

Kris Kristofferson

Lyrics to...

This old road

Closer to the bone

and some other songs...

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This Old Road

released on March 7, 2006

This old road

Look at that old photograph
Is it really you?
Smiling like a baby full of dreams

Smiling ain't so easy now
Some are coming true
Nothing's simple as it seems

But I guess you count your blessings with the problems
That you're dealing with today
Like the changing of the seasons

Chorus:

Ain't you come a long way, ain't you come a long way
Ain't you come a long way down, this old road

Looking at a looking glass
Running out of time
On a face you used to know

Traces of a future lost
In between the lines
One more rainbow for the road

Thinking of the faces in the window
That you passed along the way
Or the last thing you believed in

Chorus

Say you tried to chase the sundown
And you let it slip away
And the holy night is falling

Chorus

Look at that old photograph
Is it really you ?

Pilgrim's progress

Am I young enough to believe in revolution
Am I strong enough to get down on my knees and pray
Am I high enough on the chain of evolution
To respect myself, and my brother and my sister
And perfect myself in my own peculiar way

I get lazy, and forget my obligations
I'd go crazy, if I paid attention all the time
And I want justice, but I'll settle for some mercy
On this Holy Road through the Universal Mind

repeat Chorus

I got lucky, I got everything I wanted
I got happy, there wasn't nothing else to do
And I'd be crazy not to wonder if I'm worthy
Of the part I play in this dream that's coming true

Repeat Chorus

The last thing to go

The angels were singing a sad country song
It sounded like something of yours
With a conscience as clear as the tear in your eye
And a heart beaten golden and pure

And I felt all the feelings we set down in song
Torn from the body and soul
And the fortunes that faded like stars into daylight
And tear drops we turned into gold

Chorus

Every hard rocking wreck on the highway
Every heartbroken rule of the road
Every true thing we wrote on the wind is still singing
Love is the last thing to go

Love is the reason we happened at all
And it paid for the damage we done
And it bought us the freedom to fall into grace
On our way to our place in the sun

Repeat Chorus

Wild American

Wild American

You're the one they never tamed
'Cause you stood your ground
And they could not make you change
You're the warning they still don't understand
Watch your back, now, they'll kill you if they can

When they burn your brother down in the name of Freedom
I don't care if it's left or right
It's wrong
If that's all they can do then you don't need 'em
You're the one, Wild American

In the news

Read about the sorry way he done somebody's daughter
Chained her to a heavy thing and threw her in the water
And she sank into the darkness with their baby son inside her
A little piece of truth and beauty died

Burning up the atmosphere and cutting down the trees
The billion dollar bombing of a nation on it's knees
Anyone not marching to their tune they call it treason
Everyone says God is on his side

See the lightning, hear the cries
Of the wounded in a world in Holy war
Mortal thunder from the skies
Killing everything they say they're fighting for

Broken babies, broken homes
Broken-hearted people dying everyday
How'd this happen, what went wrong
Don't blame God, I swear to God I heard him say

Chorus:

Not in my name, not on my ground
I want nothing but the ending of the war
No more killing, or it's over
And the mystery won't matter anymore

Broken dreamers, broken rules
Broken-hearted people just like me and you
We are children of the stars
Don't blame God, I swear to God he's crying too

Repeat Chorus and repeat first Verse

Burden of freedom

I stand on the stairway
My back to the dungeon
The doorway to freedom
So close to my hand
And voices behind me
So bitterly damn me
For seeking salvation
They don't understand

Chorus:

Lord, help me to shoulder
The burden of freedom
And give me the courage
To be what I can
And when I am wounded
By those who condemn me
Lord, help me forgive them
They don't understand

Their lonely frustration
Descending to laughter
Erases the footprints
I leave in the sand
But I'm free to travel
Where no one can follow
In search of the kingdom
They don't understand

Chorus:

Lord, help me to shoulder
The burden of freedom
And give me the courage
To be what I can
And when I have wounded
The last one who loved me
Lord, help her forgive me
I don't understand.

Chase the feeling

It takes one to know one, baby
I know how you feel
You got your hunger
And some problems that are real

And you're dealing with some demons
Who are driving you insane
And I've seen them drag you screaming
Down the hallways of your brain

Chorus:

And you got loaded again
Ain't you handsome when you're high
Nothing matters
Chase the feeling 'til you die

Let it right on in there, baby
Let it run your life
Let it run your children off
And let it run your wife

Let it take the joy you love
And turn it to despair
You knew you knew better, baby
You just didn't care

repeat Chorus

Blame it on the moonlight, baby
Think of number one
Tangled up in two
When you were shining like the sun

With a pretty piece of hunger
Who was younger than her eyes
On the scale of cosmic thunder
It's a wonder you're alive

repeat Chorus

Holy creation

So many questions
So many answers
So many reasons
Most of them wrong

Facing the future
With the faith of my father
I let a stranger
Into my home

And right there before me
I saw it happen
There's no denying
Nothing's the same

The truth is a highway
Leading to freedom
All is forgiven
Love is to blame

Chorus:

And I've seen him hold her
With his head on her shoulder
Singing her love songs
Soft as her smile
Tender affection
Under the rainbow
Holy Creation
Mother and child

I know the story
I read the papers
I see the anger
I feel it too

But when I see the wonder
In the smiles of my children
It reminds me of dreams
Worth coming true

repeat Chorus

The show goes on

We used to talk about the Rock and the Roll
That made it matter not to sell your soul
Like a banner that we held so high, we weren't afraid to fall
Steady rolling through the warning signs
That were hidden in between the lines
That kept us rocking 'til the break of day
Or any break at all

