

elizabeth mitchell *& you are my flower*
blue clouds



Smithsonian Folkways

elizabeth mitchell & you are my flower

1. HOP UP, MY LADIES 1:46

2. FROGGIE WENT A
COURTIN' 3:46

(ARR. ELIZABETH MITCHELL / LAST
AFFAIR MUSIC, BMI)

3. ARM IN ARM 2:26

(REMY CHARLIP - ANNA PADGETT, BMI)

4. SAN TOKI

(MOUNTAIN BUNNY) 1:38

(ADAPTED BY JEAN COOK, BMI)

5. KOOKS 3:32

(DAVID BOWIE / CHRYSALIS SONGS
O/B/O CHRYSALIS MUSIC, LTD.-
TINTORETTO MUSIC - SCREEN GEMS EMI
MUSIC INC., BMI)

6. I WISH YOU WELL 3:22

(BILL WITHERS / GOLDEN WITHERS
MUSIC, ASCAP)

7. SUMMER IS ICUMEN IN 2:09

(ARR. NANCY CHUSID, BMI)

8. ROLLIN' BABY 1:41

(ANNA PADGETT, BMI)

9. THE LITTLE BIRD 1:22

(SUSAN BERGMAN / SANDHILL SOUND,
BMI)

10. CIRCLE OF THE SUN 2:30

(SALLY ROGERS / THRUSHWOOD PRESS
PUBLISHING, BMI)

blue clouds

11. MOON DON'T GO 0:46

(**ELLA JENKINS / ELL-BERN PUBLISHING CO., ASCAP**)

12. EVERYONE 2:47

(**VAN MORRISON / WB MUSIC CORP., ASCAP**)

13. MAY THIS BE LOVE 2:23

(**JIMI HENDRIX / EXPERIENCE HENDRIX LLC, ASCAP**)

14. YUKI (SNOW) 1:56

(**ARR. ELIZABETH MITCHELL / LAST AFFAIR MUSIC, BMI**)

15. BLUE SKY

(**LITTLE MARTHA INTRO**) 3:03

(**DICKEY BETTS / UNICHAPPELL MUSIC INC., BMI; DUANE ALLMAN / HAPPILY MARRIED MUSIC, BMI**)

16. BLUE CLOUDS 3:13

(**DANIEL LITTLETON / LAST AFFAIR MUSIC, BMI**)



ALL ARTWORK FROM **ARM IN ARM: A COLLECTION OF CONNECTIONS, ENDLESS TALES, REITERATIONS, AND OTHER ECHOLALIA** © 1969, 1980, 1997 BY REMY CHARLIP, USED BY PERMISSION.

SFW CD 45065

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introduction

ELIZABETH MITCHELL

When Storey was three years old, there was a bedtime story that Daniel used to tell her called “The Land of Blue Clouds.” Many magical things happened in this land where the sky was gold and the clouds were blue. Storey and Daniel would weave the tales together, imagining adventures with fairies, elephants, oceans, rainbows, jaybirds, and beyond.

During this time, we were on our first cross-country tour with Storey, often spending every night in a different town. Returning to this “land of blue clouds” each night gave Storey a sense of home, whether we were in Tucson or Louisville, Eugene or Chicago. On our journey, Storey saw her first rainbow in Texas, her first cactus in the desert of Arizona, rode on her first pony (named Pickles!) in California, drove through her first tornado in Kansas, picked her first peach in Colorado, and made her first mural (a Christmas tree and a snake!) with her godmother Tara Jane in Oregon. Halfway through the tour,

we were in northern California visiting my sister Caroline and her family. While we were there, Daniel picked up a ukulele, and the song “Blue Clouds” was born. Now we had a lullaby to carry us home, and we still sing it today, many years later.

Anything could happen in the land of blue clouds, and it still can. A frog can propose to a mouse and they can share buttercups and dewdrop tea, a bunny may go off on an adventure and gather chestnuts for her friends. When times get tough, we can throw the homework in the fire and take the car downtown. Everyone can sing along, hop up, and ask the moon to stay just a little longer, because you never know, two octopuses might marry, have a baby, and dance every day arm in arm in arm in arm in arm in arm in arm in arm...just one more story, one more song, while the silver moon is on the rise....

