I've got a partner by the name of Sam That squarehead pilot's quite a man Here's what he says when he gets in a jam

"Do something even if it's wrong"

Do something even if it's wrong This'll make sense before too long What am I gonna do with this crazy song

Do something even if it's wrong

The first thing Sam tries, it never works
The second thing only makes it worse
But the third, the fourth the fifth, the
sixth—something works
Do something even if it's wrong

The next time that you're up a tree You just don't know what your future might be

Take a tip from Sam and me And do something even if it's wrong

Hie Awa

Traditional
Gordon—12-string guitar
I have sung this for about 40 years: can't remember where I learned it. The
Boarding Party tracked it back through
Robin Roberts who recorded it as "Love is Kind." It's also known as "Ee Awa,"
"Haul Awa" or possibly "I a bha," which
Norman Kennedy says means "she that's

gone" in Gaelic. Lucy Simpson gave me the "blessing" verse, which she made. I often sing this for my wife, Carol, when I'm touring alone.

O love is kind to the least of men HIE AWA, HIE AWA Though he be but a drunken tar HIE AWA, HIE AWA

Far from land and the sight of man O who will love the sailorman?

And awa and awa HIE AWA, HIE AWA And awa and awa HIE AWA, AWA

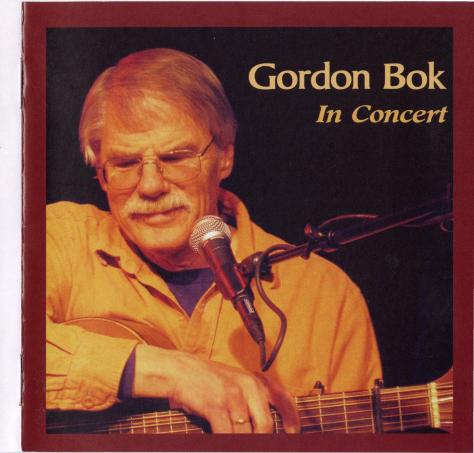
Take me to that star-eyed maid O I was happy with her laid

In the comfort of her bed There let me lie until I'm dead

Here's my blessing, let it be May you love as she loved me

For love is kind to the least of men Though he be but a drunken tar





Gordon Bok In Concert

For years I felt that knowing a concert was being recorded would remove the immediacy and spontaneity from it, along with that feeling of conversation that I usually feel with audiences.

My friends convinced me that we always have too much fun in a concert-hall for that to happen, and that I ought to let more people in on the fun, so in May and June of 2006 I recorded some concerts I was doing in Maine. This album is a sampling from them.

Recorded at The Strand, Rockland, Maine; The Chocolate Church, Bath, Maine; Center Theatre, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine; and Johnson Hall, Gardiner, Maine.

A special thanks to our loyal audiences for singing so beautifully and for providing the authentic cough-tracks.

Recorded, engineered and mastered by Bruce Boege, Limin Music, Northport, Maine

With additional recording by Rick Crampton and Bradley Truman Mixed by Bruce Boege, Gordon Bok and Anne Dodson

Mixed by Bruce Boege, Gordon Bok and Anne Dodson Produced by Gordon Bok and Anne Dodson

Front cover photograph by Mike Power

Inside photograph by Janet Buck-Marusov

Programming by Carol Rohl Graphic design by Ken Gross

Where possible, I print the oldest sources I have of these songs, no matter how much they differ from the versions that came to me.

The January Men and Then Some are: Gordon Bok, Will Brown, Sky Hall, Bill Huntington, Jamie Huntsberger, Cindy Kallet, Bob Richardson, Carol Rohl and Peter Yantz

Queer Bungo Rye

Traditional Gordon—12-string guitar A song I've known forever. I can't remember where I learned it, but I associate this version with Newfoundland. I've heard it sung "Bung-yer-eye," too.

Now Jack was a sailor and he walked up to town And she was a damsel, she skipped

up and down And she says to Jack as she passed

him by
"Would you care for to purchase some Old Bungo Rye?"

