

1 ELDER GREEN

(Trad., arr. by Tom Rush)

I'm not sure where I got this one. It's basically "Alabama Bound" with different lyrics. (The term "Alabama bound" was code for "leaving town in a hurry.") If you Google it, Charlie Patton comes up, but it's impossible to make out what he's singing after the words "Elder Green." I thought my childhood buddy Peter Coyote taught it to me, but he denies any knowledge. (Of the song — he's very knowledgeable about a variety of other things.) I love the bit about "he's got greenbacks, sweet babe, enough to make a man a suit." Inspired by this, I was at one point planning to have a suit made of money, but never got around to it. There's still time! (I have calculated that it would take \$33,264 to make a two-piece suit from \$100 bills, or \$42,768 for a three-piece. Maybe I'll start with a pair of shorts, once the kid is out of college.)

Oh, Elder Green's in town,
Good God, he's walking 'round,
He's got them greenbacks, sweet babe, enough,
To make a man a suit.

Oh, make a man a suit,
Now, make a man a suit,
He's got them greenbacks, sweet babe, enough,
To make a man a suit.

Now, Elder Green told the deacon,
"Oh, let's go down in prayer,
Well, there's a big stone steeple down in New Orleans,
Come on and let's go there."

"Come on and let's go there," (etc.)

Now, Elder Green told the sexton,
"You run and tone the bell,
You know all of the sisters in the company here,
They're going to burn in Hell."

"Going to burn in Hell," (etc.)

Oh, Elder Green's in the pulpit,
Oh, Bible in his hand,
You know and all of the sisters in the corner cryin',
"Oh, Elder Green's my man."

"Elder Green's my man," (etc.)

And Elder Green's in the pulpit,
He pass his hand around. He said,
"Come on, you brothers, sisters, shoot the money to me,
I'm Alabama bound."

"I'm Alabama bound,
oh, Alabama bound,
And if this train don't stop and turn around,
I'm Alabama bound."

Oh, Elder Green is gone,
Now, Elder Green is gone,
You know he's gone on down to the country, boys,
He's got his long clothes on.

Got his long clothes on, (etc.)

2 COME SEE ABOUT ME

Tom Rush

*I don't think I wrote this one, I think the guitar did.
It's fun to play, and I don't think I can say much more about it.*

Hey, little mamma, come see about me,
See how your daddy done done,
Hey, little mamma, come see about me,
'Round about the setting sun.
I might be good, I might be bad,
I might be happy, but I might be sad,
Hey, little mamma, come see about me.
Hey, hey, hey.
Hey, hey, hey.

Hey, little mamma comin' down the road,
Take me by the hand.
Hey little mamma comin' down the road,
Take me to the promised land.
I might be up, I might be down,
Might be lost, but I might be found.
Hey, little mamma, come see about me.
Hey, hey, hey.
Hey, hey, hey.

Hey, little mamma, you're the one I love,
You know that to be true.
Hey, little mamma, you're the one I love,
I hate to see you blue.
I might be hot, might be cold,
Might be rich, but I might be poor,
Hey, little mamma, come see about me.
Hey, hey, hey.
Hey, hey, hey.

Hey, little mamma, come see about me,
See how your daddy done done,
Hey, little mamma, come see about me,
'Round about the setting sun.
I might be good, might be bad,
I might be happy, but I might be sad,
Hey, little mamma, come see about me.
Hey, hey, hey.
Hey, hey, hey.

3 MY BEST GIRL

Tom Rush

I wrote a love song for my guitar! The original Naked Lady was an Epiphone Texan that I bought in Harvard Square sometime around 1963 (for \$176!). I asked Chris Hayward to inlay a naked woman entwined with a snake (a Biblical theme, of course) on the neck, and she obliged. The Lady became quite famous in her own right — when the roadie would yell to the stage hand, "Tom wants the Naked Lady in the dressing room," heads would turn.

She burned up in a house fire in 1990 and I was Naked Lady-less for a long time. Then John Marr of MacKenzie & Marr approached me about producing a Tom Rush guitar. I asked, "Can we have a naked lady with a snake on the neck?" He said yes and the deal was struck. Check her out at www.macmarr.com.

My best girl, she's big and round,
She's got a snake tattooed on her good right arm,
Sometimes in the night, we'll go dancing.

I don't dance, but she don't mind,
She keeps the time, and if I drink that wine,
She'll keep the time, from overflowing.

She can cry like the rain in the pines at night,
Ring like a hammer on a five-pound spike,
She sighs, like silk on skin.

She fits my arms like coming home,
And when I'm lost and all alone,
She'll hold me close and whisper
'bout where we've been.

My best girl...Oh, sweet baby mine.

She's not as young as she once was,
She's got the scars from the miles we've shared,
When it rains, she's my silver lining.