We used to take about a day and a night
To try to sing up all the soul in sight
And anyone who couldn't see the light
We had to leave behind
And the sweetest thing you ever heard
Was the singing of the Speckled Bird
And commercial was a dirty word
We laid it on the line

Chorus

It was all so easy then
We could do no wrong
We'll never be the same again
But the show goes on

We used to drink about a bucket of booze
To try to chase away the black and blues
And when it came the time to pay your dues
You gave an I.O.U.¹
To the devil with the dirty smile
Which he added to the growing pile
Of the promises you mean to keep
The day your dreams come true

Repeat Chorus

¹ für Schuldschein ... I owe you

Thank you for a life

Thank you for a life that I'd call happy
Overlooking all that we've been through
When it comes to loving I've been lucky
Everything I am I owe to you

Thank for the little girls you gave me
Thank you for them bouncing baby boys
Thank you for the sadness
That you saved me from the madness, baby
All I'm crying now are tears of joy

Thank you for that burning sun that's rising
Golden in the air that smells so sweet
Thank you for that empty far horizon
That opens to a new eternity

instrumental

repeat first verse

The final attraction

Well here you are
The final attraction
Awaiting direction
From somewhere above

Your finest performance
Approaching perfection
I know what you're making
Is some kind of love

Somewhere in your lifetime
You were dared into feeling
So many emotions
That tear you apart

But they love you so badly
For sharing their sorrows
So pick up that guitar
Go break a heart

Come on son, get back up on that stage,
If you can do it one time just for Hank Williams
Go break a heart
Ray Charles, Johnny Cash, June Carter, Waylon Jennings, Roger Miller
Go break a heart
Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix, George Harrison, John Lennon, Mickey Newbury
Go break a heart
Vince Mathews, Shel Silverstein, Lefty Frizzell
Go break a heart
And Harlan Howard,

And maybe one time for me
Go break a heart

Closer to the Bone

released on September 29, 2009

Closer to the bone

Ain't it kinda funny
Ain't it just the way though
Ain't 'cha gettin' better
Runnin' out of time
Making pretty music
Closer to your feelings
Working on the reason
Running on the rhyme

Heading for the highway
Rolling like a river
Soaring like an eagle
Skippin' like a stone
Comin' from the heartbeat
Nothin' but the truth now
Everything is sweeter
Closer to the bone

Ain't afraid of moonlight
Ain't afraid of freedom
Love will make you crazy
But your soul will keep you sane
Singing to the starlight
Over the horizon
Open to the pleasure
Equal to the pain

Heading for the highway
Rolling like a river
Soaring like an eagle
Skippin' like a stone
Comin' from the heartbeat
Nothin' but the truth now
Everything is sweeter
Closer to the bone

From here to forever

(Kris Kristofferson, T.S. Bruton, Glen Clark)

Cool shadows fall through the moonlight
Soft as the breeze through your hair
And the smile on your face when you're sleeping
Is the answer to anyone's prayer

Fill your heart for the mornin' tomorrow
You've still got a long way to grow
And the love that you're dreamin' will guide you
And live like a song in your soul

And darlin' if we're not together
There's one thing I want you to know
I'll love you from here to forever
And be there wherever you go

There are so many feelings to follow
So many chances to take
So many ways you can stumble
Someday your heart's gonna break

Darlin' take all the time that you're given
Be all you know you can be
And if you need a reason for livin'
Do it for love and for me

And darlin' if we're not together
There's one thing I want you to know
I'll love you from here to forever
And be there wherever you go

I will love you from here to forever
And be there wherever you go

Holy woman

I see you in the mornn' with the spirit in the sky
The breeze is full of freedom and the eagle i your eye
And the aura of an angel come to show me how to fly
Where the mess don't matter anymore

And I see you in the darkness with the moonlight on your face
The breeze is full of flowers and the shadows soft as lace
And I feel the way our faces come together into space
Where the heart has never been before

Chorus:

Holy woman, I will build a shinin' monument to you, wait and see
I'm only human, can you fill the holy emptiness in me

I see you in the glory of your passion blazin' bright
And God almighty stillness of the stars that fill the night
'cause you held me in the darkness and you led me to the light
Turned the key and opened me a door

Chorus:

Holy woman, I will build a shinin' monument to you, wait and see
I'm only human, can you fill the holy emptiness in me

Starlight and stone

I just wanted a ride, I just want you to know
I got nothing to hide, I got nowhere to go

And the hunger is hard as a promise to keep
And the night's are so long and the silence so deep

There's a piece of my mind the world can't erase
I remember the time and the look on your face

And i will tell the wind blow the stars from the sky
The road never ends, the soul never dies.

Be who you are just as long as you can
Know in your heart I'm still your man

Headin' for home, starlight and stone

Sister Sinead

I'm singing this song for my sister Sinead
Concerning the god awful mess that she made
When she told them her truth just as hard as she could
Her message profoundly was misunderstood

There's humans entrusted with guarding our gold
And humans in charge of the saving of souls
And humans responded all over the world
Condemning that bald headed brave little girl

And maybe she's crazy and maybe she ain't
But so was Picasso and so were the saints
And she's never been partial to shackles or chains
She's too old for breaking and too young to tame

It's askin' for trouble to stick out your neck
In terms of a target a big silhouette
But some candles flicker and some candles fade
And some burn as true as my sister Sinead

And maybe she's crazy and maybe she ain't
But so was Picasso and so were the saints
And she's never been partial to shackles or chains
She's too old for breaking and too young to tame

Hall of angels

We stayed at the barroom till closing
I held down a place at his side
And drank to the memory that crushed him
A lady who'd loved him and died

