



All songs written by John Kelly and Joe Kelly (SOCAN)

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Joe Kelly: Singing, Guitar, Bass, Mandolin

Chris Bartos: Fiddle, Electric Guitar,

Mandolin, Accordion, Piano, Singing

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Chris Coole: Banjo

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Mixed and Mastered by Brian Lahaie

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For the record, here's our small measure of thanks to those devoted to us, the ones to whom we dedicate ourselves.



THE KELLY SONG COLLECTIVE
Unless And Until

Long Day (For Robert Latimer)

Tempers cooling on the window sill,
my kingdom for a hill,
there'll be no harvest here unless and until.
And the world weighs me down.

The sun is setting like an orange wrecking ball.
These shadows sure are tall.
It takes a night like this to make the big ones fall,
and they don't make a sound.

Sleep's a fantasy I'm sharing with the moon,
but I'll get out of here soon.
The sun's a sober executioner at noon.
His shadow's hiding on the ground.

There's a pain that kills my love. There's a dryness in the rain.
There's a pain that kills my love. There's a love kills my pain.

Mornings 'round here come like stealing in the night.
I have called out the light.
It always ends up in some sleepy-eyed fight.
I think I'll go another round.

Dusk is here again. Its scaffolding is grey.
The stairs moan and sway.
Starlight, footlight, headlight to put on the play.
I think I'll head on into town.

Nothing longer than a night that never ends.
The stars'll make amends.
I heard of a guy can give any light the bends.
But that's over my head now.

Don't Lay Me Down

My name it is of no consequence now
as if it had mattered anyway, anyhow.
It's written in stone six feet from my bones,
misspelled and it's fading. I should've known.
Born on June 2nd, 1953.
God saved the queen. She lived longer than me.
My crowning was tight. We fought through the night.
Her coronation was blinding and bright.

Don't lay me down. I want to go 'round.

I dreamed in the classroom. I learned in the street.
I fought in the school yard. I thought on my feet.
Factory work paid, and the wages I made
left my hands just as fast as the women I played.
I had a son born 1993.
His mother said once he is nothing like me.
I loved him 'til death. My life was bereft,
cold as my lips, and blue as my breath.

I had a local where they knew my name.
I could have been somebody. No one's to blame.
The architect died with my plans by his side.
I tried and I failed, and I failed and I tried.
I died all alone in a room that I rent.
The way I came in is the way that I went -
gasping for air. Death isn't fair.
I forced out a laugh, and I stifled a prayer.

It's seldom I feel a foot on my plot -
a scheme that I had, a path that I bought,
a route that I chose, a river that flows
into the future where nothingness grows.
The snow and the grass are obscuring my name.
Groundskeeper's jealous. He keeps me from fame.
If you're around, keep your ear to the ground.
I'll tell you the secret to life that I found.

Scar

You can't seem to keep it off your tongue,
but you use it like some medicine.
Flesh that's cut is supposed to heal,
or do you need the pain that you feel?

These aren't the words that I want to write.
It's only one round in a bigger fight.
Like all the notes from this guitar,
every kiss leaves a scar.

I could never mark your skin,
or make music on your violin.
Costume changes in the wind
like the promises that you rescind.

Finding words already penned.
Empty rooms and branches bend.
Machines persist all through the night.
A small tattoo is my last rewrite.

First Day Of The Year

Raise the lights above a whisper
enough so everyone can hear.
This ain't a cornfield in Iowa,
but it's the first day of the year.

Should old acquaintance be forgotten
like verses soaked in beer.
And melodies a-changin'
on the first day of the year.

Bruised but still breathing,
driven and seething,
on lost highways through the night in the south.
Bone man's in the window
with liquor pouring into,
and words spilling out of their mouths.

Parade is marching down your main street.
The band is warming in the rear.
If I could lay down this guitar some
to feel the first day of the year.