(Ruddy rye, fol de diddle dye, ruddy rye, ruddy rye)

Says Jack to himself, "Now what can this be But the finest of whiskies from far

Germany Snuggled up in a basket and sold on the sly

And the name that it goes by is Old Bungo Rye"

Jack gave her a pound, for he thought nothing strange

"Hold the basket, young man, while I run for your change"

Jack peeked in the basket and a child he did spy

"I'll be damned, (he did cry) this is Queer Bungo Rye"

Well, to get the child christened was
Jack's next intent
And to get the child christened, to
the parson he went

Says the parson to Jack, "What will he go by?"
"I'll be damned, (did he cry) call him

Queer Bungo Rye!"

very queer name'
"I'll be damned (did he cry) and it's a
queer way he came
Snuggled up in a basket and sold on

the sly
And the name that he'll go by is

Oueer Bungo Rve!"

Says the parson to Jack, "That's a

So come all you young sailors who walk up to town

Beware of those damsels who skip up and down Take a peek in their baskets as ye

Take a peek in their baskets as ye pass them by

Or else they may pawn on you Queer Bungo Rye!

Last Shift at the Crowns

© 1999 M.J. O'Connor Gordon—Spanish guitar

Author Mike O'Connor, OBE, says, "'The Crowns' was a famous tin mine on the Cornish coast. Its main shaft was started in 1858. Unlike most shafts it sloped at an angle of about 45° leading to a labyrinth of about 60 miles of tunnels under the Atlantic. Men were carried up and down the shaft in a gig, a purposebuilt wheeled box, which was also used to raise ore.

"The incident I describe is true. When the last shift came up, in 1914, all the families gathered at the pit head. Long before the wagon carrying the men came into sight their voices could be heard singing in harmony, the sound echoing up to the surface from beneath the ocean."

And the last shift returned from the shaft beneath the sea
We heard them first, for every man was singing
As each in turn rose to the sunset glow
On harmonies born from the gates of

When the Crowns closed

Hell

That even drowned the breakers on the granite far below

I asked the last man What he remembered from his years beneath the ground He said, at end of shift when all was

He said, at end of shift when all was quiet

The drill was stopped, the pumps were far way

Before going to the shaft with all its singing

In silence he would listen, and in silence he would pray

What did you hear?
"Seas breaking over, close above the mine"

He'd catch the water from the tunnel roof

He'd taste for salt, then silently he'd pray

For all who worked 'neath ocean and 'neath granite

He said the sound of waves above would haunt him all his days

What of today? Crowns' engine-house is a silent, empty shell

The shaft is gone and all who sang so fine

I never felt the granite tremble 'neath the swell

But I heard the last shift rising to the sunlight And I still remember singing out of the Gates of Hell

Patrick Spencer (Sir Patrick Spens, Child No. 58)

©1975 Bob Coltman Gordon—12-string guitar I sang with Ed Trickett professionally for many years, and still do for fun. I think I learned this song from him in the 1970's, or one of those decades. His friend Bob Coltman has written many hundreds of songs including the great folk-favorite. Lonesome Robin.

Through friends in various services, I've come to know what it's like to be sent to sea and kept out there by people who have never had to be out there.

Oh, don't the moon look pretty, she sails like a ship in the sky
Darling, you don't know nothing about sailing, she's got a cast in the eye
When the moon weeps silvery tears,
you can look for a terrible storm
God pity the sailor that's out tomor-

If you be Patrick Spencer, and man, you better had be

row, I'm glad I can bide at home

mands you to go to sea
How little he thinks of the dangers,
among his wine and his song
His daughter in far Norroway, she's
sick and she wants to come home

He might have written me greeting, he

might have cast me blame

Standing out to sea, oh Lord,

Here's a letter from the King, he com-

He might have asked me a hundred favors, God knows I'd never complain But this running up in the rigging with a hurricane on the wing It's come to a matter of life and death to have to pleasure the King

it commenced to rain
The sea like the tops of mountains,
and the wind like a thing in pain
Patrick Spencer took his glass, and he
put it in Johnny's hand
Run up, Johnny, as high as you can,
and see if you see any land

No land, Patrick Spencer, no never a sight of shore Then give it over, boys, he cried, we'll never see home any more Never mind your buckle shoes, for

you'll wet more than your feet
And as for the letter from the King,
it's a damn small winding-sheet