He purely could not find a reason
To get it back up and go on
Then out of the dark came a stranger
Who turned us around with a song

He said: I know the pain that you're feeling
I had a sweet little girl
And I loved her more than her mother
Or anything else in the world

And sure as I loved her I lost her
Sure as I wanted to die
Then I had a dream or a vision
Of wonder that opened my eyes

I dreamed of a young band of angels
That shone like the stars from above
'Cos each had a bright burning candle
Except for the angel I loved

And I asked why their candles were burning
And why that hers wasn't the same
She said: Oh, Daddy, each time that I try to light it
Your tears just keep drowning the flame

We stared at the stranger in silence
His spirit was truly alive
If life had made his eyes glisten
The diamond was bright in his eye

'Cos everyone who ever loved him
Though fortune had torn them apart
Will live in the Hall of the Angels
As long as the love in his heart

Oh they'll live in the Hall of The Angels
As long as the love in your heart

Love don't live here anymore

Perfect strangers sitting down face to face
Like we've never met before
Nothing's left between us
But the space between us

Love don't live here anymore
Faded photographs; dusty dreams
Lying scattered on the floor
Nothing's here to bind us
To the years behind us
Love don't live here anymore

Never sharin' nothin'
We don't care
I got nothin' close to nothin' you'd care to hear
Nail the shutters down; pull the shades
Hang a sign upon the door
There's no use pretending
There's no happy ending
Love don't live here anymore

Good morning John

dedicated to Johnny Cash

Good morning, John:

Ain't it great to see your future shining brighter,
Than the naked light of day?

You made it, John:

But I confess there was a time we two have thought,
That you might let it slip away.

I love you, John:

In the cold and holy darkness,
You were always shining brighter than a star.

God bless you, John:

For the love and joy you've given,
As the living inspiration that you are.

You scared me, John:

'Cos you've crossed so many borders into danger,
With the price upon your head.

They got you, John:

And it hurts to see so many friends who ran,
Along beside you laying dead.

I know you, John:

There ain't nothing you can't handle now,
'Cause there ain't nothing bigger than your heart.

Keep shining, John:

For you owe it to the others as the dark,
And holy wonder that you are.

Hang in there, John:

It's a rocky road to glory,
But the straightest and the strongest will survive.

Keep smiling, John:

We won't make it there tomorrow,
But today let's say we're lucky we're alive.

I see you, John:

For the best of good intentions,
Have a way of getting scattered by the wind.

I mean it, John:

You might lose your mind or memory,
But you ain't gonna lose me as your friend

Tell me one more time

Girl I guess I've been forgiving;
I've acquired a taste for living
Just when I was close to giving up the ghost;
and I be what I believe about as often as I can be
and I maybe can be oftener than most;

And if the best I have to offer is the chances you will be taking
With the heart that you will be breaking if you lose;
Well I can't tell you how to take it;
Girl I know you know the answer
Darling tell me one more time before you choose

Did you feel a little lighting,
Did you feel a little thunder,
That was barely running under your control;
Was it just a little frightening,
As he stared into the wonder
Of the deep and starry splendor of your soul

I won't be surprised to see you heading down the highway
Just like every dream I never see come true;
Look for me to go on living;
If you loving me or leaving
Darling tell me one more time before you do;

Did you feel a little lighting,
Did you feel a little thunder;
That was barely running under your control;
Was it just a little frightening
When he stared into the wonder
Of the deep and starry splendor of your soul.

Let the walls come down

On a cold dark corner i town
An old soul standing his ground
Sang his heart right out at the world
Passing him by
I can still hear every word
Of a song that nobody heard
'Cause he sang right out of his soul
Into the sky, when he cried

Chorus

Let the walls come down
Let the love come through
When it all comes down
Well, it's up to you

Talking man or woman to man
Pray to God just as hard as you can
Brother, help your brother in need
Soon as you see one

And you can't free nobody else
If you can't be true to yourself
If you're looking for a miracle now
Buddy, you better be one
All alone, on your own

Repeat chorus

Let the walls come down
Let it all come true
When it all comes down
It's up to me and you

Wonder

There's a song in my soul for the sun going down
When it dies at the end of the day
With the sadness descending as soft as the sound
Of the life that was slipping away

The heavens above me seem empty and gray
As dreams that won't ever come true
Then the star-spangled glory of love fill the skies
And my heart with the wonder of you

Pretty berries I carry to you
Pretty flowers still hold in your hand
Pretty reasons for dreams coming true
And for doing the best that you can

I swear to be thankful the rest of my days
And wear the whatever I do
For the chance I was given to live and believe
In the love and the wonder of you

I hate your ugly face

„Here's the first whole song I ever wrote. Eleven years old and well on my way.”

You heard a lot of singers, moanin' of the love they've lost,
They're always true to their long lost dear no matter what the cost.
I want you to hear I ain't cryin' in my beer, this is how it goes with me,
The happiest day of my unhappy life was when you set me free.

I hate your ugly face, I see it every place,
It follows me wherever I try to go.
Your skin is tan like leather, it looks just like a heffer's,
Oh I hate you dear and I think you ought to know.

Now most heartbroken lovers wish their sweethearts happiness,
I just hope you're miserable you sorry lookin' mess.
I want you to hear I ain't cryin' in my beer, this is how it goes with me,
The happiest day of my unhappy life was when you set me free.