May 2012
Woodstock, NY





*arm in arm
with remy and elizabeth*

BRIAN SELZNICK

The blue clouds roll in against the glowing white sky. You look up, and the clouds bend and change until they seem to form a letter. Yes, it's a beautiful R, which is then followed by another letter, e. You're charmed by the graceful up-and-down of an m as it forms the outline of a mountain range in the air. Then a bird flies by, distracting you for a second. When you look back, you see the next letter, y, has already appeared.

You lift your arm and trace the letters with your fingertips. Seven more letters appear, one after the other, twisting, bending, rolling, dancing, until they spell a name you can easily read.

Remy Charlip

It hovers there in the middle of the sky, a billowy blue signature, waiting for you to recognize it. And then you understand.

The name you've just watched write itself across the sky belongs to a man known for his brilliant writing, his charming illustrations, his groundbreaking dancing, his influential choreography, his legendary teaching, and his capacity for deep friendship and love.

Remy Charlip lives in San Francisco. He was born in 1929 and taught for many years at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York. Remy's life, his work, his every breath, has been dedicated to reminding us that we are all artists, that we all are living creatively. "Look around you," he seems to be saying, "life itself is a dance."

Over the course of his 83 years, Remy has done many extraordinary things. He was one of the founding members of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. He designed the program for John Cage's first "Happening" (which included Robert Rauschenberg showing his paintings and playing wax cylinders of Edith Piaf!). He was the director for the National Theater for the Deaf. He won two Obie awards for theater and three Isadora Duncan awards for dance. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship when he was 76 years old. He invented a new way to choreograph, called Airmail Dances.



He co-founded The Paper Bag Players, one of the most important children's theater companies in America.

Along the way, Remy also gathered a loving network of family and close friends, and I'm proud to include myself among them. Indeed, several years ago, I asked him to pose as Georges Méliès in my book, The Invention of Hugo Cabret, which he graciously agreed to do. Besides all of this, he also made some of the most wonderful children's books of the past forty years, including Fortunately; Thirteen; Mother Mother I Feel Sick Send for the Doctor Quick Quick Quick; and Arm in Arm. Remy has written and illustrated 37 books over his long career. Arm in Arm, first published in 1969, is the source of all the artwork on this album.

If you don't own any of Remy's books, you owe it to yourself to find as many as you can. His work has a true sense of play to it. It's as if these stories and drawings have always been waiting to exist, and Remy just channeled them and jotted them down, quickly and perfectly. His lines are like doodles or children's sketches, yet they are sure of themselves. Furthermore, everything he draws seems to barely sit on the surface of the paper.... His artwork always feels like

it's about to lift off into the air and float away right before your eyes. His images and his ideas, like his body and his heart, are always dancing. Everything breathes in Remy's world. Everything is alive.

The simplicity and the beauty of Remy's vision, the childlike joy and sophisticated wonder of his work, have found their perfect match in the music of Elizabeth Mitchell. I've known Elizabeth since college. We worked in the theater together, and I've been a huge fan of her beautiful voice since we met. Her voice has always felt so unforced and natural that it seems as straightforward as speech. You feel as if Elizabeth is speaking directly to you, as if she's telling you something wonderful, a secret that only the two of you share. You listen to her voice and instantly feel like her friend. Her world breathes. Her music is alive with love and understanding, and she's surrounded herself with a beautiful family, who help bring that world to life.

The songs on this album seem like a patchwork of memories we've always shared. Anna Padgett's lovely setting of Remy Charlip's text Arm in Arm perfectly captures the simple joy in the story and the wordplay ("two octopuses got married and walked down the aisle arm in arm in arm in arm in arm in arm in arm..."), and Elizabeth



brings it disarmingly to life. She recently told me that, when she was a child, The Paper Bag Players made many visits to her elementary school, leaving a lasting impression on her. So, in a way, Remy and his sensibilities have long been a part of her life.

The images that run throughout this album, across all of the inspired and unusual song choices (Jimi Hendrix! David Bowie!) feel related to Remy's world, the birds and breezes and stars and moons, the love and families and clouds and trees. "Blue Clouds," the sweet song by Daniel Littleton that closes the album and gives it its name, was inspired by the bedtime tales he's long told to their daughter (my goddaughter) Storey. The song is the perfect encapsulation of everything that this album is about. A father loves his daughter and weaves a tale for her each night as a kind of dream blanket. It's Storey's story, and her sweet voice appears throughout this album as well, a child's answer to her parent's love.

