

elizabeth mitchell sunny day

- 1. sunny day 1:32
- 2. shoo lie loo 3:10
- 3. mr. rabbit 1:33
- 4. ooki na kuri no ki no shita de (under the big chestnut tree) 1:15
- 5. keep on the sunny side 2:56
- 6. lovely day 2:26
- 7. reggae in the fields 2:07
- 8. ong tal sam (little spring) 1:48
- 9. tell it again 1:22
- 10. green, green rocky road 2:22
- 11. school days 3:43
- 12. mystery train 2:36
- 13. oh, john the rabbit 1:51
- 14. david's mandolin 2:48
- 15. this little light of mine 2:20
- 16. fairy tale lullaby 2:30
- 17. elephants all over the world 2:02
- 18. little buckaroo 2:37
- 19. tsuki (moon) 2:19







elizabeth mitchell

1. sunny day 1:32

(Storey Littleton / Last Affair Music, BMI)

2. shoo lie loo 3:10

(Bessie Jones / TRO-Ludlow Music Inc., BMI)

3. mr. rabbit 1:33

4. ooki na kuri no ki no shita de (under the big chestnut tree) 1:15

5. keep on the sunny side 2:56

(Ada Blenkhorn – J. Howard Entwistle)

6. lovely day 2:26

(Bill Withers – Skip Scarborough / Golden Withers Music, ASCAP – Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., BMI) 7. reggae in the fields 2:07

(Augustus Pablo; words by Daniel Littleton)

8. ong tal sam (little spring) 1:48

(arr. Elizabeth Mitchell / Last Affair Music, BMI)

9. tell it again 1:22

(Louis Hardin / Managarm Musikverlag, GEMA)

10. green, green rocky road 2:22

11. school days 3:43

(Chuck Berry / Isalee Music Company, BMI)

12. mystery train 2:36

(Herman Parker Jr. - Sam Phillips / Unichappell Music Inc., BMI)

13. oh, john the rabbit 1:51

sunny day

14. david's mandolin 2:48

(Daniel Littleton / Last Affair Music, BMI)

15. this little light of mine 2:20

16. fairy tale lullaby 2:30

(John Martyn / Blue Mountain Music Ltd., ASCAP)

17. elephants all over the world 2:02

(Storey Littleton / Last Affair Music, BMI)

18. little buckaroo 2:37

(M. K. Jerome - Jack Scoll / Warner Bros. Music, ASCAP)

19. tsuki (moon) 2:19

(arr. Elizabeth Mitchell / Last Affair Music, BMI)

For Storey, Penny, and Jasper.

In memory of Jan Kotik and Anna Vaquera-Vasquez.



Sunny Day continues in the same tradition and grows in new and wonderful ways, as family life has a way of doing. As the bonds of family and friends grow older and stronger with age, Elizabeth invites us to rejoice with her own. With the continued and growing accompaniment of her daughter Storey and husband Daniel, Sunny Day greets listeners with a "welcome home" as we join them—track after track—in song once again.

Just like the rhythm of our days—the pulse of our family life—Sunny Day inspires a steady rhythm of family connection and togetherness: gently guiding us through the course of a day in song and dance (because one can't help but dance!)—taking us everywhere from bed to the kitchen, to school, to the garden, and tucked back safely

4

in bed at night. The songs bring our attention to the magical, mysterious, fabulous, and special simple moments of everyday living—all the while connecting us to each other, the animals and people of the wide world, and the pleasures found in the earthly delights around us.

Sunny Day is a collection of "handmade" music of the finest kind, for folks of all ages. Steeped in the tradition, history, and comfort of the folksingers and elders before us and spun with the modern delight and wonder of children, the songs are as young and magical as the very young and magical songwriting family making the music.