Closer to the Bone / Live at the Olympia Theater

Dublin Ireland, March 21, 2008

This old road

Look at that old photograph
Is it really you?
Smiling like a baby full of dreams

Smiling ain't so easy now
Some are coming true
Nothing's simple as it seems

But I guess you count your blessings with the problems
That you're dealing with today
Like the changing of the seasons

Chorus:

Ain't you come a long way, ain't you come a long way
Ain't you come a long way down, this old road

Looking at a looking glass
Running out of time
On a face you used to know

Traces of a future lost
In between the lines
One more rainbow for the road

Thinking of the faces in the window
That you passed along the way
Or the last thing you believed in

Chorus

Say you tried to chase the sundown
And you let it slip away
And the holy night is falling

Chorus

Look at that old photograph
Is it really you ?

The final attraction

Well here you are
The final attraction
Awaiting direction
From somewhere above

Your finest performance
Approaching perfection
I know what you're making
Is some kind of love

Somewhere in your lifetime
You were dared into feeling
So many emotions
That tear you apart

But they love you so badly
For sharing their sorrows
So pick up that guitar
Go break a heart

Come on son, get back up on that stage,
If you can do it one time just for Hank Williams
Go break a heart
And Johnny Cash and June Carter, Waylon Jennings and Roger Miller, Harlan Howard
Go break a heart
Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendrix and George Harrison and John Lennon
Go break a heart

And maybe one time for me
Go break a heart

Sunday mornin' comin' down

Well I woke up Sunday morning with no way to hold my head, that didn't hurt
And the beer I had for breakfast wasn't bad so I had one more for dessert
Then I fumbled through my closet for my clothes and found my cleanest dirty shirt
And I shaved my face and combed my hair and stumbled down the stairs to meet the day

I'd smoked my brain the night before, on cigarettes and songs I'd been pickin'.
But I lit my first and watched a small kid, cussin' at a can that he was kicking.
Then I crossed the empty street, 'n caught the Sunday smell of someone fryin' chicken.
And it took me back to somethin', that I'd lost somehow, somewhere along the way.

Chorus:

On the Sunday morning sidewalk, wishing Lord that I was stoned
'Cause there is something in a Sunday that makes a body feel alone
And there's nothin' short of dyin', half as lonesome as the sound
On the sleepin' city side walks, Sunday mornin' comin' down.

In the park I saw a daddy with a laughing little girl who he was swingin'
And I stopped beside a Sunday school and listened to the song that they were singin'
Then I headed back for home and somewhere far away a lonely bell was ringin'
And it echoed thru the canyon like the disappearing dreams of yesterday.

Chorus

Silver tongued devil and I

I took myself down to the Tally Ho Tavern, to buy me a bottle of beer.
And I sat me down by a tender young maiden, who's eyes were as dark as her hair.
And as I was searching from bottle to bottle, for something un-foolish to say.
That silver tongued devil just slipped from the shadows, and smilingly stole her away.

I said: „Hey, little girl, don't you know he's the devil. He's everything that I ain't.
Hiding intentions of evil, under the smile of a saint.
All he's good for is getting in trouble, and shiftin' his share of the blame.
And some people swear he's my double, and some even say we're the same.
But the silver-tongued devil's got nothing to lose, I'll only live 'til I die.
We take our own chances and pay our own dues, The silver tongued devil and I.”

Like all the fair maidens who've laid down beside him, she knew in her heart that he'd lied.
Nothin' that I could have said could have saved her, no matter how hard that she tried.
'Cos she'll offer her charms to the darkness and danger, of somethin' that she's never known.
And open her arms at the smile of a stranger, who'll love her and leave her alone.

And you know, he's the devil, he's everything that I ain't.
Hiding intentions of evil, under the smile of a saint.
All he's good for is getting in trouble, and shiftin' his share of the blame.
And some people swear he's my double, and some even say we're the same.
But the silver-tongued devil's got nothing to lose, I'll only live 'til I die.
We take our own chances and pay our own dues, ah ha ha ha.

The silver tongued devil and I.

For the good times

Don't look so sad, I know it's over.
But life goes on, and this old world will keep on turning.
Let's just be glad we had some time to spend together.
There's no need to watch the bridges that we're burning.

Lay your head upon my pillow.
Hold your warm and tender body close to mine.
Hear the whisper of the raindrops,
Blowin' soft against the window,
And make believe you love me one more time,
For the good times.

I'll get along; you'll find another,
And I'll be here if you should find you ever need me.
Don't say a word about tomorrow or forever,
There'll be time enough for sadness when you leave me.

Lay your head upon my pillow.
Hold your warm and tender body close to mine.
Hear the whisper of the raindrops,
Blowin' soft against the window,
And make believe you love me one more time,
For the good times.

Moment of forever

Was it wonderful for you
Was it holy as it was for me
Did you feel the hand of destiny
That was guidin' us together

You were young enough to dream
I was old enough to learn something new
I'm so glad I got to dance with you
For a moment of forever

Sometimes when you're cryin' you're happy
Sometimes you're just cryin' I know I know

Come whatever happens now
Ain't it nice to know that dreams still come true
I'm so glad that I was close to you
For a moment of forever

Don't let the bastards (get You down)

They're killing babies in the name of freedom
We've been down that sorry road before
They let us hang around a little longer than they should have
And it's too late to fool us anymore
We've seen the ones who killed the ones with vision
Cold-blooded murder right before your eyes
Today they hold the power and the money and the guns
It's gettin' hard to listen to their lies
And I've just got to wonder what my daddy would've done
If he'd seen the way they turned his dream around

I've got to go by what he told me
Try to tell the truth and stand your ground
Don't let the bastards get you down

Bombin' Bagdad back into the stone age, 'round the clock, Non-stop,
Killed 'em in their homes and on their highways
Now after a decade of cripplin' sanctions
We're talkin' about goin' back in there and doin' it all over again,
Fightin' terrorism

And I've just got to wonder what my daddy would've done
If he'd seen the way they turned his dream around

I've got to go by what he told me
Try to tell the truth and stand your ground
Don't let the bastards get you down

Why me?