Christinie be a long, long while a-waiting for me to come home
And the cold, cold sea be a long, long time a-walking over my bones
That man that told the King about me, I

wish I had him here
And the one last wish I would like to
have granted is to carry him under
with me

Plastic Container of Plonk

Words © Bill Scott
Music © Roger Ilott
© 2001 Restless Music APRA/AMCOS
Gordon—Spanish guitar
When Bill wrote this, he sent it to his
friend Roger Ilott to put a tune to it. I
learned it from Roger's singing. It is
printed in Bill's songbook Hey Rain
which Timberhead Music published in
the U.S.

Some Aussie words worth knowing: Stubbies—short cans of beer. Yabbies crayfish. Plonk—cheap red wine ("Rough Red"). Tucker—food. Burleying—roughing up (giving them a hard time).

I remember the days when we used to go fishing After the whiting around Skirmish Poi

After the whiting around Skirmish Point With a carton of stubbies, a bucket of vabbies

And worms that we dug from all over the joint And a plastic container of plonk

Remember the morning old Charlie got blotto

And fell all around in a tangle of lines He was singing his head off and whirling his sinker

But as he was having a wonderful time He spilled me container of plonk

How he splashed it all round and some went in the bucket
And the yabbies all went on a beautiful spree
They drank me rough red and got full

as old Charlie

And argued and sang and left nothing
for me

of me plastic container of plonk

We were baiting with yabbies all well marinated And waying their claws as they went

on their way And the whiting got word of this mar-

And the whiting got word of this marvelous tucker

And came in their thousands from all

round the Bay To indulge in some yabbies and plonk

When our creels were all full then we

started off homeward

With a teetotal nephew to manage the car

Then the whiting all came to the surface to thank us

For the taste thrill that came from me

old plastic jar

Me plastic container of plonk

So don't talk to me about burleying whiting Just take a tip from an old fisherman

Bring a little rough red and before you start fishing Just tip a good slosh in the bait-holding can

From your plastic container of plonk

Where the Cane Fires Burn

Words and music © 1999 Bill Scott Gordon—12-string guitar A prime reason for finally extending a tour to Australia was to meet Mavis and Bill Scott, with whom I had corresponded and shared music for so many years.

He lived his last years in Warwick, but when he died in 2005, the family took his ashes North and scattered them by the Johnstone River near Mt. Tully, the area that he loved so well. I learned the song from Penny Davies and Roger llott, though it's in Bill's songbook. I've wandered east, I've wandered west From the Hamersley Range to the Snowy Crest

From the Lachlan Plains to the Broken
Hill
But my heart's at the Johnstone River

But my heart's at the Johnstone River still Now the time has come when I must

Where the vine scrub grows and the canefires burn
Where the vine scrub grows and the

return

Mill?

canefires burn

By the Yarra now the cold rain falls

And the wind is bleak from the Bass Strait squalls I stand and wonder in the chill

I stand and wonder in the chill Has the season started at Mulgrave

For Autumn comes and I must return Where the harvesters chug and the trashfires burn

Where the harvesters chug and the trashfires burn

The smog is thick and stings the eye Where the Harbour Bridge fills half the sky

And the sirens wail through Sydney town

But I dream of Tully when the sun goes down

Where the rainforest covers the hills with green

The cane grows tall and the air is clean The cane grows tall and the air is clean

I've been wandering South and West On land and sea, but the north is best Now Autumn comes with its hint of snows

And I must follow where the egret goes To watch the evening's first faint star From Flying Fish Point or Yarrabah From Flying Fish Point or Yarrabah

Canso Strait

Traditional
Gordon—12-string guitar
A Gloucester fishing schooner returning
from the Northumberland Strait
stopped in at Canso (between Nova
Scotia and Cape Breton Island) for
supplies for the long beat back to the
Westward. The captain went ashore and
got into the booze and the rest of it is in
the song. The description of heading out
at dark, getting into a knock-down¹ and
the luck and skill involved in getting her
out of trouble is a wonderful piece of
reportage and poetry.

