

**Poems and Songs
By
Jerry "Liberty" Justice
'The Hobo Troubadour'**

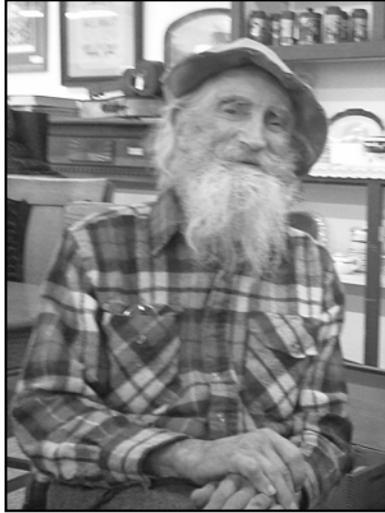


Poems Compiled By Connecticut Shorty, Hobo Queen.
Foreword and Biographical Material by Brenda Justice.
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*For Biography, Discography,
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www.jerryjustice.weebly.com



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eBook Design and Editing by
Robert "VideoBob" Whiteside



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PREFACE

My friend, Liberty Justice, was a prolific songwriter, singer and guitar player. He was proclaimed "Grand Duke of Hoboes" in August of 1983, proclaimed National Hobo Troubadour in August 1994 and elected King of Hobos in August 1996. His infectious laugh and sense of humor were unbeatable. He loved God, his family and his friends, especially his hobo friends.

Liberty was born in 1936 and "Caught the Westbound" on April 23, 2008. He was laid to rest among his hobo brothers and sisters, in the Hobo Memorial Section of the Evergreen Cemetery located at Britt, Iowa.

For several years before his passing, Liberty was aware that his time was short due to his Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). He stayed optimistic, however, and continued to write poetry in the hope that one day he might turn one or more of them into songs.

In August 2007 Liberty sent me a stack of the poetry he had written in 2006/2007. I kept these in a file for a long time. Finally, in late 2009, I opened the file and read them. A couple were personal love poems meant for his devoted wife, Brenda. These I sent to her knowing that is what Liberty would have wanted. Especially moving is his poem "You Were My Favorite," a poem about what was to become of his old guitar when he was no longer around. The poems about hobos and railriding are exceptionally good. This was a subject with which he was very familiar. He faced his mortality by talking to God through many of his inspirational poems, and wrote other poems when his thoughts took him that way.

I felt that my friend Liberty entrusted me with these poems because he wanted me to put them into print. This I completed in 2010. Hopefully, someday someone will put one or more to music as a tribute to the life and music of Hobo King Liberty Justice.

*Connecticut Shorty,
1992/1993 National Hobo Queen*

OBITUARY

Jerry "Liberty" Justice, 72, of Raytown, Missouri
"Caught the Westbound"
from his home on April 23, 2008.

Jerry was born July 12, 1935 in Raytown. He retired from Graham Truck Lines where he was a truck driver and member of Teamsters Union 41. Jerry was an accomplished musician and was a member of the Greenside Up Bluegrass Band for 7 years. He was the National Hobo King from 1996 to 1997 and was also dubbed the National Hobo Troubadour. Jerry rode the rails from 1993 to 1998 logging nearly 30,000 miles. Jerry leaves to mourn his death his wife, Brenda Justice, his son Jerry Lee Justice, his brother John Justice and sister-in-law Julie Justice.



NOTES FROM BRENDA JUSTICE ABOUT LIBERTY

Liberty got his first guitar when he was fifteen. He entered the Air Force after High School and had training in Texas.

Jerry and Brenda were married in 1957 in Texas where he picked up some jobs playing music in the bars which led to forming a band.

They returned to Kansas City where he briefly painted houses before getting a job with Missouri Pacific Truck Lines. He worked there 6 to 8 years until they went out of business. He was hired then by Graham Truck Lines where he put in his 20 years.

They went to their first bluegrass festival in the 70's and started the Greenside Up Bluegrass Band that still plays today. He was with the group for about 7 years before moving on to his solo work. Liberty wrote songs, played guitar and mandolin.

Liberty and Brenda would "snowbird" down to Texas every Winter where Liberty played music for the campers and local bars and events. Liberty and Brenda were married for 52 years and had a son in 1960.

Liberty regularly wrote letters to hobo friends he'd met, especially Iron Horse Harry. There were always drawings in the letters and his graphic signature of three little birds.

Liberty kept busy in the snow bird camp by carving and making benches all day and playing music at night. People always came to hear him.

Brenda closes by saying, "He really liked to joke around with everybody.. we always had a lot of fun together."

From Larry Ellis

Notes By The Editor from a phone call.

Larry Ellis is the only surviving founding member of the Greenside Up Bluegrass Band which is still working. Jerry was a founding member from 1971-78. He recorded a single with the group and was featured on the band's 1974 LP release,

"How Does Bluegrass Grow?"

Larry commented on Jerry's talent for satirical or humorous songs and sang one in it's entirety to me on the phone, called: "Call It What You Want, But.. It Ain't Bluegrass" He explained the lyrics that homage Norman Blake, Doc Watson and others.

He mentioned another song from Jerry's only solo Vinyl LP, "**Justice**" "The Trains Run Too Fast Nowadays"

45 single from Larry Ellis for this project. Thanks, Larry



YOU WERE MY FAVORITE

Written August 6, 2006

For fifty five years I've had a good friend
that's been with me `most everywhere.
Together we've written many a song
`bout the good times and bad times we've shared.
Parts of our bodies have been broken at times
and some may be broken again.
I guess it depends on where we are goin'
and what situation we're in.
We just about ran all the races my friend,
we've just about ran out of time.
You can tell by the scars on our faces my friend,
we've both had a hell of a time.

I know that soon as we part my dear friend
some one will be pickin' on you.
I hope you'll be handled by some masters hand
that won't beat the hell out of you.
Somewhere not far down the line my friend
I'll be making my last curtain call.
I hope that your future won't find you
hung up somewhere with your back to the wall.
Play beautiful music and have a good time,
spread good will wherever you are.
I cherish the years we've had together my friend,
you are my favorite guitar!



COUNTRY BOY

Written January 23, 2007

My mind wanders back
to when I bought my first guitar,
I learned to pick it,
I learned in taverns and honky tonk bars.
Hank Williams and Lefty whom I idolized
inspired me to sing and to play,
a young country singer with stars in my eyes,
but my eyes are dimmin' today.

I loved to sing to the young pretty girls,
make the cords on my old guitar ring,
how I love to listen to Willie and Merle
and sing the songs that they sing.
The old country music was better by George,
than what the younger boys sing,
I was an old country boy and really enjoyed
the songs an' doin' my thing.

Now my old guitar just hangs on the wall
and brings back some old memories,
I have to wonder was it worth it all,
the heartaches and tears it brought me.
Before my road of life comes to an end
there's something I'd like to know,
if I had the chance to do it again
which way would this country boy go.

RETIRIN' FROM THE TRACK

It's six o'clock on Wednesday evening
and I wish that I was leavin'
on a train headin' anywhere toward home.
I know I look a little rough,
my clothes and body's had enough
of livin' on the road away from home.
Mission food is not the best,
you share the bed with little pests,
you can never get the proper rest.
If I get back home again
there'll be no more ridin' trains,
this old hobo is retirin' from the track.

I remember what my mama told me,
but there was no way that she could hold me,
I was young and knew it all away back then.
I got in trouble down the line,
down in sunny Caroline,
the judge sentenced me from five to ten.
Now I'm tumbling' down the highway,
hopin' someone's going my way,
all I own I carry in a paper sack.
If I get back home again,
there'll be no more ridin' trains,
this old hobo is retirin' from the track.

A DIFFERENT TRAIN A DIFFERENT SONG

Sleeping in the rain,
waitin' for a train,
trying to get back home to you.
I can hear the whistle blow,
a train is near I know,
but this one is only passin' through.

Can't catch out on the fly,
I'm afraid to try,
my old legs ain't what they used to be.
I'm a long, long way from home
waitin' for my train to come,
it's still a thousand miles to you Marie.

I heard songs years ago
on my crystal radio,
listenin' to Jimmy sing the blues.
But time has moved along,
a different train, a different song,
why did I wander far away from you.

Relivin' Jimmy's songs
as time still moves along,
I wonder what he would have thought of me.
A different time, a different place,
tears streamin' down my face,
it's still a thousand miles to you Marie.