Why me Lord what have I ever done to deserve even one
Of the pleasures I've known
Tell me Lord what did I ever do that was worth loving you
Or the kindness you've shown

Lord help me Jesus I've wasted it so help me Jesus
I know what I am.
Now that I know that I've needed you so
Help me Jesus, my soul's in your hand.

Try me Lord, if you think there's a way, I can try to repay
All I've taken from you
Maybe Lord, I can show someone else what I go to myself
On my way back to you

Lord help me Jesus I've wasted it so help me Jesus
I know what I am.
Now that I know that I've needed you so
Help me Jesus, my soul's in your hand.
Jesus my soul's in your hand

and some other songs...

Me and Bobby McGee

Words and music by Kris Kristofferson and Fred Foster
from the 1970 album 'Kristofferson'

Busted flat in Baton Rouge; headin' for the trains,
Feelin' nearly faded as my jeans,
Bobby thumbed a diesel down just before it rained;
Took us all the way to New Orleans,
I took my harpoon out of my dirty, red bandana and was blowin' sad,
While Bobby sang the blues;
With them windshield wipers slappin' time and Bobby clappin' hands
We fin'ly sang up every song that driver knew;

Chorus:

Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose,
And nothin' aint worth nothin' but it's free;
Feeling good was easy, Lord, when Bobby sang the blues;
Feeling good was good enough for me;
Good enough for me and Bobby McGee.

From the coalmines of Kentucky to the California sun,
Bobby shared the secrets of my soul;
Standin' right beside me, Lord, through everything I done,
And every night she kept me from the cold;
Then somewhere near Salinas, Lord, I let her slip away
Lookin' for the home I hope she'll find;
And I'd trade all of my tomorrows for a single yesterday,
Holdin' Bobby's body next to mine;

Chorus:

Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose,
And nothin' left was all she left for me;
Feeling good was easy, Lord, when Bobby sang the blues;
And Buddy, that was good enough for me;
Good enough for me and Bobby McGee.

Help me make it through the night

from the 1970 album 'Kristofferson'

Take the ribbon from your hair, Shake it loose and let it fall,
Layin' soft upon my skin. Like the shadows on the wall.
Come and lay down by my side till the early morning light
All I'm takin' is your time. Help me make it through the night.

I don't care what's right or wrong, I don't try to understand.
Let the devil take tomorrow. Lord, tonight I need a friend.

Yesterday is dead and gone and tomorrow's out of sight.
And it's sad to be alone. Help me make it through the night.

I don't care what's right or wrong, I don't try to understand.
Let the devil take tomorrow. Lord, tonight I need a friend.

Yesterday is dead and gone and tomorrow's out of sight.
Lord, it's bad to be alone. Help me make it through the night.

To beat the devil

from the 1970 album 'Kristofferson'

A couple of years back I come across a great and wasted friend of mine in the hallway of a recording studio.

And while he was reciting some poetry to me that he had written, I saw that he was about a step away from dying, and I couldn't help but wonder why.

And the lines of this song occurred to me.

I'm happy to say he's no longer wasted, and he's got him a good woman.

And I'd like to dedicate this to John and June, who helped showed me how to beat the devil.

It was wintertime in Nashville

Down on Music City Row

And I was looking for a place

And to get myself out of the cold

To warm the frozen feeling that was eating at my soul

Keep the chilly wind off my guitar

My thirsty wanted whiskey

But my hunger needed beans

But it had been a month of paydays

Since I'd heard that eagle scream

So with a stomach full of empty

And a pocket full of dreams

I left my pride and stepped inside a bar

Actually I'd guess you'd call it a tavern

Cigarette smoke to the ceiling

And sawdust on the floor

Friendly shadows

I saw that there was just one old man sitting at the bar

And in the mirror I could see him checking me and my guitar

And he turned and said,

Come up here, boy, and show us what you are

I said I'm dry, and he bought me a beer

He nodded at my guitar and said,

It's a tough life, ain't it?

I just looked at him

He said, you ain't making any money, are you?

I said, you been reading my mail

He just smiled and said, let me see that guitar

I got something you ought to hear

And then he laid it on me

If you waste your time a talking

To the people who don't listen

To the things that you are saying

Who do you thinks gonna hear?

And if you should die explaining how

The things that they complain about

Are things they could be changing

Who do you thinks gonna care?

There were other lonely singers
In a world turned deaf and blind
Who were crucified for what they tried to show
And their voices have been scattered by the swirling winds of time
'Caus the truth remains that no one wants to know

Well the old man was a stranger
But I'd heard his song before
Back when failure had me locked out
On the wrong side of the door
When no one stood behind me
But my shadow on the floor
And lonesome was more than a state of mind
You see, the devil haunts a hungry man
If you don't want to join him
You gotta beat him
I ain't saying I beat the devil
But I drank his beer for nothing
Then I stole his (pocket) song

And you still can hear me singing
To the people who don't listen
To the things that I am saying
Praying someone's gonna hear
And I guess I'll die explaining how
The things that they complain about
Are things they could be changing
Hoping someone's gonna care
I was born a lonely singer
And I'm bound to die the same
But I've gotta feed the hunger in my soul
And if I never have a nickel
I won't ever die ashamed
'Caus I don't believe that no one wants to know

For the good times

from the 1970 album 'Kristofferson'

Don't look so sad; I know it's over;
But life goes on and this old world will keep on turning.
Let's just be glad we had some time to spend together
There's no need to watch the bridges that we're burning.