*So, take a deep breath, close your eyes,
and come join everyone beneath the twisting,
bending, rolling, dancing, joyous, beautiful,
peaceful blue clouds.*



song notes

ELIZABETH MITCHELL



1. *hop up, my ladies*

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS, PERCUSSION; DANIEL LITTLETON, HARMONIUM;
STOREY LITTLETON, VOCALS; JANE SCARPANTONI, CELLO; KIRSTEN JACOBSON,
FLUTE; NANCY CHUSID, RECORDER; JEAN COOK, VIOLA; CLEM WALDMANN, DRUMS;
JUSTIN GUIP, DRUMS; RODMAN STOUT, VOCALS

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Ruth Crawford Seeger's songbooks are a great resource and treasury of American folk music and a continual source of inspiration in our home. Here we tried to create something new, inspired by her brilliant piano arrangement of this song. This recording makes me want to dance, and don't forget, you don't have to be a lady to hop up!

2. *froggie went a-courtin'*

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, VOCALS, HARMONIUM; RUTHY UNGAR, VOCALS, BANJO; JAY UNGAR, FIDDLE; MOLLY MASON, VOCALS, UPRIGHT BASS; CLEM WALDMANN, KNEE SLAPS

This tale of courtship between a frog and a mouse has been sung so many different ways in the folk tradition. We recorded another version—slower, with a repeating, echoing “uh-huh” throughout—many years ago on our album You Are My Sunshine. I never loved the “king kong kitchie” version until I started singing it with my students in a folk music class I was teaching this year. Something magical happened when I heard the children sing it this way. My friend Natalie taught me some verses I had never heard before, and it became clear that it was time to interpret the song again! I invited my friends Jay Ungar, Molly Mason, and Ruthy Ungar over to help me bring the music to life. Playing with this extraordinary family of musicians is an experience I will never forget. I changed the last verse from “they now had wealth and children three” to “they had good health and children three,” and they all lived happily ever after.



3. arm in arm

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ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS, PIANO; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR, HARP,
ECHOPLEX BUBBLES; NANCY CHUSID, BASS RECORDER, OBOE BIRDS; KIRSTEN
JACOBSON, FLUTE; STOREY AND PENNY LITTLETON, VOCALS

Storey's godmother Cynthia Nelson gave the book Arm in Arm to Storey for her first birthday, and it has been a cherished part of our family life ever since. Several years later, Storey's godfather

Brian Selznick told me he had become friends with Remy, and a bridge was created between our worlds. I am grateful and amazed that the artwork of Remy Charlip is cradling the music of this album. I am still pinching myself and can't quite believe it's true! When I found out this was possible, I wanted so much to bring the visual art into the music. I asked my sister-in-law, Anna Padgett, to read Remy's book Arm in Arm and see if a song came to her. Here it is! We had so much fun recording it, making bubbles and seabird calls, and creating the sound world of a happy octopus family.

*Two octopuses got married and walked down the aisle
The love they shared it went on for miles*

They walked arm in arm....

*Their life it was sweet and after a while
They were so pleased to meet their own octopus child*

They loved him arm in arm....

*Oh, they were joyful and how they did play
Our octopus family they danced every day*

They danced arm in arm....

4. *san toki (mountain bunny)*

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS, PIANO; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR, BANJO; JEAN COOK, VOCALS, VIOLIN; CLEM WALDMANN, DRUMS

Bunnies are so sweet and cute and magical and fun and...quiet. I wish bunnies made a sound, so that we could all make a sound like a bunny, but they don't and so we can't. So instead, for this recording, I imagined what the sound of bunnies hopping would be. I asked our violinist Jean Cook, who taught us this wonderful song from Korea, to play the violin in a way that would sound like bunnies hopping, and she did!

5. *kooks*

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, VOCALS, GUITAR, PIANO, HARMONIUM, BASS; STOREY LITTLETON, VOCALS; KIRSTEN JACOBSON, FLUTE; CLEM WALDMANN, DRUMS

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David Bowie always has an entirely unique perspective to share through his songs, and here we learn some of his thoughts on parenting! When I was a teenager, my favorite song of his was "Changes," now it is "Kooks." Our family has always loved to sing along with this funny and tender song.