HE'S JUST AN OLD HOBO

He's just an old hobo doin' his best
to keep from admittin' the truth,
he's hurtin' inside'
cause he knows he can't ride
like he did in the days of his youth.
A whistle is blowin', he's beamin' with pride,
he knows it's not all in his mind,
he knows that soon he'll make one more ride,
to his home at the end of the line.

He's just an old hobo,
he'll board one more train,
he'll ride to the end of the line,
he's goin' away, leavin' today,
he's leavin' his bedroll behind.
He knows he'll find rest
at this home in the west,
his train isn't far down the track,
he's goin' away, leavin' today,
on a train that will never come back.

He's just an old hobo, he knows he'll soon be
with his friends and old loved ones again,
he'll close his eyes
when he sees the smoke rise,
he'll know that it's just round the bend.
There's a place down the line
where the sun always shines,
where he'll never be hungry or cold,
he's goin' away, leavin' today,
on a heaven bound train made of gold.

JUST A DYIN' HOBO

Written December 8, 2006

A hobo was lying on the floor of a boxcar,
the cold wind was blowing as he lay on the floor,
he said, "I should go home but I'm not sure what for,
there's nothing back there for me anymore."

He was raised in the hills of old West Virginia,
but he left his home on the B & O line,
he had wanderlust living within him,
never again to work in the mines.

He drifted for years down back roads and rail yards
in search of contentment that he never found,
now he's too old to ramble down paths and byways
there's nothing' back home but a plot in the ground.

He's just a dyin' hobo, on a long road to nowhere,
with no one to love him, no one to care,
his only prayer is that he'll go to heaven,
where he'll find his loved ones waiting for him there.

EVERY HOBO'S DREAM

Tonight the moon is shinin' bright
out on the cinder trail,
reminds me of my younger days
ridin' on the rails.

I rambled' round the country wide
on trains that ran on steam,
to hop an old freight train and ride
is every hobo's dream.

I know I'll be a hobo Lord
until the day I die,
when the angels come to get me
I will catch out on the fly.
I'll let a westbound take me
to the land beyond the sun,
but Lord I'm not quite ready yet
to make my final run.

I'll stay here in the jungle Lord
with all the younger bo's,
but I won't ride the new trains
I'll watch them come and go,
I'll catch out on the Westbound
if my soul you will redeem,
to ride a train to heaven Lord
is every hobo's dream.

FREEZIN' TO DEATH

I'm two thousand miles
from the home that I left
out on the western shore.
I'm in Chicago an' I'll freeze to death
if it gets any colder for sure.
The cold wind is blowin'
'cross Lake Michigan,
the rain is turnin' to sleet,
I've been checkin' out the dumpsters
to see if I can find a little to eat.

You can't be too picky
when your hungry and cold,
and ain't got a dime in your jeans.
A couple of bones make pretty good soup,
if you mix 'em with water and beans.
For cryin' out loud,
I can't be too proud
although I have had better days.
I'll give up my roamin' and go back home
I shouldn't have left anyway.

I'll catch some old rattler or a stinkin' hog car
and cover up in the hail.
I'll sleep all the way to Denver,
if I don't freeze to death on the way.
I'll find somethin' to eat down on Larimer Street,
with my ramblin' buddies I'll dine,
we'll spike up some grape juice with grain alcohol,
it makes a pretty good wine.

I'M LEAVIN' FOR GOOD

I've been driftin' around
knockin' on doors,
sleepin in hay lofts,
doin' folks chores.
Choppin' up firewood
is getting too hard,
I'm leavin' for good
from the railroad yards.

I met a young lady
in Saint Jo, Missouri,
a nice lookin' lady
with a beautiful smile.
She lied when she said,
"there's no use to worry,
I'll treat you quite well
if you stay for awhile."

The love she gave me
didn't last very long,
she tried to enslave me,
she treated me wrong.
Please if you could
give her my regards,
I'm leavin' for good
from the railroad yards.

The cold wind is blowing
thru a hole in this grainer,
a good cup of java
would help me a lot.
I'm tired and I'm hungry,
but don't have a container,
I've got some soup,
but I don't have no pot.

CHASIN' RAINBOWS

For years I've been out chasin' rainbows
in search of that big pot of gold.
I no longer go where I could go,
my body is broken and old.

I don't want to go back to Texas,
I don't want no part of a train.
I don't want to go back to the bulls on the track,
I don't want to sleep in the rain.

A bull busted me down in Danville,
it was all that a hobo could stand.
I hopped a freight goin' to Mobile,
in the heart of the sunny Southland.

Things were no different in Mobile,
they gave me a ball and a chain.
I'm givin' it up, I've had my fill,
I don't want to ride on a train.

I'll stay home and look out my window,
count the cars in the railroad yards.
I'll walk to the end of the rainbow,
'cause ridin' the rails is too hard.

THE PRISONERS BLUES

Written August 7, 2006

I wish that I was ridin' down a railroad track,
ridin' down the line with a roll upon my back.
I wish that I was headin, down a star lit rail,
instead of doin' time in the Nashville jail.
I never should have left my country home,
never put my feet in those wanderin' shoes.
I had a drifters heart that made me want to roam,
that's why I've got the prisoners blues.

I'm doin' time in the State of Tennessee,
the judge man threw the book at me.
For sellin' whisky on the corner of the street,
the governments done got me beat.
I don't reckon I'll be free for a little while,
my fate will be on a big rock pile.
A ramblin' man is only bound to lose,
that's why I've got the prisoners blues.

THE HOBO ROAD

Written August 11, 2006

Down at Fourth and Broadway
by the light of a candle lamp,
two hoboes shared a campfire,
and spoke about their travels
and wild episodes,
as they traveled round the county
along the hobo road.

One was from Seattle,
the other Portland Maine,
one said I never know
when I'll get home again.
At sun up in the morning,
I'll be on the go,
out on the hobo road.

The other said I'm headin' home
back to Birmingham,
it's best that I'm leavin',
I'm on the lam.
The city marshal's huntin' me
for what the good Lord knows,
I've had some troubles down the line
out on hobo road.

If I had a dime to bet
I'd bet that it will rain,
I'll refrain from getting' wet
and climb aboard a train.
I know tomorrow I will find
a new hobo abode,
as I travel down the rails
out on the hobo road.

WANDERLUST

Written October 27, 2006

There's an old railroad right of way
where steam trains use to run.
The old tracks along the line are blown with rust.
My mind wanders back to yesterday
and things I left undone,
because my heart was full of wanderlust.

These old abandoned railroad tracks
are covered up with weeds.
Sometimes I feel as if my heart will bust,
if a train could take me back
to pleasures that I need,
my heart would still be filled with wanderlust.

Time will always take it's toll
and old things fade away,
in time all railroad ties turn to dust.
I have grown tired and old
but time can't take away
the thing within my heart called wanderlust.

HOBO SHUFFLE

There's a brand new dance that's goin, round,
in a hobo camp at the edge of town.
The bo's will come with their bindle duffels,
to dance all night to the hobo shuffle.

The hobo shuffle won't cause you pain,
line right up like an old freight train.
Give it a try, it ain't too tuffle,
dance all night to the hobo shuffle.

There's a chance that you'll be on your own,
if you fall on your funny bone.
Don't want no birds with their feathers ruffled,
to dance all night to the hobo shuffle.

A brand new rhythm that's comin, down,
will get you rollin' when the sun goes down.
The bo's are comin' can't get enuffle,
they dance all night to the hobo shuffle.

There's Iwegan and Dogman Tony
a crazy kid they call Baloney.
Tuck comes around when the goin, gets rougher,
they dance all night to the hobo shuffle.

There's Mama Jo from the Show Me State,
a high class roller on a rollin' freight.
She danced so hard she huffed and puffed,
but she danced all night to the hobo shuffle.

MY RAMBLIN' RAILROAD DAYS

I woke up this mornin'
when I heard the Southern Flyer whistle blow.
I could hear those iron wheels turnin'
and once more I got that burnin' urge to go.
I closed my eyes and thought about
the old days when I roamed about.
I listened to the whistle fade away,
when the final car had passed.
I took a trip back to the past,
An' lived again my ramblin' railroad days.

Sleepin' on those boxcar floors,
cold and hungry, tired and soakin' wet.
I've knocked upon a thousand doors,
tryin' to score a lump or cigarette.
I've raided lots of garbage cans,
behind some city market stand,
bummed a buck or two along the way.
When I think about the times I've had,
the happy ones outweigh the bad.
I'm lonesome for my ramblin' railroad days.