Chorus:

Lay your head upon my pillow,
Hold your warm and tender body close to mine.
Hear the whisper of the raindrops
blowing soft against the window
And make believe you love me one more time
For the good times.

I'll get along; you'll find another;
And I'll be here if you should find you ever need me.
Don't say a word about tomorrow or forever.
There'll be time enough for sadness when you leave me.

Chorus:

Lay your head ...

The pilgrim (Chapter 33)

from the 1971 album 'The Silver Tongued Devil and I'

In 1970 Dennis Hopper, flush with the off-the-wall success of Easy Rider, went to the Indian village of Chinchero, Peru, to make „The Last Movie“ which he'd written in 1964. Amidst seemingly unlimited supplies of psychedelics and weird people, Hopper turned out a work so oblique it virtually killed off his career. „It was crazy, the biggest gang of loonies in the world, but it was a great introduction to me to the movies. It was a magic time. I was 33, Dennis was 33, it seemed like half the people there were 33 and people down there would ask us how old we were and we'd say 33 and they'd say '33, the age of Christ'. That's where 'The Pilgrim: Chapter 33' came from.”

„But this song came probably faster than anything I'd ever written, and it was a direct result of what it says. I wrote it about a special person right when it happened. I always believed it would be a hit if somebody sang it right, and Ronnie Milsap sang the hell out of it. It was such a simple song, it might have eluded everybody until then.”

„I started writtin' this song about Chris Gantry...ended up writin' about Dennis Hopper, 'n' Johnny Cash, 'n' Norman Norbert, 'Funky' Donnie Fritts, Billy Swan, Bobby Neuwirth, Jerry Jeff Walker 'n' Paul Siebel...Ramblin' Jack Elliot had a lot to do with it.”

See him wasted on the sidewalk in his jacket and his jeans,
Wearin' yesterday's misfortunes like a smile
Once he had a future full of money, love, and dreams,
Which he spent like they was goin' outa style
And he keeps right on a'changin' for the better or the worse,
Searchin' for a shrine he's never found
Never knowin' if believin' is a blessin' or a curse,
Or if the goin' up was worth the comin' down

He's a poet, he's a picker
He's a prophet, he's a pusher
He's a pilgrim and a preacher, and a problem when he's stoned
He's a walkin' contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction,
Takin' ev'ry wrong direction on his lonely way back home.

He has tasted good and evil in your bedrooms and your bars,
And he's traded in tomorrow for today
Runnin' from his devils, Lord, and reachin' for the stars,
And losin' all he's loved along the way
But if this world keeps right on turnin' for the better or the worse,
And all he ever gets is older and around
From the rockin' of the cradle to the rollin' of the hearse,
The goin' up was worth the comin' down

He's a poet, he's a picker
He's a prophet, he's a pusher
He's a pilgrim and a preacher, and a problem when he's stoned
He's a walkin' contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction,
Takin' ev'ry wrong direction on his lonely way back home.

Loving her was easier

from the 1971 album 'The Silver Tongued Devil and I'

The imagery comes straight from Peru: „I have seen the morning burning golden on the mountain in the skies” was written there, though the song took much longer to complete and came to be about more than one woman. „I was pretty free and in a very creative mood when I was in Peru. I was more or less just an observer there. I wasn't one of the actors, so I wasn't involved in that chemistry,” Kris laughs. „I spent a lot of time walking around the hills checking out the Incan ruins.”

Tompall and the Glaser Brothers was one of the last of the great country brother acts, but broke up early in the 70's when Tompall became active in the country „outlaw” scene with Willie and Waylon. Jim Glaser in particular knew Kristofferson's material well, having sung harmonies on many of the early Combine demos, so this was an appropriate vehicle for the trio's short-lived 1981 reunion. But Roger Miller was supposed to have had the first cover version a decade earlier. Kris swears that his first big disillusioning moment in the record biz came after Roger said he wanted to put the song out as his next single. Kris, on the road at the time, called to instruct his publisher and label not to release his own version, but by the time he returned to Nashville, it had been pulled as the single-his debut single, in fact-from Silver Tongued Devil, his second album. It was even a modest hit (pop, not country). When he contacted Miller to apologize, Roger replied, simple, "Welcome to the music business."

I have seen the morning burning golden on the mountain in the sky
Aching with the feeling of the freedom of an eagle when she flies
Turning on the world the way she smiled upon my soul as i lay dying
Healing as the colors in the sunshine and the shadows of her eyes

Waking in the morning to the feeling of her fingers on my skin
Wiping out the traces of the people and the places that i've been
Teaching me that yesterday was something that i never thought of trying
Talking of tomorrow and the money, love and time we had to spend
Loving her was easier than anything i'll ever do again

Coming close together with a feeling that i've never know before,in my time
She ain't ashamed to be a woman or afraid to be a friend
I don't know the answer to the easy way she opened every door in my mind
But dreaming was as easy as believing it was never gonna end
And Loving her was easier than anything i'll ever do again

Josie

from the 1972 album 'Border Lord'

I've been chasing after Josie since the day I could run
Even though I didn't know it at the time
And I followed her from Texas 'til she found me undone
Just a jump ahead of what I left behind.

She was proud of her young body as a body could be
On her way to be a woman of the world
And I still can see her smiling as she gave it to me
Lookin' like a lonesome little girl.

Chorus:

Josie, is it true that you've grown harder than your years
Sellin' them your sadness on the street
How much did you lose between the laughter and the tears
Gettin' back the bitter for the sweet

Well, she loved me back to livin' at a time I was lost
With the closest thing to love I've ever known
And she led me through some bridges I was burnin' to cross
Then she went and burned some bridges of her own.