In Canso Strait our vessel lay She'd just returned from out the Bay A schooner built both stout and strong And to Gloucester she did belong

We were homeward bound and ready for sea

When our drunken captain got on a spree

He come on board and to us did say Get your anchors, boy, and fill away

We got our anchors at his command And with all sail set we left the land We left old Sand Point on our lee And headed her out against a steep head-sea

The night come on, the dark clouds lower

The wind did howl and the waves did roar

An angry squall² from the angry sky It knocked her down about half-mast high

Her jib-sheets parted, which eased her some

She come head-to-wind and she rose again

We got our jibs in and a new sheet bent And straightway aft to our captain went We kindly asked him to shorten sail
Or we'd be lost in the heavy gale
He cursed and swore that if the wind
would blow
He'd show us how his old boat could go

Then up spoke one of our gallant men "There's twelve of us right here at hand We'll reef her down and to sea we'll go And if you refuse you'll be tied below"

The waves did roar, the wind did rave We hardly thought our lives we'd save But we reefed her down to her own success She's like a bird swinging for her nest

She's headed up off the Cape Shore now She knocks the white foam off her bow Oh never again will I ever sail With a drunken captain and a heavy gale

The Angelus

Poem © Elizabeth Shane Music © 2003 Gordon Bok BMI Gordon—Spanish guitar Elizabeth Shane (1877-1951) was a poet from Donegal who knew her land and her waters well. This poem has the feel of a lot of the country-folk I've met in my visits to Ireland. "Turf" is peat, dug up in the bogs and dried in stacks, for fuel. Mary and Manus are working the turf together
Old they are, the two of them, old

and grey

Over the bog the sea-wind sings in

the heather

Night clouds lie on the hilltons, far

Night clouds lie on the hilltops, far away

They will have comfort now when the nights are colder They will have turf, aye, plenty of

turf to spare
Light she steps with the heavy creel
on her shoulder

Load on load for the stack that is building there

Now there is a deeper note than the sea-wind's singing

Soft it comes, on the breath of the dying day

Down in the hollow the bell from the chapel is ringing

And Mary and Manus stand for a minute and pray

Soft and low on the air each long note lingers

Quietly bending their old, grey heads they stand

Making the holy sign with work-worn fingers

Wrapped in the sudden peace that has blessed the land

Where the wind slaps the vessel flat on her side in the water—some vessels don't come back from that.

² I sang "wave"

Is it the light of heaven on the wide sea breaking Spreading its glory out like a golden rain And with the light of the world in their eyes a-waking Mary and Manus are working the turf again Inheritance ©1990 J.B. Goodenough

From her book, Milking in November. Judy was a poet who captured the hard, clear language of the New England landscape with a "fierce economy." She was a good musician too, and wife, mother and friend. No rum-money Slave-money Whale-money My grandfathers Were landlubbers all

They left me A tilted house A broken-backed barn And six fields Hung on the hill Fifty years I thought I was poor But I learned this: Good dirt Is hard to come by

Hark Now © 2004 Gordon Bok The January Men and Then Some A rowing song. You can bail her all night, you can bail her all day HARK NOW, HEED ME NOW And dammed if she'll give you a decent week's pay OH HEED AND HARKEN TO ME If Ronnie was here on the end of an oar I'd show the old bat what a muckle³ was for I've run round old England, I've put into France Wherever I've landed I got a fair chance A China-man come to my old woman's door He gave her a hake and it danced on the floor

O who will pull with ye when I am gone? If ye pull like ye talk we could lift-her-

And who will sing with ve when I am If ye sing like ye pull we'll be here all

along4

gone?

night long!

Let the Lower Lights Be Burning

Phillip Bliss 1871 The January Men and Then Some I learned this from Kendall Morse in the 1960's—it was popular along this coast a generation before mine. We've heard three different stories of how this song came to be, all involving a ship disaster on the Great

Lakes. Phillip Bliss was a well-known

evangelist who heard one of these

stories and wrote the song.

