
Feeding the lowly and feeding the kings
It's all a part of the nature of things

A cool breeze blows, taking a breath
A new babe is born an old man faces death
A bird gliding by stretches its wings
It's all a part of the nature of things

Pictures are drawn of sinners and saints
But what a great picture the morning sky paints
Colors like sounds, ringing like strings
A rainbow delight in the nature of things

The lands are littered with rocks and filled with jewels
The world carries human beings and fools
Who rules hangs on which way the pendulum swings
But that's just a part of the nature of things

There's magic in a south sea tropical isle
But it's not like the magic that's in a girl's smile
And music the way a mountain brook sighs
But it's not like the music that's in her eyes
Riches are fine, and glamorous things
But there's nothing like the pleasure a sweet woman brings
All the marvels of the twentieth century beings
Sure ain't nothin', compared to the nature of things

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THE LIVELONG DAY

The traffic and his footsteps flow right on without delay
In this livelong day
While up in the heavens the sun gets on its way
In this livelong day

Passing through his miles he rests himself awhile
In a shaded park upon Manhattan's isle

All about the buildings rise and scrape their tops against the skies
In this livelong day
Like eagles over valleys birds fly over streets and over alleys
In this livelong day

How he'd like to stay and while the time away
Like the grass that now bends where once he lay.

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SEASONS CHANGING COLORS

Cigarette smoke goes waving to the ceiling
Noises rise up from the streets below
And memories go flashing by before my very eyes
Like the scenes upon the screens of your local picture show
Rhymes roll across the table like a pair of dice
Lines hang suspended like the pictures on your wall
And words get thrown around concerning hell and paradise
But it's being with you that I think of most of all

Cho.: And it's a long time since I've seen you
Baby, babe, it's been too long a time
And the days go rushing by, at least they seem to
It seems like only yesterday I held your hand in mine

The seasons changing colors pass as swiftly as a dream
Blink your eyes and a new one's coming on
Like the pieces that get carried in the ripples of a stream
Come from distances to be distantly gone
Turning round and turning round with no beginning and no end
Like a carousel carnival ride
Leaving traces where they've been before they start up once again
Remembered late upon some night when your thoughts roam far and wide

Cho.: And it's a long time since I've seen you
Baby, babe, it's been too long a time
And the days go rushing by, at least they seem to
It seems like only yesterday your heart beat close to mine

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THE SHIFT OF THE SANDS

The sea was calm, it was a fair wind that blew
In the autumn of 1622
The ships were all loaded and filled with the stores
And the loot of the Spanish conquistadors
Headed for Spain and into the mysteries
Waiting for them off of the Florida Keys

Conditions were right, the sailors could tell
Good weather the night of a new moon bodes well
And well it was into the afternoon
When they were pounded by a typhoon
The Caribbean swallowed the treasure the ships did hold
A thousand bars of silver and more ingots of gold

Cho.: Yes, it's told by the wind in the way it exhales
And drives through the rain and the sleet and the hail
And on stormy nights in the way that it wails
That the shift of the sands is what prevails

The booty lay buried for three hundred years
When motorboats left steel waterfront piers
Propelled by an idea that was conceived
To seek out the treasure and have it retrieved
Led by Mel Fisher and helped by his sons
Who sank in the sea just as the treasure was won

Yes they talk of that area, calling it strange
How the sea gave its wealth and took lives in exchange
How on the water is written the names
Of all of the victims that it has claimed
Who went under and now sleep
Along with the fishes and the secrets of the deep

Cho.

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A HARVEST SONG

The rain is a-pouring right down now in sheets
And puddles are forming all over the streets
I wonder what it would be like to be roaming
Down in New Mexico or up through Wyoming

Cho.: Or to be now in Kalamazoo
Or walk through the winding streets of Timbuktu
Find a beach off of Nice
Or an island off of Greece
Or to be in Tahiti with you

The summer beats a retreat
When the winter comes chasing the heat
When reapers cut down the wheat piled up at their feet
Like it always did and in all ways will repeat

Cho.: (Ah, to be now in...)