Now the road's a little colder every time that I leave
For another empty place I've never been
And I don't suppose it's likely that she's lookin' for me
But someday I may just chase her down again.

Chorus:

Josie, is it true that you've grown harder than your years
Sellin' them your sadness on the street
How much did you lose between the laughter and the tears
Gettin' back the bitter for the sweet

Smokey put the sweat on me

from the 1972 album 'Border Lord'

I've known some women in every state
New York City to the Golden Gate
I've lived with some, and buddy, I loved 'em all.
But no one woman had a claim on me
'Cause I still had a lotta world to see
And I sometimes stagger, but sugar, I seldom fall.

Then like a hungry man, I went to Louisiana
Where the lovin' and the livin' was good
Without a care to hide and just as satisfied as I could be.
A lotta women and wine and not a tie to bind me
And behaving just as cool as I could
'Til that long legged, sweet walkin' ravenhaired cajun lookin'
Devil put the sweat on me

They call her Smokey, she's a little bit-a evil
Smokey, right as wrong can be.
Smokey, she could shake the very devil
Smokey put the sweat on me.

Oh, my pulse is a beatin' to the clickety clack
Of this one-way ride that's gonna take me back
And my body's just a-breathin' in that Mississippi River smell
Well, my feet wasn't ready yet for settling down
But my soul kept tellin' me to turn around
And the longer I tried to fight it, the harder I fell

And like a hungry man, I went to Louisiana
Where the lovin' and the livin' is good
I'll get a brand new bride and be as satisfied as I can be
And I won't even mind the world I'm leavin' behind
Because I never really thought that I could
'Til that long legged, sweet walkin' ravenhaired cajun looking devil
Put the sweat on me.

They call her Smokey, she's a little bit-a evil
Smokey, right as wrong can be
Smokey, she could shake the very devil
Smokey put the sweat on me
Smokey put the sweat on me
Awww, Smokey put the sweat on me.

Jesus was a Capricorn

from the 1972 album 'Jesus Was a Capricorn'

Jesus was a Capricorn
He ate organic food
He believed in love and peace
And never wore no shoes

Long hair, beard and sandals
And a funky bunch of friends
Reckon we'd just nail him up
If he came down again

Chorus:

'Cause everybody's gotta have somebody to look down on
Who they can feel better than at any time they please
Someone doin' somethin' dirty decent folks can frown on
If you can't find nobody else, then help yourself to me

Eggheads cussing rednecks cussing
Hippies for their hair
Others laugh at straights who laugh at
Freaks who laugh at squares

Some folks hate the Whites
Who hate the Blacks who hate the Klan
Most of us hate anything that
We don't understand

Chorus

Why me

from the 1972 album 'Jesus Was a Capricorn'

Why me Lord what have I ever done
To deserve even one
Of the pleasures I've known
Tell me, Lord, what did I ever do
That was worth lovin' you
Or the kindness you've shown

Lord help me, Jesus, I've wasted it so
Help me Jesus I know what I am
But now that I know
That I've needed you so
Help me, Jesus, my soul's in your hand

Try me, Lord, if you think there's a way
I can try to repay
All I've taken from you
Maybe Lord I can show someone else
What I've been through myself,
On my way back to you

Lord help me, Jesus, I've wasted it so
Help me Jesus I know what I am
But now that I know
That I've needed you so
Help me, Jesus, my soul's in your hand

Lord help me, Jesus, I've wasted it so
Help me Jesus I know what I am
But now that I know
That I've needed you so
Help me Jesus my souls in your hand
Jesus, my soul's in your hand.

Who's to bless and who's to blame

from the 1975 album 'Who's to Bless and Who's to Blame'

If a cheated man's a loser
And a cheater never wins
And if beggars can't be choosers
'Til they're weak and wealthy men

And the old keep gettin' older
And the young must do the same
And it's never gettin' better
Who's to bless, and who's to blame

Chorus:

All the cards are on the table
You done laid your money down
Don't complain about your chances, boy
It's the only game in town

And the meaning doesn't matter
Nor the way you play the game
To the winner or the loser
Who's to bless, and who's to blame

Chorus:

Keep your hands above the table
And your back against the wall
Toss your chips in with your chances, boy
Let 'em lay the way they fall

Cause the moral doesn't matter
Broken rules are all the same
To the broken or the breaker
Who's to bless, and who's to blame.

Stranger

from the 1975 album 'Who's to Bless and Who's to Blame'

Maybe she was smilin' in the mirror
Maybe I was too, 'cause I was stoned
Singin' every sad song on the juke-box one more time
Honey, they were hittin' close to home

And I said - Maybe this'll make you think I'm crazy
Honey, don't feel lonesome if you do
But if you wanna make a young man happy one more time
I'd sure like to spend the night with you

Chorus:

And she said – Stranger
Shut out the light and lead me
Somewhere - shut out the shadows, too
And while we lay there, makin' believe you love me
Stranger, could I believe in you

Maybe you got all you got together
Maybe you keep rollin' like a stone
Maybe some old lonesome song'll take you by surprise
And leave you just a little more alone

Chorus:

Singing – Stranger
Shut out the light and lead me
Somewhere - shut out the shadows, too
And while we lay there, makin' believe you love me
Stranger, could I believe in you

Chorus:

Keep Singing – Stranger
Shut out the light and lead me
Somewhere - shut out the shadows, too
And while we lay there, makin' believe you love me
Stranger, could I believe in you

I got a life of my own

from the 1976 album 'Surreal Thing'

Chorus:

I said I got a life of my own
I've got a life of my own

I said, don't try to make me a part of no plan
Take me or leave me alone
Freedom's a feeling that few understand
And I got a life of my own I said
I ought to know where to sow my own seeds
And when I oughta leave it alone
Trouble's an old friend that I didn't need then
And I had a wife of my own.