These ghosts that tap me on the shoulder
and whisper nothings in my ear
keep their secrets hidden from me
on the first day of the year.

Pledge pin through my skin,
revolver at my chin,
And Happy Days helps to me to survive.
There's an angel of death.
I can smell her on my breath.
I'll never make it out of this world alive.

Scatter My Ashes

Scatter my ashes in the hollows and cracks
of memory familiar and warm.
Scatter my ashes down the roads and the tracks,
so they'll settle in the place I was born.

And if the winds will to raise my remains, don't protest.
They can blow me from Long Beach to Clare.
Just hold my vessel to your chest.

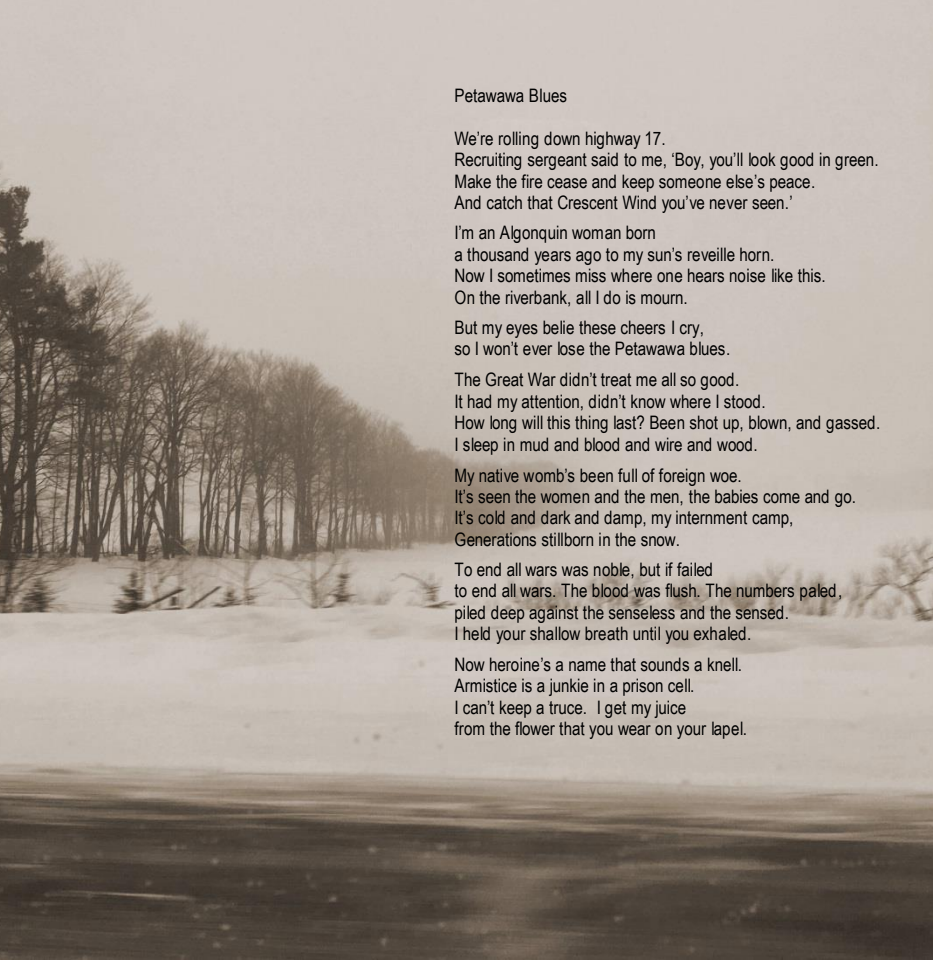
Scatter my ashes wherever you will,
by the sea or by the highlands.
Scatter my ashes in a garden still
where I laid every stone with my hands.

And if the winds will to raise my remains, don't protest.
They can blow me from my heart to yours.
Just hold my vessel to your chest.

I don't need your tributes.
I don't need your cheers.
I don't need you whoring out your soul.
I don't need your memories.
I don't need your tears.
I don't need to have the starring role .