Brightly beams our father's mercy From the Lighthouse evermore But to us he gives the keeping Of the lights along the shore

Let the lower lights be burning Send their gleam across the wave Some poor fainting, struggling seaman You may rescue, you may save

Dark the night of sin has settled Loud the angry billows roar Eager eyes are watching, longing

For the lights along the shore

In the darkness may be lost

Trim your feeble lamp, my brother Some poor sailor, tempest-tossed Trying now to reach the harbor

Wrecker's Prayer

Poem © Theodore Goodrich Roberts Music © 1973 Dan Aguiar The January Men and Then Some Stories of people enhancing their living by wreck-picking, or even assisting the wrecks to happen, are rampant round the coasts of many countries. In this poem, it is coastal Newfoundlanders merely praying for a little divine assistance. It comes from The Leather Bottle, a 1937 novel by Theodore Goodridge Roberts. Dan Aguiar is an old musical friend of mine now living in Red Hook, New York.

For winter in Topsail Tickle⁵ is hard With grey frost creepin' like a Mortal Sin And perishin' lack of bread in the bin

Give us a wreck—or two, Good Lord

A grand, rich wreck, we do humbly pray Busted abroad at break-of-day

With vittles and gear to beguile our grief One grand wreck, or maybe two

And hove clear in 'cross Topsail Reef

With gear and vittles to see us through

³ fish club ⁴ get the job done quickly

⁵ A tickle is a small strait, or passage.

'Til spring starts up like the leap-of-day And the fish strike back into Topsail Bay

Lord of reefs and tides and sky Heed ye our need and hark to our cry: Bread by the bag and beef by the cask Ease for sore bellies is all we ask

One rich wreck, for Thy hand is strong A barque or a brig from up-along⁶ Bemused by the twisty tides, oh Lord For winter in Topsail Tickle is hard

Loud and long will we sing thy praise Merciful Father, O Ancient of Days Master of fog and tide and reef Heave us a wreck to beguile our grief Amen

⁶ To the Westard—Nova Scotia or U.S.

Collage: "Pretty"

Words & music ©2005 Gordon Bok Gordon—Spanish guitar Through many years on the water, mostly along this coast and a few others, I've heard a lot of things, and have recently been jotting them down as I remember them. This is some parts of conversations strung together and sung. I've interspersed it with one side of a conversation I heard on marine radio a few years ago—that's the spoken part.

Memory is a drifty thing, as my brother and I enjoyed proving, so the words may be more mine than theirs, but the stories and the sentiments are true as the day they happened.

Sung:

Lord, lord, lord, ain't it pretty today!
With the sky all quilted over like a mattress, soft and gray
See every twig and pebble on the islands up the bay
And the wind away . . .

Spoken:

Hey Pete—you on this one?⁷
Yeah, it's me. I been hauling over here under the Blockhouse all morning.
Look—is that you in there by the Sears bell?

Hey, hey, hey; pretty today

I thought that looked like you. Uh . . . you've been kind of . . . stationary in there for awhile. Is everything all right?

Aw, that's a bummer. I expect you've cleaned your filters, bled her out, looked at the aircleaner, like-a-that? Naw, God, beyond that, I dunno. Could

be injectors, anything, I guess. Anyway, I think I'll go over to Turtle Head: I've got a couple of strings in

⁷ A particular marine radio channel (not 16)

there and if I can get to them, maybe I can catch up to myself a little this week. So look, if there's anything I've got that you can use, I'll be in the neighborhood. You will let me know, won't ya?

Well, good enough: I'll leave you to it, then. I'll be on this channel, anyway.

Sung:

wind

Poor old boats
They're nothing but a flaming
Construct of the Mind
Nothing but a pile of man-made
notions
Steel and plastic—spells and

potions—
They've got nothing to do with the ocean or the wind
Nothing to do with the water or the

Damned old things
Yeah, they're nothing but a flaming
construct of the mind
Nothing but a flaming fabrication
Some damned human machination

And we wonder why they won't keep a-running on their own Wonder why they don't keep running on their own

Oh but someday the world's going to give a great old shake—

Blow us all to hell-and-gone off here
And I know for one that the ocean wouldn't mind
And you can bet your boots that the wind won't even care....

Spoken:

Oh—oh—here we go . . . Hey Pete! I know you're busy, but stick your nose up outa there and talk to me for a minute, will ya?

