

WASN'T THAT A TIME?

A Community Recollection and Songwriting Project

April 30, 2017



WATER IS OUR ANCIENT SONG

Celia Dunnington, Benn Dunnington, and Kelsi Vanada
arr. Jean Littlejohn

Ten thousand lakes and an old farm pond
The creek that runs down behind the barn
Mighty rivers fall to the rocks below
The ocean tides and the undertow

Birch canoe sliding through the reeds
Blue herons fishing among the weeds
Bright reflections beneath the moon
The haunting cry of the common loon

These are the waters that I hold dear
Blue, green, brown, or clear
Water is our ancient song
Giving life to everyone

Grandpa's ranch on the northern plain
The livestock suffer when there's no rain
Winter came and there was no snow
Where did the plenty of water go?

Wash the car and soak the grass
We didn't think it wouldn't last
Will our children pay the price?
With rising oceans and melting ice

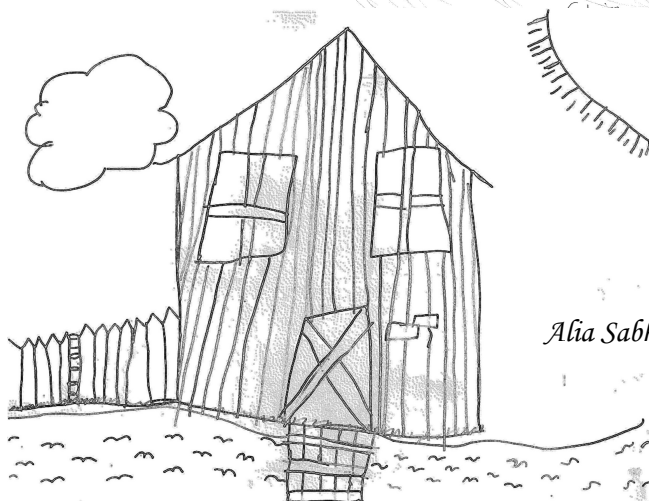
But what on Earth have we done?
What if the water were gone?



Ada Gilchrist



Claire Sauder



Alia Sabha

HOW CAN IT BE BOTH?

words: Miles Call
music: Lynn Partridge

arr. Nicole Upchurch, Jean Littlejohn, and Tara McGovern

It is a roar, it is a whisper
It is a whisper, it is a roar
How can it be both?

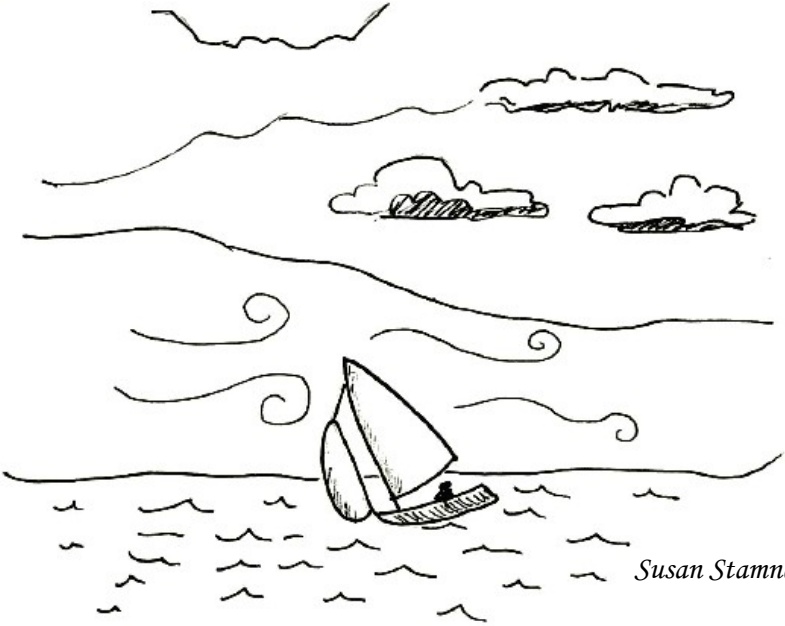
It is calm, it is wild
It is wild, it is calm
How can it be both?