In a world that can often feel overwhelming, chaotic, and just too busy, this music is a deep sigh of peace and a full smile of love. The songs gently encourage us to remember and honor childhood as a time of exploration, wonder, and imagination. No matter our age, we are reminded that there is great pleasure to be found in the simplest of small, ordinary, and beautiful moments in everyday life. As we listen to the words of peace and share them with our family through song, borders and age fade away. . . and loving arms hold us close together as a family. In that place, we become open to the promise and possibility that today... "it's gonna be a lovely day."



7

dear friends,



I just finished my song notes and—wow—each song really has a long story! I believe that songs are treasures, journeys, prayers and celebrations, full of meaning and memories. For our family, these songs have become all these things and more. They are a bridge from our home to yours, allowing us to share moments with you and to travel to places we never dreamed we would go.

As I write this, Storey is one month away from turning nine years old! When we last met with the release of *You Are My Little Bird*, she was five. Storey grows, the music grows, and I try to keep up with them and the muses, sounds, and inspirations that fly around my head like little birds.

We've made so many lovely friends in Woodstock and beyond these last few years. I am so grateful to be able to share with you these sounds that we made together.

- ELIZABETH MITCHELL

song notes

1. sunny day

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, vocals, banjo, ukulin, viola; Storey Littleton, vocals, harmonica: birds sing

Storey spent a lot of time as a toddler with her Lola (the word for "grandmother" in the Philippines). She always felt loved and cherished by her Lola, always patiently encouraged to bloom and grow. They spent many hours in conversation, as Storey was a very verbal little girl. I know these moments they shared were special, as Storey often revealed parts of herself that she kept hidden, even from me. This song was born during one of their many afternoons together. Storey plays a harmonica sunrise!

the sun comes up
the flowers bloom
the rain comes down
the flowers grow
people dancing everywhere
the sun comes up again

8



2. shoo lie loo

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, percussion, harmonica; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar; Storey Littleton, vocals; Justin Guip, drums; Phillippa Thompson, violin; Warren Defever, bass, harmonica; Nancy Chusid, Jojo Gara, Annika Enzien, Talulah Patch, Ken and Somoto Ejinkone, Jean Cook, Esme Waldmann, Anna Padgett, and Miggy Littleton, vocals

I first heard this song on an album by Bessie Jones called Step It Down. Bessie was a member of the Georgia Sea Island Singers, a folk and gospel group who were recorded by Alan Lomax in the 1950s. Bessie's incredible music can only be matched by her work collecting and transmitting the songs and games of the Sea Islands for future generations. Storey learned this song in a music class taught by my good friend, Nancy Chusid. The song is accompanied by a dancing game where you stand in a circle, clap your hands to the beat, and call out for your friend to fly across the circle like a bird.

3. mr. rabbit

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, vocals, harmonium; Storey Littleton, vocals; Kirsten Jacobson, flute; Jane Scarpantoni, cello; Athena, Caroline, Gloria, and Robert Miros, vocals

Ruth Crawford Seeger was a modernist composer. She was the mother of Barbara, Mike, Peggy, and Penny Seeger, and the second wife of Charles Seeger, father of Pete. When Ruth's children were young, she took a job with the Library of Congress transcribing field recordings of folk songs collected by Alan Lomax. This led her to

publish several definitive songbooks of American children's music. Ruth always wrote her arrangements of folk songs with the beginner pianist in mind—she wanted all people who loved music to be able to enjoy the songs, regardless of their skill level. How lucky we are to be able to learn from her efforts and enjoy the beauty of her thoughtful arrangements. Although she wrote mostly for piano, Daniel has adapted some of the songs for a small ensemble of cello, harmonium, and flute, and this is one of them. My sister Caroline and her family sing along with us here.

4. ooki na kuri no ki no shita de (under the big chestnut tree)

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, guitar, banjo; Storey Littleton, vocals; Kirsten Jacobson, flute; Jean Cook, violin; Nancy Chusid, oboe, bass recorder; William Constan, clarinet; Libby Constan, vocals

In the fall of 2008 our family traveled throughout the wondrous country of Japan on tour with our band Ida. Our friend Mimi came over before we left to help us learn some Japanese. She taught us this song that day, and we fell in love with it! On one of our many rides on the Shinkansen—the bullet train—we saw two little girls about Storey's age singing this song and doing the hand movements that accompany it. Here Storey is joined by her sweet cousin Libby singing and by her oldest cousin William on clarinet.