Yes—you *are* in kinda close. Look, I've got a line made up right here—why don't I slide in by your stern and we twitch you outa there? Yeah, that looks good to me. I'll just

poke along easy; we got all day. Hell, we got all night, if we need it. No, buddy, don't even think about it. Next week it'll be me out there,

Next week it'll be me out there, we both know that. Look, you talk to Rosie, you give her my best, won't ya?

Sung:

I don't dream of sailor's heaven, I won't sing of Fiddler's Green I'm not looking for a fairer world than the one I've always known I just drive her when she rises and slack her when she falls

And hope I never get to reap all the foolishness I've sown

No, I don't dream of sailor's heaven,
I don't sing of Fiddler's Green
I'm not looking for a kinder world
than the one I've always seen
I just ease her when she pitches and
catch her when she rolls
And get her in before the devil
knows we're out here

Lord, lord, lord . . . pretty today

Oystershell Road

©2003 Mary Garvey Gordon—12-string This is about oyster "farming" in the tidal estuaries around Willapa Bay, WA, during WWII, when the women had to replace the men who had gone off either to fight or to be put in internment "camps." Mary, bless her, took the time to listen and to tell their story.

You have to dig oysters when the tide is just right

And sometimes it comes in the dead of the night

The orders came down to extinguish all light

To our homes on the Oystershell Road

Now the glow of a lantern could bring an attack

And sometimes we'd sleep in the old oyster shack

And let ourselves down with a rake and a sack

Near our homes on the Oystershell Road

Some came from Germany, some from Japan

They lived for the oyster each woman and man

We said, God be with you, return when you can

To your homes on the Oystershell Road

For when push comes to shove your mettle shines through

And our hands and our feet somehow knew what to do

With the men gone away we made such a fine crew

From our homes on the Oystershell Road

In the sea was the sub, in the air was the plane

And the men had it worse so we couldn't complain

And the neighbors would honk us all home in the rain

To our homes on the Oystershell Road

We helped win the war in the mud and the muck

And prayed that our feet would never get stuck

When the tide rushes in, you can run out of luck

By your homes on the Oystershell Road

Oh how I remember the dark and the cold

I had hoped that our story would someday be told

But it probably won't cause we're getting so old

In our homes on the Oystershell Road



Culebra

©1984 Gordon Bok Gordon—Spanish guitar A remembrance of a day delivering a sad old boat from St. Thomas, V.I. to Puerto Rico, wherein we strove to avoid damaging the island of Culebra.

Do Something (Even If It's Wrong)

Words and music / © Captain Dave Kennedy

Gordon—12-string guitar Dave was a phenomenon, a force of nature. Having "come up through the hawsepipe" on a hundred ships, he had an unlimited license and world pilotage when I met him. A great lover of many kinds of music, he used to write sentimental country songs. This was straight out of his experience running a small, independent company of ship-pilots in New York Harbor, I made a few ship-movements with him, both in Long Island Sound and the Port of St. Croix, and can attest that he was an astonishingly canny ship-handler though not immune to the odd mistake. The "Sam" in this song was Sam Sorensen, one of his partners. I will always thank Steve Sellors for keeping this song alive until we learned it.

Gordon Bok In Concert

- 1. Introduction to Queer Bungo Rye :27
- 2. Queer Bungo Rye 2:54
- 3. Last Shift at the Crowns 3:26 4. Patrick Spencer 3:37
- 5. Introduction to Plastic Container of Plonk 2:01
- 6. Plastic Container of Plonk 3:09
- 7. Where the Cane Fires
- Burn 4:56
- 8. Canso Strait 3:39 9. The Angelus 3:19
- 10. Inheritance 1:22
- 11. Hark Now **1:49**
- 12. Let the Lower Lights
 - Be Burning 2:54
 - 13. Wrecker's Praver 2:43
- 14. Introduction to Collage: "Pretty" 1:03
 - 15. Collage: "Pretty" 7:27
 - 16. Ovstershell Road 3:48
 - 17. Introduction to Culebra:47
 - 18. Culebra 3:26
 - 19. Introduction to Do Something:56 20. Do Something **2:26**
 - 21. Introduction to Hie Awa:38
 - 22. Hie Awa 3:22
 - Total time: **60:21**

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Total time: 60:2



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