This is wind
It is wind
Is it the wind?
It is
It's strong, it's powerful
It's mystical, it's alive
This is the wind, this is the wind
This is the wind in my life

It is known, it is a mystery
It is a mystery, it is known
How can it be both?

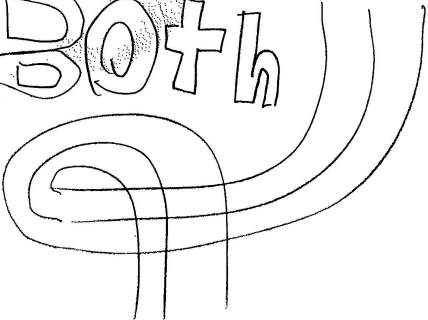
Good when it's soft, sends me aloft
Harsh when it's cold and strong

It is magical, it is mundane
It is mundane, it is magical
How can it be both?



Susan Stamnes

HOW CAN it BE Both

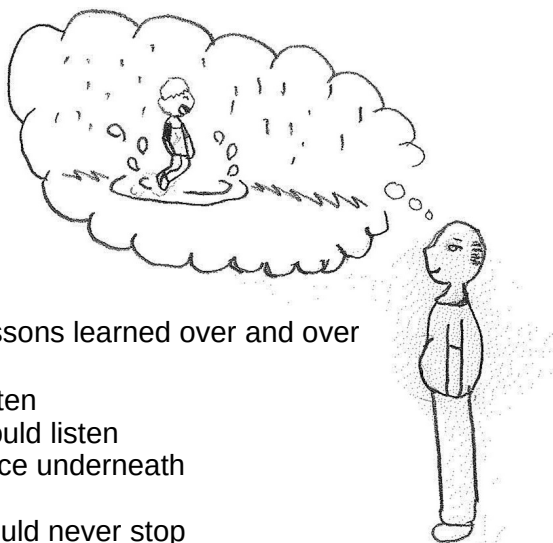


Miles Crall

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Tina Adino, Libby Conley, Maura Cook,
Pat Goeldner, AmyRuth McGraw, and Sara Newhart
arr. Sarah Cram, Marcy Rosenbaum, Nicole Upchurch, and Jean Littlejohn

Looking back
Looking forward
I am younger
Now so much older
Dreams fulfilled and changed
and some that I've let go
Looking back
Looking forward
I am growing
Now so much stronger
Memories, wishes, and life lessons learned over and over



Lulu Roarick

The lake would shine and glisten
When we dove in deep, we could listen
to our heartbeats and the peace underneath
Our ears would pop
And long sun-shining days would never stop

I dove under the covers
My dad said, "Where's your sense of wonder?"
as lightning flashed across the sky
Storms will come and go
Sometimes you walk in the rain
if you want to grow

Splashing in puddles
Try not to get too wet!
Stop and look down, what do you see?
What do I see?

A LIE IS A LIE

Aprille Clarke, Amy Dobrian, Ed Flaherty,
Matt Gilchrist, Mike Partridge, and Claire Sauder
arr. Jean Littlejohn

"Refugees are terrorists!
Immigrants commit crimes!"
Does this sound familiar?
We've heard it many times
A tyrant and his cronies
want to make us insecure
But we won't be distracted
our conscience will endure

The Bowling Green Massacre

Pull us apart, twist our heads
Treat us as shallow, feed us meds
The lies are just distractions
to divide us into factions
But the truth is what unites us
You can see it in our actions

Because a lie is a lie no matter how much you tell it
A lie is a lie no matter how hard you sell it
A lie is a lie no matter how much you repeat it
The truth is on our side: they will never defeat it

Identify the lies and refute them
twice as often as they're told
A vein of truth is more precious
than a tower made of gold

No One!