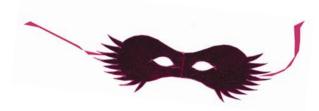
5. keep on the sunny side

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar; Karla Schickele, bass; Levon Helm, drums; Teresa Williams and David Levine, autoharp; Larry Campbell, fiddle; Amy Helm, Storey Littleton, Libby Constan, and Talulah Patch, vocals

My grandmother, Ardis Orpha Hunt, passed away this summer at the age of 97. She was a force of nature her whole life, full of grace and fire. We sang this song with seven of her great-grandchildren at her memorial service. My grandmother endured many dark times in her life, but had a sign in her kitchen that said "Remember to laugh."

Written in 1899, "Keep on the Sunny Side" was made popular by The Carter Family. This recording features some of our neighbors—Levon and Amy Helm, Larry Campbell and Teresa Williams—friends we've been very fortunate to make here in Woodstock.





Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, percussion; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar, percussion, Wurlitzer; Storey Littleton, vocals; Warren Defever, percussion

Over the last few years this has become one of my favorite songs, and the meaning resonates more and more as I get older. All hail the mighty Bill Withers!

7. reggae in the fields

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, drums; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar, organ, melodica, percussion; Storey Littleton, Annika Enzien, vocals; Kirsten Jacobson, flute; Warren Defever, guitar

We listened to a lot of dub when Storey was a baby. She loved the open, magical, echoing sounds and rhythms. Augustus Pablo is a giant in Jamaican music, a master of the melodica, and a true visionary. Daniel and Storey wrote this poem about the dream of peace and the promise of a new day with each rising of the morning sun. Thanks to DJ Wong Chu and Zora Neale Hurston for inspiration.

14

Our beloved violinist Jean Cook taught us this Korean song that she had learned from her mother. When she is not singing about bunnies and playing violin with us, Jean is the director of the Future of Music Coalition—traveling the globe to Ethiopia, Tajikistan, and beyond, making the world a better place for musicians. We had so much fun singing and recording the xylophones together!

9. tell it again

8. ong tal sam (little spring)

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar, percussion; Storey Littleton, vocals; Jean Cook, violin; Kirsten Jacobson, flute

We learned of this song from a piano tuner who came over one day to our home in Mount Tremper. He noticed a Moondog LP sitting by our record player, and told us about a children's music recording that Moondog had made with none other than Julie Andrews! We could not believe such a magical combination could be possible, and we were so excited to discover this music! Moondog was a mysterious and complex artist—a blind New York City street musician and avant-garde composer who made truly unique, rhythmically inventive music featuring beautiful rounds and haunting melodies.

10. green, green rocky road

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, glockenspiel; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar; Storey Littleton, vocals; Dan Zanes, vocals, *cuatro*; Justin Guip, drums; Elliot Bergman, clarinet

This was a popular folk song performed in coffeehouses during the 1960s, but its roots can be found in the African-American folk tradition of children's games and songs. Storey learned it during her music classes with Nancy Chusid in Woodstock. She came home singing it, and we all sang along. Our friend Dan Zanes learned it from legendary New York folk musician Dave Van Ronk. Dan was taking guitar lessons from him years ago in Manhattan's West Village. Nancy and Dave had different interpretations of the song, so we brought those two worlds together and made something new.



11. school days

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar; Storey Littleton, vocals; Levon Helm, drums; Chris Wood, bass; Susie Lampert, piano; Charlotte Constan, Lucia Legnini, Athena Miros, Ken and Somoto Ejinkone, vocals

When Storey was in first grade, she and Daniel listened to a lot of Chuck Berry while driving to school in the morning. Storey loved the narrative quality of the songs, and the irrepressible energy. At the same time we were doing Kid's Rambles over at Levon Helm's, and I was really trying to get the kids singing more. This seemed like the perfect time to hand over the microphone! My niece Charlotte and our friend Lucia join Storey here on the fabulous lead vocals, and our band includes Levon, Chris Wood of Medeski Martin & Wood, and Susie Lampert of the Laurie Berkner Band.