6. *i wish you well*

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, VOCALS, WURLITZER ELECTRIC PIANO, HARMONIUM; RUTHY UNGAR, VOCALS, FIDDLE; MICHAEL MERENDA, BANJO; CLEM WALDMANN, DRUMS; AMY HELM, VOCALS

Bill Withers writes from the heart and makes you feel loved with his songs. I was so happy when Daniel found this song and shared it with me. We recorded this on the morning of the Fourth of July in 2011. Three out of three moms who sang on this recording had a lot of trouble doing so without starting to cry!

7. *summer is icumen in*

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; NANCY CHUSID, ORFF XYLOPHONE, BASS RECORDER, SOPRANO RECORDER; RUTHY UNGAR, FIDDLE; DANIEL LITTLETON, HARMONIUM, PERCUSSION; STOREY LITTLETON, RODMAN STOUT, JOEY DRISCOLL, AND EMMA LOEWEN, VOCALS

This song, a traditional medieval round, was transcribed in the 13th century by a monk, but we don't know who the composer was. It is one of the oldest rounds in existence! If the words sound a little funny, it is because they are from an older form of the English language called Middle English. But I think you can still figure out what the song is about—the wild beauty of summertime.

8. *rollin' baby*

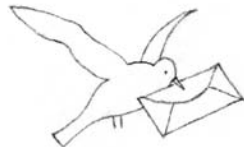
ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS, PIANO, KNEE SLAPS AND HAND CLAPS; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR; RUTHY UNGAR, FIDDLE; CLEM WALDMANN, DRUMS; BONNIE MITCHELL, KNEE SLAPS AND HAND CLAPS

Written by our own Aunt Anna and originally recorded on her album The Good Ms. Padgett, this song reminds me of my favorite Woody Guthrie songs for children—playful, sweet, and perfectly capturing the point of view of a little baby in a big city.

9. the little bird

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; GLOCKENSPIEL, PERCUSSION; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR; STOREY LITTLETON, VOCALS; LIBBY CONSTAN, VOCALS

One day many years ago our friend Elliot Bergman, founder of the bands NOMO and Wild Belle, was visiting and we started talking about making music for children. Elliot said, “My mom used to write songs and sing them to me when I was a child; would you want to hear them?” Of course we said yes and were so grateful to learn this lovely song. Storey and her cousin Libby had fun singing call-and-response with me.



10. circle of the sun

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; GLOCKENSPIEL; ANNA PADGETT, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, VOCALS, GUITAR, ZITHER, DULCIMER, PIANO, HARMONIUM; STOREY LITTLETON, MICHAEL LITTLETON, PENNY LITTLETON, VOCALS; CLEM WALDMANN, DRUMS

We recorded this song as a tribute to Storey’s cousin Destry Sage Stephens-Marner, a beautiful and loving little girl who passed away last summer at the age of four. Destry’s family is part of a tight-knit community in the Western Slope of Colorado, and they have come together to create the Destry Sage Celebration Art Project

in her memory. We made this recording of Sally Rogers's beautiful song to be part of a compilation called Take Her by the Hand. The compilation will help to raise funds for the creation of a Celebration Life sculpture in Destry's name in the courtyard of the library in Palisade, Colorado. Family friend Dave Grossman wrote these words of sweet Destry: "(She was) full of ebullient grace, prinkle skies, and vast wonderment.... Her lively sense of color, vibrant art, and outfits shamed the rainbows."

11. moon don't go

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS, PIANO; JANE SCARPANTONI, CELLO; STOREY LITTLETON, SOMTO EJINKONE, KEN EJINKONE, VOCALS AND PERCUSSION

Ella Jenkins is known as the First Lady of Children's Music. She has been recording with Folkways since 1957, making a diverse array of albums exploring rhythm, call-and-response, songs of the civil rights era, comprehensive international folk traditions, and more. She is an extraordinary songwriter and instrumentalist and can do perfect birdcalls! I am deeply inspired by Ella's commitment to creating meaningful music with and for children, and I love this mysterious little song.



12. everyone

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR, VOCALS; STOREY LITTLETON, VOCALS; KIRSTEN JACOBSON, VOCALS, FLUTE; JANE SCARPANTONI, CELLO; JUSTIN GUIP, DRUMS

This song was written by a man named Van Morrison. He lived in Woodstock, the town where I live now, when he wrote this song. Woodstock is home to many musicians, artists, poets, chipmunks, owls, tree frogs, and winding streams. I can feel the spirit of my town in this song, and it makes me so happy. Thank you, Van!