Erin Partridge

Bridge: The Ballad of Bowling Green

Come hear the sad tale of Bowling Green
destruction the likes of which we've never seen
The bloodshed, the horror, the violence, the fear
the footsteps of murders as they drew near
We could have prevented that terrible day
but since we were soft, they sailed away
to continue their sowing of terrorist seeds
And now we all suffer from these awful deeds
O never forget dear Bowling Green
Feel hate in your heart and your head and your spleen
For seven foul terrorists each took an axe and massacred . . . no one
These are alternative facts!

A sense of false security based on hating others
We're touched by better angels urging love, sisters and brothers

A FOREVER HOME

Greta Boerner, Stella Demarest, Wendy Levy, Lulu Roarick, Alia Sabha, Joanna Sabha,
Neda Sabha, Katie Senn, Susan Stamnes, Keygan Trana, and Waelyn Upchurch
arr. the Awful Purdies, Tara McGovern, and Jean Littlejohn

All alone in the big, big world
Looking for something lost, unknown
Kids are grown, all alone
Waitin' for a critter to make me whole

All alone in the big, big world
Looking for something lost, unknown
Needing someone to love and care
Sometimes life is so unfair

I have a wish; please make it true
Someone to love, a love that's new

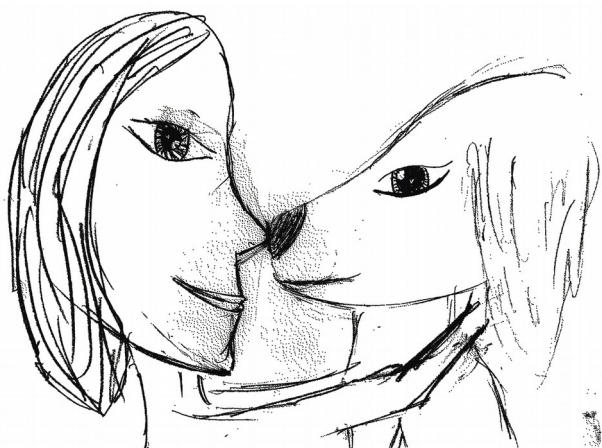
I wander through these quiet rooms
yearning for someone to call to
I ramble through the brambles howling a tune
searching for a forever home

Sizzling bacon on the stove
Cheese? Peanut butter? Ice cream?
Delicious smells wafting to and fro
Cheese! Peanut butter! Ice cream!
Enticing a hungry scratch at the door
Who was there? It was someone to adore

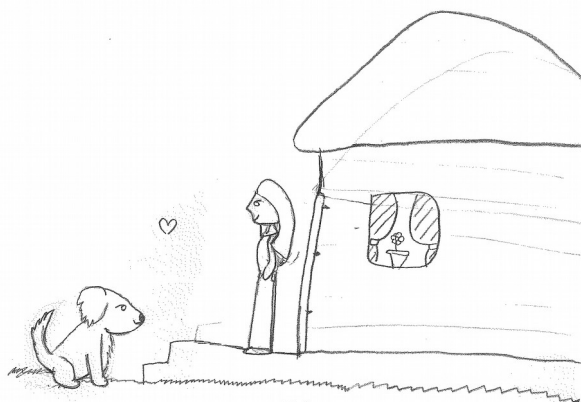
At last, a home with devotion and care
Full bowl, warm bed, fresh water
A wonderful someone who's always there
My forever home

I had a wish; you made it come true
Someone to love, a love that's new

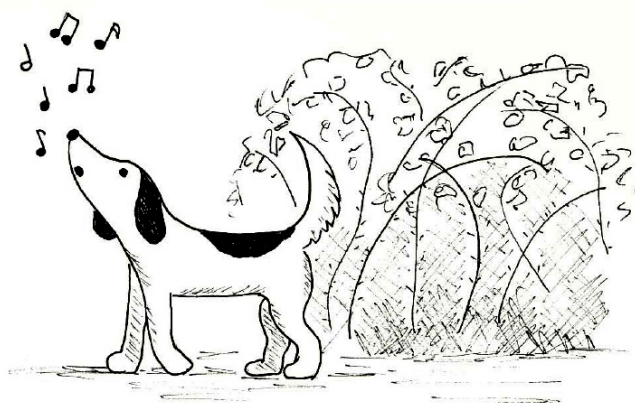
I found my critter
I found my home
I have all I need now
I'll never roam
I found my someone to love and care and
Cheese! Peanut butter! Ice cream!
A life of love and joy (and treats!) to share