12. mystery train

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, guitar; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar; Levon Helm, drums; Karla Schickele, bass; Charlotte Constan, vocals; William Constan, train whistle; Storey Littleton, Gloria Miros, Teddy Constan, and Penny Littleton say Choo Choo!

This is another song we had the immense honor of recording with the great Levon Helm. Sometimes the roots of songs are great mysteries. When The Carter Family had a hit with "Worried Man Blues" in 1930, they sang "the train arrived sixteen coaches long, the girl I love is on that train and gone." Did they write those words, did they take them from a long-forgotten blues song, or were they just in the air at

the time? We asked Levon when he had first heard "Mystery Train." He told us, "It seems like that song has always been there for as long as I can remember." Levon said Junior Parker made the first recording he knew about; he closed his eyes and started singing "Train, train..."

13. oh, john the rabbit

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, guitar, harmonica, percussion; Daniel Littleton, vocals, mandolin, electric guitar; Storey Littleton, Esme Waldmann, and Penny Littleton, vocals

I used to sing this with my students at the Roosevelt Island Day Nursery every day. Every day! They never got tired of it, especially the part where we would do a little switcheroo and they would sing the lead and I would sing "yes ma'am!" back to them. Now it's Storey's turn!

14. david's mandolin

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar, mandolin; David Levine, fiddle

Sometimes a borrowed instrument can bring new inspiration. Daniel wrote this song on our dear friend David Levine's mandolin one day when Storey was six years old and growing up so fast. David joins us here on fiddle.



Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, harmonium; Daniel Littleton, vocals, guitar; Storey Littleton and the Children of Agape Choir, vocals

Fannie Lou Hamer, a hero and a leader of the Civil Rights Movement, sang this song outside the Democratic National Convention in 1964, where she was fighting for all Americans, regardless of race, to receive the right to vote and to have real political representation. Her efforts helped to change the world. Everywhere we have played over the years, people know and love this song and sing along.

This recording was made at the home studio of Dan Zanes, with the Children of Agape Choir. I came to know the choir through the Geier Family, whom I had known during my years of teaching on Roosevelt Island. Their older daughter had been a student of mine. The Geiers' younger daughter, Hallie, died after being struck by a car in 2004 at the age of 11. Hallie was an activist and a poet, and had raised money to donate to children in sub-Saharan Africa. The Geiers were determined to keep Hallie's remarkable spirit of optimism and compassion alive, and they brought the Children of Agape choir to the United States for the very first time. The children are all from the Agape orphanage in South Africa, and have since been the subject of an award-winning documentary called We Are Together.

16. fairy tale lullaby

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, guitar, mandolin; Storey Littleton, vocals; Jean Cook, violin; Kirsten Jacobson, flute; Elliot Bergman, clarinet

John Martyn was an influential singer, songwriter, and guitarist who, along with Nick Drake, Richard Thompson, and Sandy Denny, led the British folk rock scene to some of its many creative heights in the early 1970s. John had an incredibly expressive and versatile voice. He could growl and howl and sing tender and sweet too. This song is a particularly gentle one that lives up to its title.

17. elephants all over the world

Storey Littleton, vocals; Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals, Wurlitzer; Daniel Littleton, vocals, Irish harp

Storey's "Uncle" Warren and his wife Hitoko gave Storey a beautiful book about elephants in Thailand when she was about three years old. In the book, there is a picture of elephants bathing in a river that she was particularly captivated by, and she wrote this song about it.