When it's darker than the darkest night,
When everything's wrong and nothing's right,
My best girl, oh, she comes shining.

She can cry like the rain in the pines at night,
Ring like a hammer on a five-pound spike,
She sighs, like silk on skin.

She fits my arms like coming home,
And when I'm lost and all alone,
She'll hold me close and whisper
'bout where we've been.

My best girl...Oh, sweet baby mine.

My best girl, she's big and round,
She's got a snake tattooed on her good right arm,
And sometimes in the night, we'll go dancing.

My best girl...

4 LIFE IS FINE

Tom Rush

Tomato's hanging there on the vine,
Moon is hanging up in the sky,
My baby loves me,
Oh, life is fine.

Hound dog lying here at my feet,
Little one is sound asleep,
My baby loves me,
Oh, life is sweet.

And we don't care when the sun don't shine,
She says that doesn't matter.
She says she'll love me when I'm old,
And fat and getting fatter.

Appreciating how the moon does shine,
Sitting listening to some old John Prine.
My baby loves me,
Oh, life is fine.

The fish are biting and the beer is cold,
Night is young and the bourbon's old,
My baby loves me,
Oh, life is gold.

Now, we don't care when the cold wind blows,
We just snuggle closer,
And when I say, "I love you most,"
She says, "I love you most-er."

Wind is whistling off in the pines,
Church bell says it's half past nine,
My baby loves me,
Oh, life is fine.

Come on, woman, won't you dance with me?
Bring the baby and we'll make three,
And if you love me,
Oh, life's a dream.

So life is love, and love is life,
So the world goes 'round.
I'll be happy just as long,
As that woman lets me hang around.

Tomato's hanging there on the vine,
Moon is hanging up in the sky,
My baby loves me,
Oh, life is fine.

My baby loves me, oh, life is fine.

5 COLD RIVER

Tom Rush

*This is kind of a soundtrack for a movie that doesn't exist.
I wrote it for a duo, The Civil Wars, that our teenage
daughter liked, only to discover after it was done that they
had disbanded a couple of years before. So I'll do it for her!*

It's cold, cold water in the river,
Watchin' her roll will make you shiver,
You wouldn't last long, being swept along,
Might last a little longer if you're strong.
But you're dead on the bank, way down stream,
Dead on the bank for a coyote's meal.

Came West from the East, spring of '23,
I was green, as green could be,
My mamma wouldn't like the things I done,
The High Sheriff didn't like 'em none.
A hungry man does hungry things,
Now I wish to the Lord that I had wings.

And it's cold, cold water in the river,
Watchin' her roll will make you shiver,
You wouldn't last long, being swept along,
Might last a little longer if you're strong.
But you're dead on the bank, way down stream,
Dead on the bank for a coyote's meal.

There was a girl, there was a gun,
Sixteen days now on the run,
Sixteen nights when the sun goes down,
Gotta keep moving, stay away from the towns,

Eat when you can, what you can find,
Sleep in the sand, try to stay alive.

And it's cold, cold water in the river,
Watchin' her roll will make you shiver,
You wouldn't last long, being swept along,
Might last a little longer if you're strong.
But you're dead on the bank, way down stream,
Dead on the bank for a coyote's meal.

I was in jail, she stood my bond,
Said, "Get moving, gotta move along.
Move along, gotta hit the trail,
Got no time to weep and wail,
Weep and wail like a newborn child,
Gotta get moving, stay runnin' wild."
Wild like the coyote on that hill.
You can hear him howl, you can feel the thrill,
Feel the thrill and the coyote's gone,
He's got no place, got no home,
Home is where you spend the night,
Gotta get movin' in the morning at the first daylight.
I miss my mamma and I miss that girl.
This ain't no way to leave this world.

Here I am on the riverbank,
Dogs are comin', I can hear 'em bark,
They say that the water will wash you clean,
I'm scared of the water, of what it means,
Cold will strike you to the bone,
Waters close and take you home.

And it's cold, cold water in the river,
Watching her roll will make shiver,
You wouldn't last long being swept along,
Might last a little longer if you're strong,
But you're dead on the bank way down stream,
Dead on the bank or a coyote's meal.

6 FAR AWAY

Tom Rush

*I wrote this for my bride, Renée. We met in Jackson, Wyoming,
a long time ago, and my life has been better ever since.*

*When I first came up with the chorus, I thought it sounded
dangerously familiar. I emailed Tom Paxton an iPhone-recording,
asking if he'd already written it. He said, "No, but I wish I had."
Great guy!*

Far away, far away,
Tell my troubles I'm not home today.
Just lie here in my arms,
and we'll sing another song,
Tell the world we've gone so far away.