Lookin' out my window
into the lonely railroad yards below
a rusty engine sits at rest.
Reminds me of myself, I'm getting old.
I'm old, I'm tired and weary,
I've had better times along the way,
an' if I had my youth again
I'd hop aboard some old freight train,
the same as in my ramblin' railroad days.

BEALE STREET BLUES

Written January 22, 2007

I left my home in southwest Missouri,
just twenty miles from the Arkansas line.
Told mama an' dad, please don't you worry,
your ramblin' son is goin' to be fine.
Caught out on the fly on a train headin' east,
where it was headin' I don't know.
The box car was warm and empty at least,
except for me and one other bo.

What he said his name was I couldn't recall,
after we shared a jug of grain alcohol.
In the rail yards of Memphis down to Beale Street,
walkin, and lookin' for something' to eat.
A hard talkin' bull told us to move it along,
I don't want to see you around here for long.
My feet were achin' in my water soaked shoes,
I've got a bad case of the Beale Street blues.

What's wrong with a man who leaves his home
to travel the country, to wander and roam.
A man will have the desire to be free
if he cannot be what he wants to be.
The wanderlust flowin' within my veins
made me go to the yards and hop a train.
I'm an old hobo doin' what I wanna do,
I've got a bad case of the Beale Street Blues.

I thought I could find a job drivin' trucks,
only to find I was down on my luck.
Findin' a job I found to be hard,
now have to be union and carry a card.
Now I'm walkin' the street with that train ridin' bo,
where we are goin' we really don't know.
We don't have a case of no kind of booze,
we've got a case of the Beale Street Blues.

THE END OF THE RAINBOW

For years I've been out chasin' rainbows,
now I don't want to go near a train.
Don't want to go back near the shacks,
long the tracks,
I don't want to sleep in the rain.
I've spent too much time down in Huntsville,
it was all that this hobo could stand.
Hopped a freight train to Mobile,
to the heart of the sunny south land.

Things weren't any different in Mobile,
they gave me a ball and chain.
In my travels I tried to act noble and fair,
'til the shacks' long the tracks caused me pain.
Now I stay home and look out my window,
counting the cars in the railroad yards.
I'll rather walk to the end of a rainbow,
'cause ridin' on trains is too hard.

DADDY SANG WITH WOODY GUTHRIE

Written August 13, 2006

Daddy was a farmer on a north Missouri farm,
just a country lovin' farmer with a lot of country charm.
He left home to travel way back in nineteen twenty two,
left his home in north Missouri, caught out on the C.B.Q.
He worked in the Dakotas, followed harvest for a while,
from each morn' until late evening,
it seemed to cramp his style.
He caught out on a train again, out to the golden west,
he was sure he could endure most any kind of test.

He railed to Sacramento back in the dust bowl days,
he had to work too many hours for very little pay.
Two thousand miles away from home he was down and out
he opened up his guitar case and got his guitar out.
Daddy sang a few songs, soon a few folks gathered round,
he gathered up some pennies from a can placed on the ground.
Then up walked a slight built fellow,
said lets pick a tune or two.

I'm just a ramblin' hobo, could I pick along with you.
It made him and daddy welcome at every Hooverville,
they always had enough to eat and kept their bellies full.
Then he got the word from Bethany, said Johnny please don't
roam,
catch out on an eastern freight, get yourself back home.
Your mama's heart is getting' worse, just has a week or two,
she's been waitin' on you Johnny, she wants to talk to you.
Daddy sang a lot of songs he learned, he sang 'em all to me,
daddy sang with Woody Guthrie back in 1933.

NOTHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

Written December 18, 2006

I left my home in the month of November,
tryin' to remember where I've never been.
My fire's burnin' down to its last ember
it's time to head to the south land again.

The north wind is freezing an' blowin' too hard,
there ain't much pleasing' in this railroad yard.
I just made some stew Lord, an' I have to shout
that it ain't nothing' to write home about.

The life of a hobo has more ups than downs,
good times prevail with hobos around.
I hopped an old rattler an' I'm headin' out,
this place ain't nothing' to write home about.

Now here I am in the south land again,
doin' three months for ridin' on trains.
I've never been one to fuss or to pout,
but this place ain't nothing' to write home about.

Here I am in the Huntsville Tovm Jail,
the soup here is lous5 the bread here is stale.
My wife said, "Don't come back!"
when she threw me out,
I ain't got nothing' to write home about.

Big Grain Car George was a cell mate of mine,
he snuck in a fruit jar of dandelion wine.
I gargled with mouth wash to get the taste out,
cause it weren't nothing' to write home about.

SOMETIMES I PRAY TO GOD TO LET ME FLY

Driftin' around the country
just to see what I could see,
no special destination,
just driftin' cause I'm free.
Free to go from New York City,
from Birmingham to Chi.
Sometimes I pray to God to let me fly,

Chorus

Freedom's all that I call mine,
if it's travelin' down the back roads,
or some old railroad line.
I've still got a lot of things to see
before the day I die.
Sometimes I pray to God to let me fly.

From Southern California on out to Northern Maine,
down to the State of Texas,
out across the Kansas plains.
To Pocatello, Idaho where I left out on the lam,
my home is always anywhere I am.
Clip the wings of an eagle, the eagles bound to die.
Sometimes I pray to God to let me fly.

Chorus

Freedom's all that I call mine,
if it's travelin' down the back roads,
or some old railroad line.
I've still got a lot of things to see
before the day I die.
Sometimes I pray to God to let me fly.

KEEP ME FROM SINNING TODAY

Written on Christmas Day 2006

I've been lyin' here thinking, 'bout what people do,
how do they live on the earth without you?
When they woke up this morning, at the first light
of day, how many took time to pray?

Before this day is over what will you do?
What's goin' to bring out the devil in you?
The devil will tempt you and lead you astray.
How will you sin today?

Will you be involved with another mans wife?
Will you try to take another one's life?
Murder by shootin' then drive away?
How will you sin today?

Oh lord, walk beside me, I'll give you my all,
please won't you guide me so I won't fall.
Don't let me get lost so I won't have to say,
how will I sin today?

Jesus you walked with the will power of Job.
Up Calvary Hill, they stripped off your robe.
Now Jesus I pray,
keep me from sinning today!

MY OASIS

Written July 15, 2006

For many years I've traveled the land
in search of beautiful places.
Playin' and singin' for women an' man,
in hopes I put smiles on their faces.
I've found that most of the places I go,
on mountains or wide open spaces,
I've opened my eyes now, I realize,
there's always another oasis.

It's true there is ugliness on this old earth,
hatred brought on by the devil.
I try to ignore him for all that it's worth,
to keep me from hatred and evil.
I've committed a few mortal sins, in the past,
I pray that the good Lord erases.
If I finally make it to heaven at last,
I know I have found my oasis.

I WONDER WHAT GOD HAD PLANNED FOR ME

Written August 9, 2006

Sometimes it's hard to put my thoughts in song,
sometimes they're like a gentle running stream.
Sometimes my thoughts go driftin' far along,
will they return someday in instant dreams.
If yesterdays dreams do come true,
maybe then I'll know what I should do.
I'm slowly driftin' through eternity,
I wonder what God has planned for me.

I'm growing old and wearier each day,
don't want to go out with nowhere to go.
They say a dream will slowly fade away,
I wonder if I will ever know.
Yesterdays dreams sometimes come true,
some dreams are lost, they disappear from view
I'm slowly driftin' through eternity,
I wonder what God has planned for me.

THE EAGLE AND ME

Written January 7, 2007

An eagle is soarin' high over the mountain,
a part of the world where he's happy and free.
Often I've stood on top of the mountain,
where I talk to someone much higher than me.
As I stand on the top of the mountain I see
what God created down below me.
As I stand on top of the mountain I find
we're two of a kind, the eagle and me.

As I look at the beautiful things God has given,
from the top of the mountain they're not hard to see,
I give thanks to God because I'm livin'
in a world he made for you and for me.
I look at the eagle that flies up above me,
a creation of beauty God made to see,
I'm contented 'cause I know he loves me,
I know he created the eagle and me.

THE ROCK

Written December 24, 2006

There's a secret place I love to go
that's very private to me.
There's a beautiful rock there to behold,
it's become a big part of me.
There's beautiful country there to be found,
as I sit on that rock bestowed,
and look at the godliness all around,
from up on that rocky node.

I sit on the rock, it's my private domain
that I hope to retain evermore,
in hopes in time my soul will remain
above where the bald eagle soars.
This rock to me is a beautiful haven
like God meant for it to be.
Could it be a stair step to heaven
for a God lovin' mortal like me?