Anonymous



Lulu Roarick



Susan Stamnes

WE ARE CHANGE

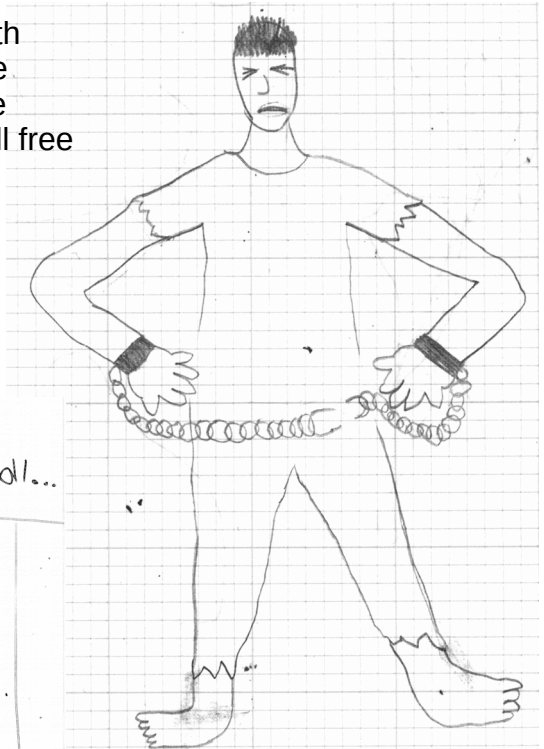
Ada Gilchrist, Dave Larew, Perry Lenz, Jean Littlejohn,
YiYing McGraw, Erin Partridge, Katie Roche, and Claire Sauder
arr. Jean Littlejohn

We are daughters of the witches that they could not burn
We are sons of the families that they interned
We are descendents of the slaves who broke through their
chains
We are survivors, we're the future, we are change

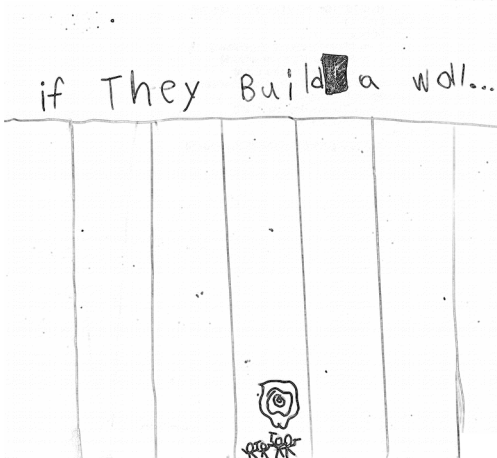
If they build a wall, we'll tear it down
We are survivors, we're the future, we are change

We are protectors of the earth
We are voices raised in hope
We are keepers of the peace
We are not free until we're all free

We sing out for peace
sing out for hope
We are survivors
we're the future
we are change



Sophia Wagner



Sophia Wagner

WASN'T THAT A TIME?

Lee Hays and Walter Lowenfels
New verses by Rebecca Littlejohn, Minta Colburn, and Jean Littlejohn
Arr. Jean Littlejohn, via the Weavers and Jefferson Airplane

Our fathers bled at Valley Forge
the snow was red with blood
Their faith was worn at Valley Forge
Their faith was brotherhood

Wasn't that a time, wasn't that a time?
A time to try our very souls
Wasn't that a terrible time?

Neighbors with fam'ly from Japan
were pulled from home and store
Behind barbed wire they endured
and now, cry "Nevermore!"