We met in the mountains, so many years ago,
I still can see the smile that won my heart.
Through sunny times and stormy times,
the years they've rolled and flowed,
And if I have my way we'll never part.

The blossom is such beauty,
but the blooming is too brief,

As beauty is a treasure, time's a thief.
Yesterday steals tomorrow, tomorrow steals today,
So, come my love, come, let's steal away.

Oh, far away, far away,
Tell my troubles I'm not home today.
Just lie here in my arms, we'll sing another song,
Tell the world we've gone so far away.

Sometimes love's the dagger, but love can be the balm,
Love might be the tempest, or love might be the calm.
Love can be the fever, but love can be the cure,
The world will pass us by, but love endures.

Oh, far away, far away,
Tell my troubles I'm not home today.
Just lie here in my arms, and we'll sing another song,
Tell the world we've gone so far away.

Oh, far away, now far away,
Tell my troubles I'm not home today.
Just lie here in my arms, and we'll sing another song,
Tell the world we've gone so far away.

Tell the world we've gone so far away.

7 HEAVEN KNOWS (BUT IT AIN'T TELLIN')

Tom Rush

*Getting in touch with my inner country boy here. The Nashville
players didn't need to be told twice how to do this one!*

Runnin' up Chicken Road, with Daisy the dog,
Down on the millpond, rolling a log,
Momma's yellin', "Ain't you got nothing,
Better to do?"

I love Jesus, God knows I do,
Jesus knows, I love my baby too,
Heaven only knows what I would do,
If I had to choose.

Heaven knows, but it ain't tellin',
All I know's I'm down here yellin',
"Daisy... Let's get on home."

I ain't good looking, heaven knows,
I ain't got the style, I ain't got the clothes,
What she sees in me,
I'll never know.

I like beer and she likes whiskey,
And when my baby's feelin' frisky,
How she does what she does,
Oooh, heaven knows.

Heaven knows, but it ain't tellin',
All I know's I'm down here yellin',
"Daisy... Let's get on home."

Heaven knows I ain't good lookin',
My baby says she likes my cookin',
Says it leaves her,
Feeling fine.

Sometimes she do, sometimes she don't,
Sometimes she will, sometimes she won't,
Heaven only knows what's comin',
Down the line.

Heaven knows, but it ain't tellin',
All I know's I'm down here yellin',
"DAISY... Let's get on home."

Runnin' up Chicken Road, with Daisy the dog,
Down on the millpond, rolling a log,
Momma's yellin', "Ain't you got nothing,
Better to do?"

I love Jesus, God knows I do,
But Jesus knows, I love my baby too,
Heaven only knows what I would do,
If I had to choose.

Heaven knows, but it ain't tellin',
All I know's I'm down here yellin',
"Daisy... Let's get on home."
Daisy... Let's get on home."

8 CORINA, CORINA

(Trad., arr. by Tom Rush)

Corina, Corina, where you been so long?
Corina, Corina, girl, where you been so long?
I ain't had no loving, girl, since you been gone.

I got a bird to whistle, got a bird to sing,
I got a bird to whistle, I got a bird to sing,
I ain't got Corina, I ain't got a thing.

I love Corina, tell the world I do,
I love my Corina, I'll tell the world I do.
I ain't got Corina, don't know what to do.

Corina, Corina, way across the sea,
I love my Corina, and way across the sea,
I hope my Corina, sometimes thinks of me.

Corina, Corina, where you been so long?
Corina, Corina, girl, where you been so long?
I ain't had no loving babe, girl, since you been gone.

9 IF I NEVER GET BACK TO HACKENSACK

Tom Rush

One bad gig can really sour you on a town! I've been told, since we did this recording, that Moonachie is pronounced "moon AH kee." I wanted to go back in and re-record the whole thing, but the grownups wouldn't let me. (Another fellow said, "I've never heard 'Squankum' used in a song before." So I'm apparently boldly going where no songwriter has gone before.)

Now, I just love New Jersey,
so please don't get me wrong,
There's just one tiny little itty-bitty thing,
that makes me sing this song,
The Garden State is just first rate,
from Teaneck to Fort Lee.

But if I never get back to Hackensack,
it'll be all right with me.

I got nutty friends in Nutley,
they're bonkers in Bayonne,
My sidekicks down in Squankum,
they won't let you drink alone.
They're raucous in Secaucus,
and they whip it in Whippany,
If I never get back to Hackensack,
it'll be all right with me.

I've seen how they rock in Rockaway,
seen Loveladies' beaches' bums,
The peas you pack in Peapack,
they're really next to none,
Why they let 'em name it "Squankum,"
that's sure a mystery,
And if I never get back to Hackensack,
it'll be all right with me.