BLUE DIAMONDS

Written August 15, 2006

Have you ever been on a highway at night,
with lights from a city nowhere in sight,
with no sound of a thing not even a bird,
or the sound of something some never heard?
Is it sound of sheer silence that roars in the night,
or the sound of beautiful angels in flight?
Could it be the angels who keep the stars lit?
Could it be I'll be lost in a bottomless pit?

For years I have rambled, for years I have roamed,
with my father and mother waiting at home,
with no one to lead me from wrong into right,
I rambled around like a thief in the night.
One evening I saw a big light in the west,
could this be the day God would take me to rest,
or could it be God in control of it all,
could it be the night I will see my star fall?

They say every life has a star of its own,
I want to be ready when my last days are gone.
With diamonds of blue as bright as a sunshine,
I see a star falling, could that star be mine?
Blue diamonds, blue diamonds is my end in sight,
are blue diamonds falling through heaven tonight?
Blue diamonds, blue diamonds time will soon tell,
will I find blue diamonds, or the lost pits of hell?

BORDERLINE BANDIT

Mexicans call me a Gringo,
I will have to admit,
I'm not Zono or Ringo,
I'm just a little misfit.
The fust thing I do in the mornin'
is get on my knees for my prayers,
then I go down to Garcia's Cantina
an' have me a couple of beers.

Every mornin' when daylight I see
I jump in my old yellow truck,
I pray to God to watch over me,
and give me a day of good luck.
I don't think it matters to Jesus
if we have a beer now and then,
eat, drink and be merry pleases us,
an' drinkin' good beer ain't a sin.

I'm not a gay caballero,
I'm survivin' an' I'm doin' well,
I make a little dinero
from junk that I find to sell.
Sometimes not many centavos
is all I make in a day,
then I go Garcia's Cantina,
there goes my dinero away.

GOD HAS PLANS FOR ME

I've nothing' in my pocket but one faded lookin' dollar,
you can't buy much for a dollar anymore.
My tattered old tee shirt has grease around the collar,
they don't give no credit at the general store.
I've been lookin' for employment in many different places,
if there's work around, don't know where it can be.
I see looks of annoyance as I look into their faces,
I don't think nobody's overwhelmed with me.

Sometimes a man has problems tryin' to get up from the gutter,
when no ones there to lend a helping' hand.
I'm sick of eatin' stale bread and peanut butter,
or what I get behind a market stand.
I guess I'd better not complain although I'm down an' beaten,
I know the Lord can't always grant our wish.
I know he'll do all that he can do to try to keep me eatin',
like he did when he passed around the fish.

When the sun comes up I'll catch out for warmer weather,
I can feel the chill of winter gettin' near.
I'll pack my roll and try to get my wasted life together,
there's not one bit of future for me here.
I think that God has plans for me although I'm a sinner,
I'll find out down the track a little ways-
When I reach those pearly gates I'll know I'm a winner,
I'll be ready for that final restin' place.

FORGIVENESS

My body is old, sometimes it hurts
more than I think I can stand,
to God I pray make the pain go away.
I bear it but don't know if I can
stand one more minute
as the pain overwhelms me.
Then I realize it's not as bad
as the pain Jesus felt on Calvary.

Dear Jesus I know that you died for me,
for the many times I have sinned,
and I realize that sometime in weakness
I may commit them again.
I've accepted you as my Savior,
I know that I've been forgiven,
and regardless of my behavior dear Lord,
I know I'm goin' to heaven.

TOO FAR AT A TIME

Written August 13, 2006 Veterans Hospital

Good momin' Jesus, I'd like to thank you
for all that you've given me,
Sometimes I stumble, but I'm tryin' much harder
to be what you want me to be,
when the devil tempts me and I don't let him win.
Each evening at bedtime I pray,
I say thank you sweet Jesus for being my friend,
thank you for making my day.

Chorus

Too far at a time sweet Jesus
I've wandered way out of line,
I strayed from the fold, was out in the cold,
to far from heaven divine.
Lost in a sea where I don't want to be,
in a cesspool of endless slime.
Please help me today I've wandered away
to far at a time.

I wake up each mornin',
I know you are with me
to guide me with each step I take.
It keeps me from slidin' right back to the devil,
and makin' the same old mistakes.
So thank you sweet Jesus,
you know where I've been,
still you won't turn me away.
Thank you sweet Jesus for being my friend,
thank you for makin' my day

Chorus

Too far at a time sweet Jesus
I've wandered way out of line,
I strayed from the fold was out in the cold,
to far from heaven divine.
Lost in a sea where I don't want to be,
in a cesspool of endless slime.
Please help me today I've wandered away
too far at a time.

THANK YOU LORD

Written January 24,2007

I've been headin' down a railroad line,
lookin' for a way to clear my mind.
I tried for years but I could not see
dear Savoir what would be my destiny.
I'm doin' things you want me to do,
I'm seekin' refuge with a helpin' hand from you.
I pray each day that you'll walk with me,
thank you Lord for lettin' me be me.

I don't have a mansion on a hill,
I'm not sorry that I never will.
A boxcar is my home away from home,
Lord you're with me everywhere I roam.
I have a little shack along the track,
but most of the time my home is on my back.
I'm bein' what you want me to be,
thank you Lord for lettin' me be me.

I can't remember where all I have been,
or some of the troubles I have been in.
In a moment of weakness when I went wrong,
I spent time in prison, but not for long.
Servin' time made me a different man,
today I serve God the best that I can.
My God given right lets me be free,
thank you Lord for lettin' me be me.

OLD JUKEBOX MEMORIES

Written August 25, 2006

I can hear a jukebox playin'
in a tavern down the street.
It's in a little shady place
where broken hearts often meet.
Those old tear jerkin' country songs
are gettin' into me.
The lonesome sound keeps bringin' fond
old jukebox memories.

Chorus

Jukebox memories, take me back in time,
to when growin' up was fun,
when I had a hard time waitin'
'til I was twenty one,
but time sure flew by quick
and ran away from me,
now all I have to show for it is
old jukebox memories.

I very seldom hear old songs
I have heard before,
the D.J.'s on the radio
don't play 'em anymore.
The music that we hear today
ain't what it used to be,
but they can never take away
old jukebox memories.

Chorus

Jukebox memories, take me back in time,
to when growin' up was fun,
when I had a hard time waitin'
'til I was twenty one,
but time sure flew by quick
and ran away from me,
now all I have to show for it is
old jukebox memories.

NEW HOME ON THE RANGE

I've been ridin' trains' round the county,
driftin' 'round just for kicks,
like a bum on the roam,
far from my home down in the east Texas sticks.
Got bumped off a train in Montana,
it must have been 40 below.
I wandered around way up in the mountains,
got lost in the cold driftin' snow,
when up rode a pretty young cowgirl,
she was ridin' a strawberry roan.
Woopie ti yi yay, I knew right away,
I wanted her for my own.

She said, 'I own a ranch down in Dillon,
I'm needin' a hand for a while,
I'll put you to work if your ready and willing,"
she captured my heart with her smile.
I'd been lookin' for fun and enjoyment,
it's hard to find when you're broke,
I never cared much for permanent employment,
never thought I could be a cowpoke.
She put me to work herdin' cattle,
and helping' her out with the chores.
Woopie ti yi yay, I'm ridin' all day,
woopie ti yi yay, saddle sores.

I'm still in the State of Montana,
I've made a big change in my life,
now I wear a beaver hat and bandana
I'm ridin' tle range with my wife.
I spend lots of time in the saddle,
ridin and ropin' all day,
ridin' and ropin' roundin' up cattle
where the deer and the antelope play.
I never thought it would happen,
the way that it happened is strange.
Woopie ti yi yay, all I can say is
I love my new home on the range.

DANCIN' TO A MARTY ROBBINS SONG

In nineteen fifty two when I danced with you,
you felt so soft and warm,
our love was very strong.
We played the jukebox for a dime,
one love song at a time,
and we danced to Marty Robbins songs.

Now many years have passed,
time goes by too fast.
Darlin' I have loved you all along,
we danced together years ago,
we fell in love I know,
when we were dancin' to Marty Robbins songs

Mr. Teardrop now has gone,
but our love will linger on.
I still hold you in my arms where you belong.
I love you and you love me,
I know we'll forever be,
dancing' to Marty Robbins songs.

BE MY SUNSHINE AGAIN

Written December 5, 2006

Tonight I am heartsick and weary,
my day was stormy and long.
Everything I've tried to do only,
I've managed to do it all wrong.
Have I caused you a lot of misgivin,
what brought on the gray skies and rain?
Please give me a reason for livin,
please be my sunshine again.