13. may this be love

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR, CYMBAL

Some people might be surprised to learn that Jimi Hendrix wrote such a gentle, comforting song. Daniel thought it would be nice to imagine how Joni Mitchell might arrange this song for guitar. Recently we found out that Jimi Hendrix was, in fact, a big Joni Mitchell fan. One time he came to her show with a big tape machine and asked her if he could record her songs. Of course she said yes!

14. *yuki* (snow)

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, GUITAR, HARMONIUM; KIRSTEN JACOBSON, FLUTE; NANCY CHUSID, BASS RECORDER; STOREY LITTLETON, VOCALS

Our dear friend Mizuyo Aburano, aka Mimi, taught us this Japanese song when we were looking for a winter song. The second verse, which we don't sing in English here, is about dogs running around outside happily in the snow, and cats curled up inside by a kotatsu (Japanese heating table). We love this cheerful and sweet song so much that we named our dog Yuki after it!

15. *blue sky* (little martha intro)

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; DANIEL LITTLETON, VOCALS, GUITAR; AMY HELM, VOCALS

I grew up in the 1970s and spent a lot of time listening to music on the radio in the back of our family station wagon. One of my favorite bands on the radio was the Allman Brothers. I really loved the harmony in their guitar playing, and the sweet melodies of the songs. I loved their song "Ramblin' Man"—as a child growing up in the suburbs I found that narrative very exciting! And this song always made me feel so good. Here we are joined by our dear friend, Amy Helm.

16. blue clouds

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, VOCALS; GLOCKENSPIEL; DANIEL LITTLETON, VOCALS,
GUITAR, HARMONIUM; STOREY LITTLETON, VOCALS; JEAN COOK, VIOLIN

Daniel wrote these words for Storey, many years ago....

*Goodnight, my darlin'
Silver moon is on the rise
I love you more than a thousand suns
The morning rain on a butterfly's wings*

*Goodnight, my darlin'
Holy river shining bright
Step to the gate, don't be late
All of your dreams await you*

*Goodnight, my darlin'
Don't you worry your head
The blue blue clouds in the golden sky
The jaybird singing with the fireflies*

A blanket of stars on the back of your eyes.



credits

PRODUCED BY ELIZABETH MITCHELL,
WARREN DEFEVER, AND DANIEL LITTLETON

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AND CHARLIE PILZER

MIXED BY WARREN DEFEVER, JUSTIN GUIP,
DANIEL LITTLETON, AND CHRIS EDWARDS

MASTERED BY PETE REINIGER

ANNOTATED BY ELIZABETH MITCHELL AND
BRIAN SELZNICK

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PRODUCTION MANAGER: MARY MONSEUR

FOR STOREY AND PENNY

IN MEMORY OF DESTRY SAGE STEPHENS-MARNER AND LEVON HELM



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by remy charlip

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THE DEAD BIRD. NEW YORK: GREENWILLOW BOOKS/HARPER COLLINS © 1958, 1985.

ARM IN ARM. NEW YORK: TRICYCLE PRESS/RANDOM HOUSE © 1969, 1997.

FORTUNATELY. NEW YORK: FOUR WINDS PRESS/SIMON & SCHUSTER © 1964, 1993.

I LOVE YOU. NEW YORK: AVON/SCHOLASTIC BOOKS © 1967, 1999.

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WWW.REMYCHARLIP.ORG

you are my flower

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FRONT ROW: PENNY LITTLETON, ROSETTA SERRANO; BACK ROW: MICHAEL LITTLETON,
ANNA PADGETT, STOREY LITTLETON, DANIEL LITTLETON, ELIZABETH MITCHELL



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15. BLUE SKY (LITTLE MARTHA INTRO) 3:03
16. BLUE CLOUDS 3:13



In the land of *Blue Clouds*, anything can happen. The clear and beautiful voice of voice of children's music favorite Elizabeth Mitchell weaves musical landscapes that "seem like a patchwork of memories we've always shared," writes Caldecott Award-winning author Brian Selznick. The dreamlike illustrations of legendary artist Remy Charlip illuminate the magical narratives of these timeless songs. Mitchell's extended family band, You Are My Flower, including daughter Storey and husband Daniel Littleton, embrace us with sound in a celebration of family, imagination and love.

Featuring artwork from the book *Arm in Arm* by Remy Charlip, with introductory essay by Brian Selznick. 16 tracks, 39 minutes, 32 page booklet.

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