Whatever courses get charted
Make their way from wherever they're started
On to all that awaits as the road unwinds and rotates
Until it comes time to be departed

Cho.: (Off to Kalamazoo...)

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THE THING THAT FELL INTO BILL MCCARTHY'S POND

You've heard about the Loch Ness monster up in the Scottish highlands
And about the stone figures that sit out on Easter Island
But there's another tale and it's one you ought to hear
About this thing that fell upon Wakefield, New Hampshire

Cho.: Out of the skies on a winter's day it flew
What it was and where it came from no one ever knew

There was a blizzard that was gusting and all the stores were closin'
There was ice upon the roads and all the lakes were frozen
It might've been conjured up by the wave of a wand
That thing that fell into Bill McCarthy's pond

Cho.

It made a hole that all the townfolk watched in snow up to their knees
The ice began to melt though it was only five degrees
But everybody ran away when it began to spread
They left by car and horse and buggy and in busses and by sled

Cho.

Soon the entire eastern seaboard vanished in the hole
They couldn't figure how to stop it or to keep it in control
It got to the equator, then took in the hemisphere
And then finally the planet just up and disappeared

Cho.

Well, now this song is being written from somewhere in outer space
We're out here looking for some habitable place
That twinkling in the sky you see may be a speck of dust
Or it may be stars or satellites, but it probably is us

Cho.

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TIDEWATER SOUNDS

Yesterday's words echo on down the hall
Turn into less, less than nothing at all
Time passes on
As old fables are acted and ended and new ones begun
If the future is but an echo of the past
Then all time's an illusion into which men are cast

The steps are made smooth by the passing of many feet
In a gradual time with a scarcely perceptible beat
A diluted language is over and over rehashed
A fire burns brightly but leaves only the ash
Words are sometimes much less than they seem
It's beyond the patterns that a meaning is gleaned

As a ferryboat cuts through the haze of the noonday sky
From the throat of a gull echoes a cry
As it blends into the days hues
Rising up out of view
Raising its voice in a clamorous din
But it's only going to where it's already been

Over the chasms and canyons and prairies and rivers and creeks
From the floors of the valleys on up to the loftiest peaks
How the winds blow mighty and strong
To burst with the forces of fire into song
While along the shores the tidewater slaps relentlessly
And each grain of sand speaks of the power of the sea

While all the earth's creatures struggle each day to survive
Men struggle each day to build empires or just to get by
While the four cornered winds blow the thundering clouds through the sky
The elements man seeks to control or defy
While children build piles of leaves and around them dance
Men struggle to find something more absolute than the whimsy of chance
Beyond all truths and mysteries
The only struggle there is is for man to be free

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THE EXPLOSION OF A STAR

Once upon a time a long, long time ago
In the deserts of Arabia where caravans did go
The people up and looked across a million miles afar
Saw something to be beholden, the explosion of a star

Cho.: And so from the end of one
Another was begun

The fateful day did come to some system far away
A million years or more it took the sight to get this way
To suddenly appear among the glimmerings of light
Against the silken blackness of the curtains of the night

Cho.

Humankind was young, with more before than lay behind
Someday all the workings of the stars would be defined
And there'd be satellites and spaceships, telescopes to scan the skies
Machines built of steel, imaginations realized

Cho.

To the edges of the galaxies, beyond even that instead
To the edges of the universe, someday so far ahead
The beings of another world will see a sight unknown
Stare startled at the bursting of a star to be our own

Cho.: And so from the end of one
Another will be begun

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EVERYTHING CHANGED

I used to wander down empty lanes
Broken by highways and rusty drains
Just a short time ago, but it seemed so long
Everything changed when you came along

We walk down streets and along esplanades
The very same places used to seem odd
You brought me back to where I belong
Everything changed when you came along

Running on diesels and subway trains
Looking through easels of window panes
Over a canvas all clouded and gray
When you came along they all faded away

Friends became strangers, strange shadows were friends
Days had no meaning and nights had no end
Filled with pretending but something was wrong
Everything changed when you came along

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