It was two weeks ago when we parted,
for a reason you wouldn't disclose.
You left me broken hearted
when you started packin' you clothes.
Now I sit alone every day an,
I'm starin' at four lonesome walls.
Lord,I've been hopin' an' prayin,
that some how you'll stop the rain fall.

THE BLUE RIVER BLUES

Standing alone 'neath the cottonwood tree,
where you said you'd be waiting for me.
I've been here hours waiting for you,
pickin' wild flowers on the banks of the blue.
The sun's going down the waters are warm,
I should be holding you in my arms.
The flowers are dying I picked for you,
I'm standing here crying, got the Blue River blues

There's nothing as mournful as the sound of a dove,
when you can't be with the one that you love.
I'm waiting for you, where can you be,
could it be you've forgotten 'bout me.
The moon is on high, midnight is here,
darling I'm crying because you're not here.
My heart is breaking, it's calling for you,
alone and forsaken, got the Blue River blues.

BILLY THE COWBOY

The coyotes are quiet on the great plains tonight,
the nighthawk won't fly at dawns early light.
The blue skies are clear, the bald eagle cries,
Billy the cowboy said his last goodbye.

Billy was one of a vanishing breed,
who worked with broncos, fillies and steeds.
A cot in the bunkhouse was all he would need,
a good pot of java and a bible to read.

Billy once told me when his time came to die,
the angels would take him to a ranch in the sky.
He'll be missed by the livestock, eagles and owls,
now Billy the cowboy has thrown in the towel.

We buried him out on the prairie to rest,
by the juniper trees near a fence to the west.
His last request was to ride for the foreman in the sky,
Billy the cowboy said his last goodbye.

MY GOOD FRIEND CHARLIE SCOTT

Charlie was a friend of mine,
I'm proud to say I knew,
born down in Missouri
back in nineteen thirty two.
The main objective in his life
was to have a lot of fun,
that's exactly what he did
'till his life on earth was done.

Charlie brought a little sunshine
to all that knew him in life,
a dedicated man who
loved his children and his wife.
His friends all called him sunny,
he was happy all his days,
with a sunny disposition
and a smile upon his face.

Charlie loved to get together,
camp out with his friends,
He said, "I envy my life so much
I hope it never ends."
But God had different plans for Charlie,
the angels came one day
I guess they needed more sunshine
up in heaven's way.
Now Charlie's gone and left us,
he will never be forgot,
I just had to write this song
for my good friend, Charlie Scott.

SO LONG CHESTER COOPER

In the Nashville railyards
waiting for a train to home,
nothin' in my jacket
but a pack of camels and my pocket comb.
I'd been chasin' dreams in Nashville,
hopin' that I'd be a star someday,
the dreams I had were all in vain,
it didn't take 'em long to fade away.

Met a homeless man in Nashville,
he said that Chester Cooper was his name,
he said he'd come to Nashville
several years ago in search of fame.
Chester said he'd owned a guitar
he pawned when things got bad,
he said chasin' dreams in Nashville had cost him
everything he'd ever had.

I played and sang at Broadway in a tavern,
only made a buck or two,
I was feeling sorry for myself,
I didn't do the things I'd come to do.
But when I looked at Chester,
I gave him all the money I had made,
and he invited me to dinner
at the city mission where he stayed.

I'm in the Nashville railyards
waitin' for a train to take me out.
It didn't take me very long to learn
what broken dreams were all about.
I remember Chester sayin'
"Go back home, that's where you need to be."
Thank you Chester Cooper,
thanks for everything you've done for me.

I DIDN'T COME IN FOR THE BEER

Written September 7, 2006

I didn't come in for the beer,
I was hopin' I'd find you in here.
Lately I'm out in the cold,
I'm needing someone to hold.
Maybe the timin' is right,
if Lady Luck is with me tonight.
Take me somewhere where it's warm,
let me spend the night in your arms.

I'm needin' some lovin' tonight,
I'm hopin' that maybe you might,
be needin' a little lovin' too,
please let me know if you do.
Please won't you give me one chance,
I'm in the mood for romance.
I'd like to make one thing clear,
I didn't come in for the beer.

I didn't come in for the beer,
I really don't like the atmosphere,
the jukebox is playin' too loud,
I've never been much for crowds.
Maybe I've got you all wrong,
I've been to lonely too long.
Lady, lets get out of here,
I didn't come in for the beer.

BIG BUBBA JONES

Written August 12, 2006

Big Bubba Jones was the bully of our town,
he seemed to take great delight in knockin' others down.
On Friday nights you'd find him down at Fourth and Main,
at the old corner tavern in the same spot again.

Jim Beam was his whiskey, Bud Light was his beer,
when he drank them both together
he would grin from ear to ear,
Just a couple rounds and he'd be feelin' well,
he'd go on the warpath and tear things all to hell.

It was on a Friday night he was feelin' pretty rough,
he said, "It's time to kick some butt, to show'em I am tough."
He attacked some local rednecks, bounced 'em off the wall,
took another shot of Beam and beer
as he watched the last one fall.

About that time a little man came walkin' thru the door,
Bubba took another drink and said, "I'll whip one more."
Bubba said, I need a drink, pour me another round,
ain't no one gonna take me out, I weigh 400 pounds.

The little man was fast as light, soon the fight was o'er,
and Big Bubba Jones lie stretched out on the floor.
The fight at Corner Tavern is talked about today,
the man who whipped Big Bubba was a Green Beret.

ALCOHOL

Written August 13, 2006

Last night I got messed up
with too much cherry wine,
woke up this morning'
searchin' through my over tangled mind.
I'm not sure if one more drink
will take the pain away,
I think that I have seen my better days.

I should have had much more by now,
booze has changed my life,
old by gone days will torture me,
they're cuttin' like a knife.
The fifty cents that I have left
won't buy much booze at all,
is there someone who
will buy me alcohol?

Alcohol will take it's toll
and it will take my life,
it took away my home and car,
I lost my kids and wife.
It's puttin' me through misery,
but Lord I caused it all,
I gave up everything for alcohol.

No angel will come for me
when I'm laid to rest,
take a gallon of Jack Daniels
and pour it on my chest.
When Satan comes to get me,
I will let him have it all,
for the hell he put me through with alcohol.

EACH NIGHT AT NINE

It was thirteen years ago today when I first kissed you,
you told me that you always would be mine.
It was nine o'clock and I could not resist you,
when you pressed your red lips to mine.

Then I had to leave to fight for our great country,
it was hard to go to war with you behind.
It makes me feel that you're much closer to me,
if you look up at the stars each night at nine.

Each night at nine I'll look above me,
knowin' you are gazin' upwards too.
I'll look up into the sky and know you love me,
even though the clouds
may keep the stars from shinin' through.

I will never place another love above you,
I'll know your love is just as strong as mine.
Look up at the stars and know I love you,
look up at the stars each night at nine.

PHOTO ALBUM AND MANUSCRIPTS

The next few pages have some snapshots
of Liberty collated by Shorty
for the Poetry Collection

Then, the final section of this eBook
contains some of Liberty's songs
from his original notepad where
he composed lyrics. To see original
manuscripts by any composer or poet
is somewhat rare. A book of John
Hartford's lyrics in his own calligraphy
was recently published by that estate.

A very special thanks is due
Brenda Justice for allowing us to
make copies of Liberty's originals
for this eBook.

Seeing the song script for,
"He's Just An Old Hobo"
which is a masterpiece, alone is
worth browsing these pages.



Liberty Justice



Liberty Justice



Liberty and the
1987 Hobo King
Alabama Hobo
Amory, Mississippi
Railroad Festival
April 1993



Big Skip, N.Y. Maggie,
Liberty and Connecticut Shorty
Logansport, Ind. - July 1993



Liberty Justice
National Hobo Convention
Britt, Iowa - 1993



Liberty Justice



Liberty Justice and
Come on Pat
Elected National Hobo King
and Hobo Queen
Britt, Iowa - August 1996



Liberty Justice,
Drakesville Bill (center) and
Be Gone Norm (end)
South Texas Music Festival
Weslaco, Texas – February 1997



Liberty and the 1995 Hobo King
Luther the Jet at the Hotel Florence
in Chicago's Historic Pullman District
June 1997



Liberty and the 1997 Hobo King Frog
Atchison, Kansas Hobo Festival
May 1998



Come on Pat and Liberty
East Coast Hobo Gathering
Pennsburg, Pennsylvania
September 2002

8-13-66
Daddy sang with Woody Guthrie back in 1933

DADDY SANG WITH WOODY GUTHRIE

DADDY WAS FARMER ON A NORTH MISSOURI FARM

JUST A COUNTRY LOVIN' FARMER WITH A LOT OF COUNTRY CHARM

HE LEFT HOME TO TRAVEL BACK IN NINETEEN TWENTY TWO,

LEFT HIS HOME IN NORTH MISSOURI, CAUGHT OUT ON THE C.B. & Q.