18. little buckaroo

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, guitar; Storey Littleton, harmonica; Jon Langford, vocals

A few years ago I read a biography of The Carter Family called Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone? It cites "Little Buckaroo" as the first song Anita Carter joined her mother Maybelle in singing on Mexican Border Radio in 1938. Being such a big fan of Maybelle and her daughters, I had to hear this song. When I did, I knew it was the song to sing with my new friend and musical hero, Jon Langford. Jon is a founding member of the Mekons, a legendary British punk rock band. Jon and I share Jean Cook as our violinist, often duking it out to see who can have her for precious moments onstage. We recorded it in Chicago at the end of a day we had spent with Ella Jenkins. Jon sang about Buffalo Bill, Storey nailed the harmonica solo, and we all slept well that night, amazed by the day we had just experienced.

19. tsuki (moon)

Elizabeth Mitchell, vocals; Daniel Littleton, banjo, Irish harp; frogs sing

Our most magical and memorable night in Japan was spent on the beach of Kamakura, putting our bare toes in the black sand and the waters of Sagami Bay, watching the sun set and the moon rise. This was the last song we recorded for this album, and the last song we recorded before moving out of our home in Mount Tremper. We miss the frogs from our pond there, and I was happy to open up the windows and doors and give them a chance to add their voices to our song.

Produced by Elizabeth Mitchell, Warren Defever, and Daniel Littleton

Recorded at On-Me Sound, Mount Tremper, NY, 2006–2009, by Warren Defever

Additional recording at Levon Helm Studios, Woodstock, NY; Excello Recording, Brooklyn, NY; Kampo Cultural Center, New York, NY; DZ, Brooklyn, NY; North Branch Recording, Chicago, IL; Dubway, New York, NY; Mark Dann Recording, Woodstock, NY

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Jeff Place, archivist; Ronnie Simpkins, audio
specialist; John Smith, sales and marketing;
Stephanie Smith, archivist.

24

Special thanks to my Woodstock music teachers - Nancy Chusid and Levon Helm, all musicians and artists who contributed to this album, everyone at Smithsonian Folkways for bringing this music to you, and to Mizuyo Aburano, John Allen, Scooter Alpert, Chris Ballew, Jack Baran, Betsy Blachly and the Bank Street School, Beth Blenz-Clucas, Melissa Block, The Bowmans, John Bream, David Brown, Linda Brumbach, Ann Marie Callan, Tobe Carey, Laurie Cearley, Bill and Ella Childs, Cheryl Colbert, Maverick Concerts, Noel Conklin, Kelly Corson, The Courtneys, Pete Cowdin, Darren Critz, Lee Reed Dixon, Scott Eirinberg, Frances England, Ernie Enzien, Sasha Frere-Jones, Norio Fukuda, The Garas, The Geiers, Jeremiah Greco, Mark Greenberg, The Guips, Arthur Hagen, Ayun Halliday, Kori Hammel, Lyn Hardy, Hera, Edwina Hoffman, Ella Jenkins, Dean Jones, Charity Kahn, Millicent Kaufman, Connie Kirch, Stephanie Kristal, Debbie Lan,

The Legninis, Ruth Keating Lockwood, Lisa Loeb, Ziggy Marley and his Family, Layng Martine, Sarah McCarthy, Zodwa Mgadi, Hugh Musick, Cynthia Nelson, Greta Nicholas, Barbara O'Brien, Tara Jane Oneil, Jodi Palinkas, Steve Patch, Suni Paz, Jeanne Raichle, Alex Rappoport, Astrid Lewis Reedy, Janet Billig Rich, Bernadelle Richter, Heather Roberts, Dana Ronnquist, Julia Rose, Jon and Todd Rubin, The Saito Family, Hitoko Sakai, Amy Schatz, The Schickeles, John Shoenfeld, Brian Selznick, Fode Sissoko, Janine Small, Alison Stewart, Toby Stover, Deborah Strafella, Sirkka Svanoe, Kazuki Tomita, The Vasquez Family, The Voelkers, Clem Waldmann, Beth Wishnie, Douglas Wolk, Peter Wright and The Wittenberg Store.

Love and gratitude to my family.



about smithsonian folkways

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