Informers in McCarthy's day
They told their sorry tales
The gangs in Congress had their way
and free souls went to jail

They marched from Selma to D.C.
alongside Dr. King
Black lives are on the line today
and so, we stand, and sing

Fairness for women and for girls
Would do a world of good
They've always held up half the sky
We sing for sisterhood

From shadows of abuse and shame
to Stonewall and the courts
Equality is ours to claim
Our love dares speak its name

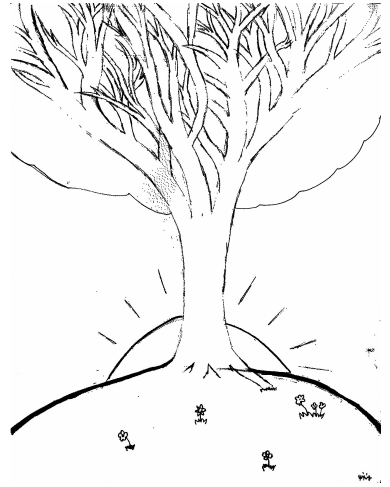
When tyrants rise, "They shall not pass!"
We cry, "¡No pasarán!"
Safe in this nation we have made
no one shall be afraid

Our souls cry out, "We have no fear!"
We dare to reach our hand
to other neighbors, far and near
to friends in ev'ry land

THE SINGLE TREE

Alice Boerner, Callista Robertson, Susan Spears, and Donna Valiga
arr. Nicole Upchurch and Jean Littlejohn

I've waded rivers, climbed the rocks
I've sought the clouds, envied the sky
Picked prairie flowers and woven a crown
But the single tree caught my eye
But it was the single tree caught my eye



YiYing McGraw

My spring tree is tender and new
watching, sharing, young and alive
Humble leaves and branches few
Inferior now, but soon to thrive
I gain fresh knowledge from her heart
Day and night, a work of art

My summer tree is green and lush
I yearn to climb her branches still
In dappled shade are treasures found
Majestic timeless sentinel
Life depends on her pure, clean air
Breathe deep, branch out in nature's prayer

My autumn tree is tall and proud
Crimson, orange, gold, and brown
As I grab each branch, upward bound
I feel the harsh, frigid air
Then suddenly fall's change occurs
And vibrant hues soon disappear

My winter tree is stark and iced
Arrayed in nature's sparkling grip
My friend, my confidant, my soul
Secrets carved in each wood chip
Rooted well but willing to bend
Her history circled within



Susan Stammes

I love my tree, my forest, my Earth
In all their glory from death to birth

RIBBON OF ROAD

Benn Dunnington
(with Celia Dunnington)
arr. Jean Littlejohn

Bought my first bike back in sixty-seven
Heart so young with that motor revvin'
Even Hell's Angels find a little bit of heaven
out on this ribbon of road
I've got my face shield up and I'm feelin' the breeze
I got the Kevlar armor on my elbows and knees
'cause you never know what's coming out of the trees
Out on this ribbon of road

Out here on this winding ribbon
The slate is clean and the choice is given
Worry 'bout dyin' or grin 'cause you're livin'
Start up your motor and ride
Just get on your motor and ride

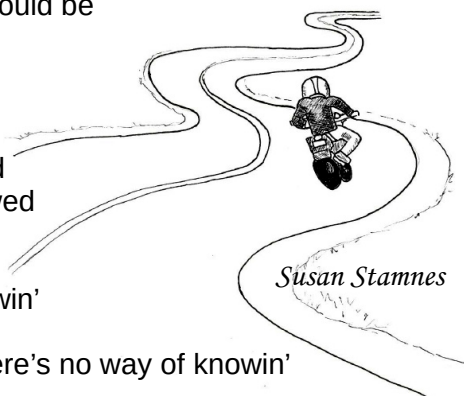
I cleaned up my life but at what cost
the road was straight but the thrill was lost
Forty years walkin' now I'm flyin' again
Out on this ribbon of road
I ride an "oil-head boxer," naked and lean
Prettiest thing that I've ever seen
except for the woman who knew I should be
out on this ribbon of road

When I feel like I might explode
I get on out to that ribbon of road
Clears my head and lightens my load
And I don't care if the lawn gets mowed
I don't care if the lawn gets mowed