HE WORKED IN THE DAKOTAS FOLLOWED HARVEST FOR A WHILE

FROM EARLY MORN UNTIL LATE EVENING SEEMED TO CRAMP HIS STYLE

HE CAUGHT OUT ON A TRAIN AGAIN OUT TO THE GOLDEN WEST

HE WAS SURE HE COULD ENDURE MOST ANY KIND OF TEST

HE TRAVELED TO SACRAMENTO BACK IN THE DUST BOWL DAYS

HE HAD TO WORK TOO MANY HOURS FOR VERY LITTLE PAY

TWO THOUSAND MILES AWAY FROM HOME HE WAS DOWN AND OUT

HE OPENED UP HIS GUITAR CASE AND GOT HIS GUITAR OUT

DADDY SANG A FEW SONGS, SOON A FEW FOLKS GATHERED 'ROUND

HE GATHERED UP SOME PENNYS FROM A CAN THERE ON THE GROUND

THEN HE WALKED A LITTLE FURTHER, SAID LETS PICK A TUNE OR TWO

OH JUST A RAMBLIN' HUBB - COULD I PICK A SONG WITH YOU

IT MADE HIM AND DADDY WELCOME AT EVERY HOOPERVILLE

THEY ALWAYS HAD ENOUGH TO EAT AND KEEP THEIR BELLIES FILLED

THE HE GOT THE WORD FROM BETHANY SAID JOHNNY COME HOME

CATCH OUT ON AN EASTERN FREIGHT, GET YOURSELF BACK HOME

YOUR MAMA'S IS HEART IS GETTIN' WORSE JUST HAS A WEEK OR TWO

SHE'S BEEN WAITIN' ON YOU JOHNNY, SHE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU

DADDY SANG A LOT OF SONGS HE LEARNED, HE SANG 'EM ALL TO ME

DADDY SANG WITH WOODY GUTHRIE BACK IN 1933.

Every Hoboes dream

Tonight the moon is shining bright
out on the cinder trail,
Reminds me of my younger days
ridin' on the rails.

I rambled 'round the country wide
on trains that ran on steam,
To hop an old freight train and ride
is every Hoboes dream.

I know I'll be a Robo Lord
until the day I die,
When the angels come to get me
I will catch out on the fly,
I'll let a westbound take me
to the land beyond the sun
But Lord I'm not quite ready yet
to make my final run.

I'll stay here in the jungle Lord
with all the younger' boys,
But I won't ride the New trains,
I'll watch 'em come and go,
I'll catch out on the Westbound
if my soul you will redeem
To ride a train to Heaven Lord
is every Hoboes dream.

written by Liberty Justice

He's just an old Hobo
He's just an old Hobo doin' his best
to keep from admittin' the truth,
He's hurtin' inside 'cause he knows he can't ride
Like he did in the days of his youth.
A whistle is blowin', He's beamin' with pride,
he knows it's not all in his mind.
he knows that soon he'll make one more ride
to his home at the end of the Line.

He's just an old Hobo, he'll board one more train,
he'll ride to the end of the line.
He's goin' away, leavin' today, he's leavin' his bedroll behind
He knows he'll find rest at his home in the west
His train isn't far down the track
He's goin' away, leavin' today
on a train that will never come back

He's just an old Hobo, he knows he'll soon be
with his friends and old loved ones again.
He'll close his eyes when he sees the smoke rise
he'll know that it's just round the bend.
There's a place down the line
where the sun always shines
where he'll never be hungry or cold
He's goin' away, leavin' today
on a heaven bound train made of gold.

9-7-2003

I Didn't come in for the beer
I Didn't come in for the beer
I was hopin' I'd find you in here
Lately I'm out in the cold
I'm needin' some one to hold
Maybe the timin' is right
If Lady Luck IS with me tonight
Take me somewhere where it's warm
Let me spend the night in your arms

I'm Needin' some Lovin' Tonight
I'm Hopin' That maybe you might
be needin' a Little Lovin' Too
Please Let me know if you do
Please won't you give me one chance
I'm in the mood for romance
I'd Like to make one thing clear
I Didn't come in for the beer

I didn't come in for the beer
I really don't like the atmosphere
The juke box is playin' too loud,
I've never been much for crowds
Maybe I've got it all wrong
I've been too lonely too long
Lady, let's get out of here
I didn't come in for the beer

8-25-86 ^{OLD} JUKE BOX MEMORIES

I CAN HEAR A JUKE BOX PLAYIN'
IN A TAVERN DOWN THE STREET,
IT'S IN A LITTLE SHADY PLACE
WHERE BROKEN HEART'S MAY MEET,
THOSE OLD TEAR JERKIN' COUNTRY SONGS
ARE GETTIN' NEXY TO ME,
THE LONESOME SOUND KEEPS BRINGIN' 'ROUND
OLD JUKE BOX MEMORIES,

CHORUS

JUKE BOX MEMORIES, TAKE BACK IN TIME
TO WHEN GROWIN' UP WAS FUN,
WHEN I HAD A HARD TIME WAITIN'
TIL I WAS TWENTY ONE,
BUT TIME SURE FLEW BY ~~SO~~ QUICK
AND RAN AWAY FROM ME,
NOW ALL I HAVE TO SHOW FOR IT IS
~~OLD~~ JUKE BOX MEMORIES

I VERY SELDOM HEAR OLD SONGS
I HAVE HEARD BEFORE,
THE D.J.s ON THE RADIOS
DON'T PLAY 'EM ANYMORE.
THE MUSIC THAT WE HEAR TODAY
AINT WHAT IT USED TO BE,
BUT THEY CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY
~~OLD~~ JUKE BOX MEMORIES

OLD

Just a DYIN' HOBO
12-8-'06

She down full mass fed
a Hobo was ^{4:11 PM} lying on the floor of a ~~boxcar~~
The cold wind was blowing
as he lie on the floor
he said "I should go home
But I'm not sure what for
There's nothing back there
for me anymore"

He was raised in the Hills
of old West Virginia

but he left his home on the B + O line
he had wanderlust baronia within him
never again to work in the mines

11 " HE DRIFTED FOR YEARS down back roads + rail
IN SEARCH OF CONTENTMENT THAT HE NEVER FOUND

2 NOW HE TOULD TO RAMBLE down ~~the~~ PATHS AND BIWAYS
THERE'S NOthin' back home

1. BUT A PLOT IN THE GROUND

HE'S JUST A DYIN' HOBO

ON A LONG ROAD TO NOWHERE

WITH NO ONE TO LOVE HIM

NO ONE TO CARE

HIS ONLY PRAYER

IS THAT HE'LL GO TO HEAVEN

WHERE HE'LL FIND HIS LOVED ONES

IN WAIT FOR HIM THERE

③

Some times I pray to God to let me fly
Driftin' 'ROUND the country
JUST TO SEE WHAT I COULD SEE,
NO SPECIAL DESTINATION.
JUST DRIFTIN' 'CAUSE I'M FREE
FREE TO GO FROM NEW YORK CITY
FROM BIRMINGHAM TO CHI
~~SOMETIMES I PRAY TO GOD TO LET ME FLY WAY~~
~~FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ON OUT TO NORTHERN MAINE~~
DOWN TO THE STATE OF TEXAS,
OUT ACROSS THE KANSAS PLAINS,
TOO POKATELLO IDAHO WHERE I LEFT ON THE LAM LAM
MY HOME IS ALWAYS ANYWHERE I AM.
CLIP THE WINGS OF AN EAGLE, THE EAGLES BOUND TO DIE,
SOMETIMES I PRAY TO GOD TO LET ME FLY

chorus

Freedom's all I have that I call mine,
IF IT'S TRAVELIN' DOWN THE BACKROADS
OR SOME OLD RAILROAD LINE.
I've still a lot of things to see
before the day I die,
Sometimes I pray to God to let me fly