They got a place called "Cheesequake,"
that really makes me smile,
And another one called "Leektown,"
I stopped there just a while,
Honey's Mill, Manuka Chunk,
Plumbsock and Moonachie,
If I never get back to Hackensack,
it'll be all right with me.

It's the light at the end of the tunnel,
the Cape May cakes are funnel.
It's just one man's opinion, boys,
but if you're asking me,
If I never get back to Hackensack,
I miss that lady like a knife in the back,
You'll need a straightjacket
to get me back,
To Hack . . . en . . . sack!

10 GOING DOWN TO NASHVILLE

Tom Rush

I've finally written an age-appropriate song! For the rest of the album I'm 23, maybe 32 at the oldest, but here, at last, I'm an old guy, looking back and regretting choices. I do find, in real life, the things I regret the most are the things I didn't do, and I guess that's what the song's about.

Going down to Nashville, boys, Nashville's calling me,
Going down to Nashville, just to see what I can see.
I'm looking for a reason, and I'm hoping for a rhyme,
I'm going down to Nashville one last time.

Last I was in Nashville, boys, was many years ago.
Prettiest girl I ever saw, she begged me not to go.
But I was young and foolish then, and blinded by my pride,
I'm going down to Nashville one last time.

I roamed this wide world over, I sailed the deepest seas.
I climbed the highest mountain, just to see what I could see,
But she was always in my heart, ever on my mind.
I'm going down to Nashville one last time.

I heard she found a fine strong man,
and children they had three,
I cannot help but wonder does she ever think of me.
I've come to say hello, and I've come to say goodbye,
I'm going down to Nashville one last time.

And it's been a long and a winding road,
and I know my end is nigh,
I'm going down to Nashville one last time.
Going down to Nashville one last time.

11 HOW CAN SHE DANCE LIKE THAT?

Tom Rush

I started really listening to music in the late '50s, the heyday of rock 'n' roll, and this is my little trip back to those roots. I could drone on about the dichotomy of spirit that is embodied in each of us, but really, I'm just envisioning a group of guys at the bar, marveling at the moves of this sweet young thing dancing to the juke box.

How can she dance like that,
and still have the heart of an angel?
How can she dance like that,
and still have the soul of a girl?
And when she turns up the heat
you can feel the sizzle,
And if she asked me, boys,
you know I'd try to give her the world.

Oh, I never knew an angel could sing the blues,
I never knew the Devil wore them high-heeled shoes.

Turn up the music, and turn down the lights,
I'm tellin' you, boys, she's gonna dance all night.
Play it loud, drive it fast,
If the brakes don't work, just hit the gas.

How can she dance like that,
and still have the heart of an angel?
How can she dance like that,
and still have the soul of a girl?
And when she turns up the heat
you can feel the sizzle,
And if she asked me, boys,
you know I'd try to give her the world.

Never knew that Gabriel could play the saxophone,
Never knew old Lucy blew the slide trombone.

Drive it fast and play it loud,
Tear it up and break it down,
Wind her up and let her go,
I'm telling you, boys, I still need to know...

How can she dance like that,
and still have the heart of an angel?
How can she dance like that,
and still have the soul of a girl?
And when she turns up the heat
you can feel, feel, feel the sizzle,
And if she asked me, boys,
you know I'd try to give her the world.

And if she asked me, boys,
you know I'd try to give her /
you know I want to give her /
babe, I want to give you the world.

12 VOICES

Tom Rush

Not sure where this one came from, but it arrived while we were staying at the lovely New Hampshire home of our friends, Bob and Laura, basking in the quiet – the birdsongs, the whispering winds, the occasional grumbling thunder. Thank you Bob, thank you Laura!

There are voices in the river, voices in the sand,
Voices in the city, and out upon the land.
There are voices in the mountains,
and way out on the sea,
Voices that are you, there are voices that are me.

And if you listen you can hear them,
You can hear them if you're still,
They have always sung for you,
And they always will.

There are voices at the ocean's edge,
voices in the foam,
Singing songs of high adventure,
singing songs of going home.
There are voices in the stillness, voices in the storm,
Voices in the dying sun,
and the day that's being born.

And if you listen you can hear them,
You can hear them if you're still,
They have always sung for you,
And they always will.

But the oldest voices of them all,
are from way beyond the stars,
From oh, so very long ago, and oh, so very far.
And they sing a song of wonder,
that's too much for the mind,
But your heart can understand,
if you are still, and you are quiet.

And if you listen you can hear them,
You can hear them if you're still,
They have always sung for you,
And they always will.

And if you listen you will realize,
there are voices everywhere,
Some will say you're crazy, I say you shouldn't care.
But know the songs that sing the truest,
are in the key of love,
To the rhythm of a loving heart,
to the wing-beat of the dove.

And if you listen you can hear them,
You can hear them if you're still,
They have always sung for you,
And they always will.