Got the G.P.S. and the screen is glowin'
Tellin' me where I think I'm goin'
but you never really know, 'cause there's no way of knowin'
Out on this ribbon of road



Benn Dunnington



Susan Stammes

THE JOY OF GROWING UP

Evelyn Endris, Pat Goeldner, Jerry Partridge, and Ben Sauder
Sarah Cram, Jean Littlejohn, Marcy Rosenbaum, Claire Sauder, and Nicole Upchurch
arr. Jean Littlejohn

I remember how it felt when I was still a child
Outside was adventure, running free and wild
Make as much noise as you want and no one really cared
Walk to places by yourself and nobody got scared

Recalling childhood life, there are things I dearly miss
Like dancing on the gym floor and first time I was kissed
Now Music was my favorite class, I loved to sing and dance
But you have to wear a nice, full skirt
You just can't twirl in pants

Phonographs and radios to 8-tracks and cassettes
And now CDs and MP3s; the more things change, and yet
I lost some friends, my heart got broke, sometimes I finished last
But now I'm grown, the time has flown
It's all gone by so fast!

I remember how it felt when I was just a yooof
On the first day at my school, I finally lost my toof
Instead of dancing, we learned soccer, bowling, and kickball
But for hanging on the monkey bars, pants work best of all!

When school was out and summer came, we always hit the road
Coolers, kids, and sleeping bags were only half the load
In station wagons or mini-vans we traveled near and far
"You crossed the line!"
"Are we there yet?"
"Don't make me stop this car!"

WE THE PEOPLE (SING OUR STORIES)

Hazel Mae Boerner, Glenda Buenger, Adelaide Capps, Jeff Capps, Katie Gandhi
Susan Henke, Carol Howard, Denise Kanne, Craig "Pappy" Klocke, Jean Littlejohn
Joan O'Kones, Reed Rennecker, Thia Rolfes, Marcy Rosenbaum, and Michael Sauder
arr. Jean Littlejohn

I'm renewed, alive again
Music takes me there
Breathe it out, breathe it in
I need it just like air

Songs tell stories we cannot say
Reveal our feelings in sound
Pick us up and show the way
Give no mind to being down

We, the people, sing our stories
We, the people, bring our songs
We, the people, join our voices
We, the people, sing out strong

Music is the thread that binds
Brings us joy when we fall apart
We're more alike than we thought we'd find
Feel the spark between our hearts

Music shows us where we've been
Here today, on and on
Each generation, sing again
You can't destroy the song!



Adelaide Capps

Wasn't That a Time: A Community Recollection and Songwriting Project

has been supported by a major grant from the Iowa Arts Council, with additional funding from the University of Iowa Community Credit Union and the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center. The project has had three phases: a story-gathering phase last fall, a songwriting phase this winter, and a performance phase this spring of which today's concert is a part. You can read our stories and songwriting reflections at time.familyfolkmachine.org.

The Family Folk Machine has learned and grown so much through our collaboration with the Awful Purdies on this project. The Awful Purdies taught us how to conduct Story Circles and led us through the songwriting process. They have been superb teachers and co-performers. The FFM is looking forward to performing our workshop songs with the Awful Purdies at the Iowa Arts Fest on Saturday, June 3, at 1 p.m. on the main stage.

Before we began this process, most of us didn't know how to write songs, and many of us didn't really believe that songwriting could be successfully accomplished by a group. We were all surprised by what we were able to accomplish. We hope you enjoy hearing our new songs as much as we have enjoyed creating and performing them.

Many, many thanks to...

The Awful Purdies: Sarah Cram, Katie Roche, Marcy Rosenbaum, Katie Senn, and Nicole Upchurch

Emily Light Edrington for all her work on the IAC grant application and management

Benn Dunnington for formatting the lyrics booklet and Nora Boerner for formatting the program

Susan Stamnes for outfitting our "Forever Home" critters

All the Folk Machinists whose extra volunteer efforts keep the Machine running smoothly.

time.familyfolkmachine.org