I LEFT MY HOME IN SOUTHWEST MISSOURI
JUST TWENTY MILES FROM THE ARKANSAS LINE.
TOLD MAMA AN' DAD, PLEASE DON'T YOU WORRY,
YOUR RAMBLIN' SON IS GOIN' TO BE FINE.
CAUGHT OUT ON THE FLY ON A TRAIN HEADIN' EAST,
WHERE IT WAS HEADIN', I DID NOT KNOW
THE BOX CAR WAS QUARTER AND EMPTY AT LEAST
EXCEPT FOR ME AND ONE OTHER BULL
WHAT HE SAID HIS NAME WAS, I COULDN'T RECALL
AFTER WE SHARED A JUG OF GRAIN ALCOHOL
IN THE RAILYARD, OFF MEMPHIS DOWN TO BEALE STREET
WALKIN' AND LOOKIN' FOR SOMETHIN' TO EAT
A HARNESS BULL TOLD US TO MOVE IT ALONG
I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU AROUND HERE FOR LONG
MY FEET WE ACHIN IN MY WATER SOAKED SHOES
I'VE GOT A BAD CASE OF THE BEALE STREET BLUES

WHAT'S WRONG WITH A MAN WHO LEAVES HIS HOME
TO TRAVEL THE COUNTRY, TO WANDER AND ROAM
A MAN WILL HAVE THE WANT TO BE FREE
IF HE CANNOT BE WHAT HE WANTS TO BE
THE WANDER LUST FLOWIN' WITHIN MY VEINS
MADE ME GO TO THE YARD AND HOP ON A TRAIN
I'M AN OLD HOBBO DOIN' WHAT I WANNA DO,
I'VE GOT A BAD CASE OF THE BEALE STREET BLUES

I THOUGHT I COULD FIND A JOB DRIVIN TRUCKS
ONLY TO FIND I WAS DOWN ON MY LUCK
FINDIN' A JOB I FOUND TO BE HARD
YOU HAVE TO BE UNION AND CARRY A CARD
NOW I'M WALKIN THE STREET WITH THAT TRAIN ROLLIN '30
WHERE WE ARE GOIN WE REALLY DONT KNOW
WE DONT HAVE A CASE OF NO KIND OF BOOZE
WE'VE GOT A CASE OF THE BEALE STREET BLUES

9 IN TWO THOUSAND MILES FROM
FROM THE HOME THAT I LEFT
OUT ON THE WESTERN SHORE,
I'M IN CHICAGO AN' I'LL FREEZE TO DEATH
IF IT GETS ANY COLDER FOR SURE,
THE COLD WIND IS BLOWIN' ~~CROSS~~ ^{ACROSS} LAKE MICHIGAN,
CROSS LAKE MICHIGAN,
THE RAIN IS TURNIN' TO SLEET,
I'VE BEEN CHECKIN' THE DUMPSTERS
TO SEE IF I ~~DUMPSTERS~~
CAN FIND A LITTLE TO EAT.

YOU CANT BE TOO PICKIE
WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY AND COLD,
AND AINT GOT A DIME IN YOUR JEANS,
A COUPLE OF BONES MAKE ~~UP~~ ^{UP}
MAKE PRETTY GOOD SOUP
IF YOU MIX EM WITH WATER AN' BEANS.
FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, I CANT BE TOO PROUD
ALTHOUGH I'VE HAD BETTER DANCE,
I'LL GIVE UP MY ROAMIN'
GO ON BACK HOME
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT ANYWAY.

I CATCH SOME OLD RATTLER
OR A STINKIN' POSCATTER ^{OR}
AND COVER UP IN THE HAWK ^{OR} ^{WAY}
I'LL SLEEP ALL THE OUT TO DENVER
IF I DONT FREEZE TO DEATH ^{ON THE WAY} ^{WAY}
I'LL FIND SOMETHIN' TO EAT
DOWN ON LARIMER STREET
WITH MY RAMBLIN' BUDS I'LL DINE
WELL SPIKE UP SOME GRAPE JUICE
WITH GRAIN ALCOHOL
IT MAKES A PRETTY GOOD WINE

1-23-07

9 Got my first guitar at the age of fifteen

9 Learned to play before Long.

2 Listened to Hank, Lefty and Carl

9 Learned to sing most their songs

9 I take my old guitar with me every day

I'D PLAY FOR TIPS, AND FOR THRILLS

THEY GAVE ALL OF THE BEER I COULD DRINK

AT A TAVERN JUST OVER THE HILL

My Ramblin' Railroad Days

I woke up this Mornin'
When I heard The southern flyer whistle blow.
I could hear those Iron wheels turnin'
and once more I got that burnin' urge to go.
I closed my eyes and thought about,
The old days when I roamed about,
I listened to the whistle fade away.
When the final car had passed
I took a trip back to the past
an' Lived again my ramblin' railroad days.

Sleepin' on those boxcar floors.

Cold and hungry, Tired and Soakin' wet.
I've knocked upon a thousand doors,
Tryin' to score a Lump or cigarette.
I've raided lots of garbage cans
behind some city Market Stand,
bummed a buck or two along the way
When I think about the times I've had
The happy ones outweigh the bad.
I'm Lonesome for my ramblin' railroad days.

Lookin' out my window

~~look~~ into the Lonely railroad yards below.
a rusty engine sits at rest,
reminds me of myself, I'm gettin' old.
I'm old, I'm tired and weary
but I've had better times along the way
an' if I had my youth again
I'd hop aboard some old freight train,
The same as in my ramblin' railroad days.

New home on the range

I'd been ridin' trains 'round the country
driftin' 'round just for kicks,

Like a burn on the roan, far from my home
down in the East Texas sticks.

Got bumped off a train in Montana, it must have been 40 below,
I wandered around way up in the mountains,
got lost in the cold driftin' snow,

when up rode a pretty young Cowgirl,

She was ridin' a Strawberry roan,

Whoopie ti yi yay, I knew right away,

I wanted her for my own.

She said I own a ranch down in Dillon,

I'm needin' a hand for a while,

So I put you to work if you're ready and willin',

She captured my heart with her smile.

I'd been lookin' for fun and enjoyment,
It's hard to find when you're broke.

I never cared much for permanent employment,
never thought I could be a Cowpoke.

She put me to work herdin' cattle.

and helpin' her out with the chores, na,

Whoopie ti yi yay I'm ridin' all day,

Whoopie ti yi yay, saddle sores.

I'm still in the State of Montana,

She made a big change in my life,

Wear a big beaver hat, a cowboy bandana,

I'm ridin' the range with a wife.

I spend lots of time in the saddle, ridin' and ropin' all day,

I ridin' and ropin', roundin' up cattle,

where the deer and the antelope play.

I never thought it would happen,

The way that it happened is strange.

Whoopie ti yi yay, all I can say's

I love my new home on the range.

No one could sing a Hobbs song

^G SLEEPIN' IN THE RAIN ^F

WAITIN' FOR A TRAIN,

TRYIN' TO GET BACK HOME TO YOU.

I CAN HEAR A WHISTLE BLOW ^G

A TRAIN IS NEAR I KNOW,

BUT THIS ONE IS ONLY PASSIN' THRU ^F ^G ^C

CAN'T CATCH OUT ON THE FLY,

I'M AFRAID TO TRY,

MY OLD LEGS AIN'T WHAT

THEY USED TO BE.

I'M A LONG, LONG WAY FROM HOME

WAITIN' FOR MY TRAIN TO COME

IT'S STILL A THOUSAND MILES TO YOU, MARIE

I HEARD SONGS YEARS AGO,

ON MY CRYSTAL RADIO

LISTENIN' TO JIMMY SING THE BLUE

BUT TIME HAS MOVED ALONG

A DIFFERENT TRAIN, A DIFFERENT SONG

WHY DID I WANDER FAR AWAY FROM YOU

RELIVIN' JIMMY'S SONGS

AS TIME STILL MOVES ALONG

I WONDER WHAT HE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF ME

IF DIFFERENT TIME, A DIFFERENT PLACE

TEARS ARE STREAMIN' DOWN MY FACE

IT'S STILL A THOUSAND MILES TO YOU, MARIE

12-18-'06 NOTHIN' TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

I LEFT MY HOME IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER
TRYIN' TO REMEMBER WHERE I'VE NEVER BEEN,
MY FIRE'S BURNIN' DOWN TO ITS LAST EMBER,
IT'S TIME HEAD TO THE SOUTHLAND AGAIN:

— THE NORTH WIND IS FREEZIN' AN' BLOWIN' TOO HARD
THERE AINT MUCH PLEASIN' IN THIS RAILROAD YARD
I JUST MADE SOME STEW LORD AN' I HOPE TO SHOUT
THAT IT WERNT NOTHIN' TO WRITE HOME ABOUT.