Scatter my ashes, scatter my heart
where brown eyes and a bishop and bluebells are.
Scatter my ashes for as soon as you start,
I'll be there to mend over a scar.





Petawawa Blues

We're rolling down highway 17.
Recruiting sergeant said to me, 'Boy, you'll look good in green.
Make the fire cease and keep someone else's peace.
And catch that Crescent Wind you've never seen.'

I'm an Algonquin woman born
a thousand years ago to my sun's reveille horn.
Now I sometimes miss where one hears noise like this.
On the riverbank, all I do is mourn.

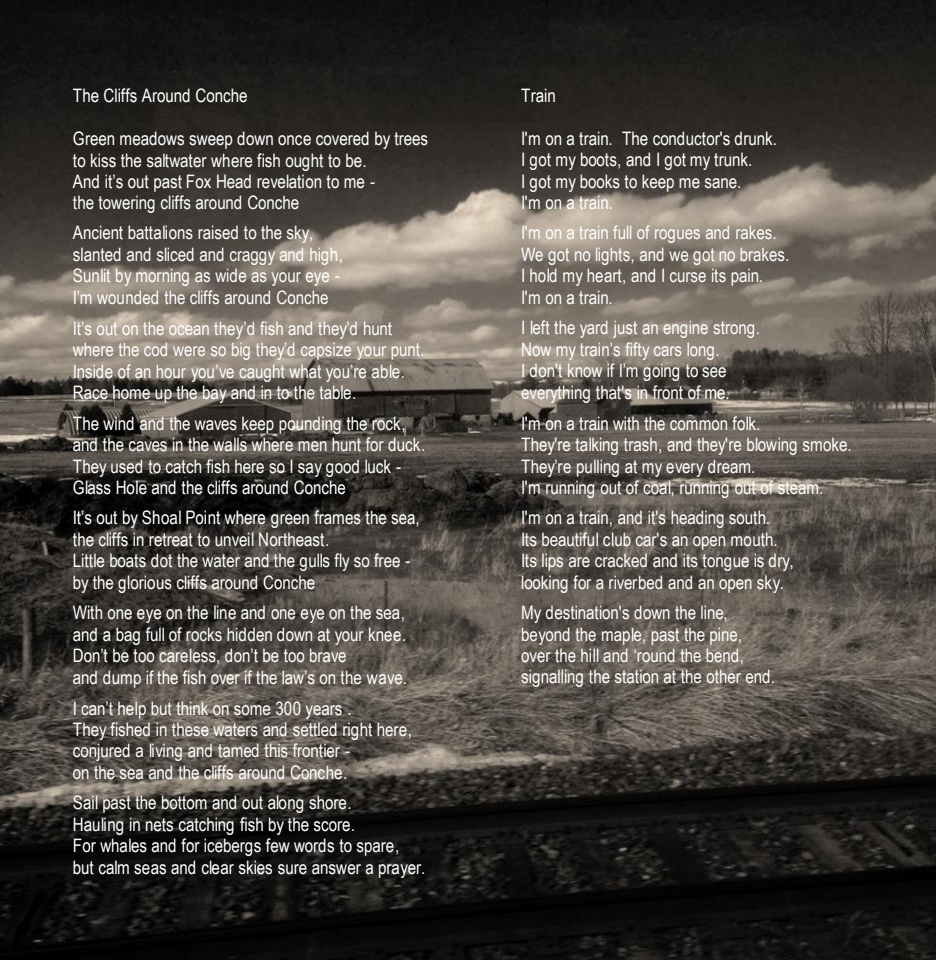
But my eyes belie these cheers I cry,
so I won't ever lose the Petawawa blues.

The Great War didn't treat me all so good.
It had my attention, didn't know where I stood.
How long will this thing last? Been shot up, blown, and gassed.
I sleep in mud and blood and wire and wood.