Chorus:

I said I got a life of my own
I've got a life of my own

I caught a beer bottle flat in the face
It laid me back to the bone
Hate is a flavor that's ugly to taste
I had a knife of my own

Now they leave me alone and alive by myself
Lost in the steel and the stone
Hopin' for heaven and headin' for hell
I've got a life of my own

Chorus:

I said I got a life of my own
I got a life of my own

You show me yours (and I'll show you mine)

from the 1976 album 'Surreal Thing'

Chorus:

If you're feeling salty, then I'm your tequila
If you've got the freedom I've got the time
There ain't nothing sweeter than naked emotions
So you show me yours, hon, and I'll show you mine

No mam I know this ain't all that you've ever been used to
You with your rings on your fingers and time on your hands
Sometimes it's nice to have somebody nice to be close to
God knows i've been there before you and I understand

Chorus

I wish that I was the answer to all of your questions
God knows I know you wish you were the answer to mine
Darling if you ain't a thing but a change in direction
Lord don't you know you'd be somethin' I'm lucky to find

Chorus

So you show me yours and I'll show you mine.

Living legend

from the 1978 album 'Easter Island'

Was it bitter then with our backs against the wall?
Were we better men than we'd ever been before?
Say, if she came again today, would you still answer to the call?
Tell the truth, my friend, don't it matter anymore?

We were simple men by her side when she was born
It was simple then like the freedom when you fall
And we were smaller then, you see, but soon we gathered like a storm.
They don't understand what that thunder meant at all.

Was he crucified? Was he done in by the lawman?
Are you satisfied that he'll never ride again?
Some people say he got away; they say he never died at all.
If that story's true, does it bother you, my friend?

Was it bitter then, with our backs against the wall?
Were we better men than we'd ever been before?
Say, if she came again today, would you still answer to the call?
Tell the truth, my friend, don't it matter anymore?

Magdalene

from the 1981 album 'To the Bone'

Magdalene, are you thinking of the gentle man
Who turned your life around
Magdalene, did he leave you any reason to go on
Magdalene, does it make it any better
That you know he really loved you
Magdalene, all your sins have been forgiven, and he's gone.

Magdalene, did he give you back the freedom
To be something you believe in
Magdalene, are you strong enough to make it on your own
Magdalene, I believe he loved you deeper
Than you ever dreamed of loving
Magdalene, and nobody ever left you so alone.

Oh, Magdalene ...

Magdalene, are the shadows in the stillness
Of the evening full of tears
Do you wonder how much sorrow you can hold
Are you haunted by the ghost of something
Gone but not forgotten
Will it fill the empty silence when you're old.

Magdalene, are you thinking of the gentle man
Who turned your life around
Magdalene, did he leave you any reason to go on
Magdalene, I believe he loved you deeper
Than you ever dreamed of loving
Magdalene, all your sins have been forgiven, and he's gone.

Words & music by Kris Kristofferson, except as noted.

Discography

- 1970 Kristofferson // Monument
1971 The Silver Tongued Devil and I // Monument
1972 Border Lord // Monument
1972 Jesus Was a Capricorn // Monument
1973 Full Moon (with Rita Coolidge) // A&M
1974 Spooky Lady's Sideshow Monument // Monument
1974 Breakaway (with Rita Coolidge) // Monument
1975 Who's to Bless and Who's to Blame // Monument
1976 Surreal Thing // Monument
1977 Songs of Kristofferson // Monument
1978 Easter Island // Monument
1978 Natural Act (with Rita Coolidge) // A&M
1979 Shake Hands with the Devil // Monument
1981 To the Bone // Monument
1982 The Winning Hand (with Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson and Brenda Lee) // Monument
1984 Music from Songwriter (with Willie Nelson) // Columbia
1986 Repossessed // Mercury
1990 Third World Warrior // Mercury
1992 Live at the Philharmonic // Monument
1995 A Moment of Forever // Buddha
1999 The Austin Sessions // Atlantic
2003 Broken Freedom Song: Live from San Francisco // Oh Boy
2006 This Old Road // New West
 Kris Kristofferson ... vocal, guitar & harmonica
 Stephen Bruton ... guitar, mandolin & harmony vocals
 Jim Keltner ... drums
 Don Was ... acoustic bass, piano & producer
2009 Closer to the Bone - dedicated to the spirit of my soul-brother Stephen Bruton // New West
 Kris Kristofferson ... vocal, guitar & harmonica
 Stephen Bruton (* November 7, 1948 - † May 9, 2009) ... guitar, mandolin & harmony voc.
 Don Was ... bass & producer
 Rami Jaffee ... keyboards
 Jim Keltner ... drums
2010 Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends: The Publishing Demos 1968-72
 Dedicated to the memory of Stephen Bruton // Light in the Attic

1985 – 1995 ... The Highwaymen (country supergroup)
Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson

Studio albums

- 1985 Highwayman ... Release date: May 1985 // Columbia Nashville
1990 Highwayman 2 ... Release date: February 9, 1990 // Columbia Nashville
1995 The Road Goes On Forever ... Release date: April 4, 1995 // EMI/Liberty/Capitol Nashville

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Highwaymen_\(country_supergroup\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Highwaymen_(country_supergroup))

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<http://www.lyricsfreak.com/k/kris+kristofferson/>

<http://www.metrolyrics.com/closer-to-the-bone-album-kris-kristofferson.html>