THE LIFE OF A HOBBO HAS MORE UPS THAN DOWNS,
GOOD TIMES PREVAIL WITH HOBBOES AROUND.

I HOPPED AN OLD RATTLER AN' I'M HEADIN' OUT
THIS PLACE WERENT NOTHIN' TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

c NOW HERE I AM IN THE SOUTHLAND AGAIN

b DOIN' THREE MONTHS FOR REDIN' ON TRAINS.

o I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE TO FUSS OR TO POUT.

g BUT THIS PLACE AINT NOTHIN' TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

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Z
HERE I AM IN THE HARTSVILLE TOWN JAIL,

THE SOUP HERE IS BLOUSY, THE BREAD HERE IS STALE
MY WIFE SAID "DON'T COME BACK WHEN SHE THREW ME OUT"

I AINT GOT NOTHIN' TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

BIG GRAIN CAR GEORGE WAS A CELLMATE OF MINE

HE SNUCK IN A FRUIT JAR OF DANDY LINE WINE

I GARGLED WITH MOUTHWASH TO GET THE TASTE OUT

CAUSE IT WERNT NOTHIN' TO WRITE HOME ABOUT

RETIRIN' FROM THE TRACK

IT'S SIX O'CLOCK ON WEDNESDAY EVENING,
AND I WISH THAT I WAS LEAVIN'
ON A TRAIN HEADIN' ANYWHERE TOWARDS HOME.

I KNOW I LOOK A LITTLE ROUGH,

MY CLOTHES AND BODY'S HAD ENOUGH
OF LIVIN' ON THE ROAD AWAY FROM HOME.

MISSION FOOD IS NOT THE BEST,

YOU SHARE THE BED WITH LITTLE PESTS

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'S CRAWLIN' IN THE SACK

IF I GET BACK HOME AGAIN

THERE'LL BE NO MORE RIDIN' TRAINS

THIS OLD HOBO IS RETIRIN' FROM THE TRACK

I REMEMBER WHAT MY MAMA TOLD ME,

BUT THERE WAS NO WAY THAT SHE COULD HOLD ME

I WAS YOUNG AND KNEW IT ALL

AWAY BACK THEN.

I GOT IN TROUBLE DOWN THE LINE

DOWN IN SUNNY CAROLINE

THE JUDGE SENTENCED ME FROM FIVE TO TEN

NOW I'M THUMBIN' DOWN THE HWY -

HOPIN' SOMEONE'S GOIN' MY WAY,

ALL I OWN I CARRY IN A PAPER SACK

IF I GET BACK HOME AGAIN

THERE'LL BE NO MORE RIDIN' TRAINS

THIS OLD HOBO IS RETIRIN' FROM THE TRACK

So Long Chester Cooper

on the Nashville rail yards waitin' for a train to take me home,
Nothin' in my jacket but a pack of Camels and my pocket comb.
I'd been chasin' dreams in Nashville, hopin' that I'd be a star someday.
The dreams I had were all in vain, it didn't take 'em long to fade away.

Met a homeless man in Nashville, he said that Chester Cooper was his name,
he said he'd come to Nashville several years ago in search of fame.
he said he'd owned a guitar he pawned it for a loan when things got bad,
he said chasin' dreams in Nashville had cost him everythin' he'd ever had.

I played and sang at Fourth and Broadway in a tavern, only made a buck or two.
I was feeling sorry for myself, I didn't do the things I'd come to do.
but when I looked at Chester, I gave him all the money I had made
he invited me to dinner at the city Misslow where he stayed.

I'm in the Nashville rail yards waitin' for a train to take me out.
It didn't take me very long to learn what broken dreams were all about.
I remember Chester sayin, go back home, that's where you need to be.
Thank you Chester Cooper, thanks for everythin' you've done for me.
So Long Chester Cooper, thanks for everythin' you've done for me.

THE END OF THE RAINBOW

FOR YEARS I'VE BEEN OUT CHASIN' RAINBOWS
NOW I DON'T WANT TO GO NEAR A TRAIN
DON'T WANT TO GO BACK NEAR THE SHACKS' LONG THE TRACKS
I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP IN THE RAIN
I'VE SPENT TOO MUCH TIME DOWN IN HUNTSVILLE
I WAS ALL THAT THIS HOBO COULD STAND
I HOPPED A FREIGHT TRAIN TO MOBILE,
TO THE HEART OF THE SUNNY SOUTH LAND
~~THE HEART OF THE SUNNY SOUTH LAND~~

THINGS WEREN'T ANY DIFFERENT IN MOBILE,
THEY GAVE ME A BALL AND A CHAIN,
IN MY TRAVELS I TRIED TO ACT NOBLE AND FAIR
'TIL THE SHACKS' LONG THE TRACKS HAILED ME IN
NOW I STAY HOME AND LOOK OUT MY WINDOW
'COUNT THE CARS IN THE RAILROAD YARDS
I'LL WALK TO THE END OF THE RAINBOW
'CAUSE RIDIN' ON TRAINS IS TOO HARD

Chorus:

I'M SEARCH OF THE ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN
I CANT NAME THE PLACES I'VE BEEN
'NEVER DRANK FROM A KOOL AIDE FOUNTAIN
AND I'M NOT RIDIN' THERE ON A TRAIN NO MORE!

2-11-06 THE HOBO ROAD

Down at fourth and Broadway

by the light of candle lamp

Two Hoboes shared a campfire

in a little hobo camp

the spoke about their travels

and wild episodes

as they traveled round the country

along The Hobo road

ONE WAS FROM SEATTLE,

THE OTHER, PORTLAND MAINE

ONE SAID I NEVER KNOW

WHEN I'LL GET HOME AGAIN

AT SUN UP IN THE MORNING

I'LL BE ON THE GO

I'VE GOT SOME THINGS TO DO

OUT ON THE HOBO ROAD

THE OTHER SAID I'M HEADIN' HOME

BACK TO BIRMINGHAM

IT'S BEST THAT I AM LEAVIN'

'CAUSE I'M LEAVIN' ON THE LAM,

THE CLAY MARSHALL'S HUNTIN' ME

FOR WHAT, THE GOOD LORD KNOWS

I'VE HAD SOME TROUBLE DOWN THE LINE

OUT ON THE HOBO ROAD

IF I HAD A TIME TO BET HEAD

I'D BET THAT IT WILL RAIN

I'LL REFRAIN FROM GETTIN' WET

AND CLIMB ABOARD A TRAIN

I KNOW TOMORROW I WILL FIND

A NEW HOBO ABODE

AS I TRAVEL DOWN THE TRAILS

OUT ON THE HOBO ROAD

8-7-06

THE PRISONERS BLUES

I wish that I was ridin' down a railroad track,
Ridin' down the line with a roll upon my back,
I wish that I was headin' down a star-lit rail
Instead of doin' time in the Nashville Jail,
I never should have left my country home,
Never put my feet in those wanderin' shoes,
I had a drifters heart that made me want to roam,
That's why I've got the prisoners' blues.

I'm doin' time in the state of Tennessee,
The judge man threw the hook at me,
For sellin' whisky on the corner of the street,
The Guv'ments done got me beat
Don't reckon I'll be free for a little while,
My fate will be on a big rock pile,
A ramblin' man is only bound to lose
That's why I've got the prisoners' blues

10-21-06 Wanderlust

There's an old railroad right of way
where steam trains used to run,
The old track along the line
is brown with rust,
my mind wanders back to yesterday
and things I left undone
because my heart was full of wanderlust

These old abandoned railroad tracks
are covered up with weeds,
Sometimes I feel as if my heart will burst,
if a train could take me back
to pleasures that I need.
My heart would still be filled with wanderlust

Time will always take it's toll
and old things fade away,
in time all railroad ties
turn in to dust,
I have grown tired and old
but time can't take away
The thing within my heart called wander

Shotgun Sadie



AFTERWORD

I spent some time with Liberty and Backwoods Jack when they performed at some Hobo/Railroad Festival events. I've known and worked around musicians my whole life and have never met a more sociable and naturally gifted individual than Jerry.

In assembling this book from Shorty's Poetry Compilation and from Brenda's personal collection of Liberty's song drafts and memorabilia I hope that everyone who knew and loved his free spirit will appreciate this digital legacy made to honor their friend.

Robert "VideoBob" Whiteside

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