My native womb's been full of foreign woe.
It's seen the women and the men, the babies come and go.
It's cold and dark and damp, my internment camp,
Generations stillborn in the snow.

To end all wars was noble, but if failed
to end all wars. The blood was flush. The numbers paled,
piled deep against the senseless and the sensed.
I held your shallow breath until you exhaled.

Now heroine's a name that sounds a knell.
Armistice is a junkie in a prison cell.
I can't keep a truce. I get my juice
from the flower that you wear on your lapel.



The Cliffs Around Conche

Green meadows sweep down once covered by trees
to kiss the saltwater where fish ought to be.
And it's out past Fox Head revelation to me -
the towering cliffs around Conche

Ancient battalions raised to the sky,
slanted and sliced and craggy and high,
Sunlit by morning as wide as your eye -
I'm wounded the cliffs around Conche

It's out on the ocean they'd fish and they'd hunt
where the cod were so big they'd capsize your punt.
Inside of an hour you've caught what you're able.
Race home up the bay and in to the table.

The wind and the waves keep pounding the rock,
and the caves in the walls where men hunt for duck.
They used to catch fish here so I say good luck -
Glass Hole and the cliffs around Conche

It's out by Shoal Point where green frames the sea,
the cliffs in retreat to unveil Northeast.
Little boats dot the water and the gulls fly so free -
by the glorious cliffs around Conche

With one eye on the line and one eye on the sea,
and a bag full of rocks hidden down at your knee.
Don't be too careless, don't be too brave
and dump if the fish over if the law's on the wave.

I can't help but think on some 300 years .
They fished in these waters and settled right here,
conjured a living and tamed this frontier -
on the sea and the cliffs around Conche.

Sail past the bottom and out along shore.
Hauling in nets catching fish by the score.
For whales and for icebergs few words to spare,
but calm seas and clear skies sure answer a prayer.

Train

I'm on a train. The conductor's drunk.
I got my boots, and I got my trunk.
I got my books to keep me sane.
I'm on a train.

I'm on a train full of rogues and rakes.
We got no lights, and we got no brakes.
I hold my heart, and I curse its pain.
I'm on a train.

I left the yard just an engine strong.
Now my train's fifty cars long.
I don't know if I'm going to see
everything that's in front of me.

I'm on a train with the common folk.
They're talking trash, and they're blowing smoke.
They're pulling at my every dream.
I'm running out of coal, running out of steam.

I'm on a train, and it's heading south.
Its beautiful club car's an open mouth.
Its lips are cracked and its tongue is dry,
looking for a riverbed and an open sky.

My destination's down the line,
beyond the maple, past the pine,
over the hill and 'round the bend,
signalling the station at the other end.

Four Colours

We sat on the cape and watched the sky rape
the future with fuel and smoke.
And I saw you stare at the white in the air.
And some the punch line's consoling a joke.
There's strong metal flying like birds that are dying,
turning their eyes to the south.
We stood in the sand, and they silenced the band.
You put your hand to your mouth.

Ah Jane, how can it be?
You only used four colours on me.

That dark Tuscan ground we look for and found
in a pail that once bore water
was dug from a spot and put in a pot
that held the remains of her father.
While the earth played it cool that note from her school
sat like a butterfly's wing,
softer than oil, gave shade to the soil,
but could not bring her to sing.

The more I grow older, the less I'm a soldier -
that portrait of Frederick the Great
we saw on the wall in a Brandenburg hall
of an army that once had a state.
And that little piss thunder that blew her from under
the reign of centuries' parade
fed on the sadness and blew like the madness
in the wind of the love that she made.

There's blood in the sun, and the moon has begun
stripping the hours to pull
my hands from your hips, my mouth from your lips
and the picador's lance from the bull.
My shoulder is stained with the blood of your name
and the seal of your heart.
The seas are not dry and the rocks are still high,
but Jane, we're apart.

If I Could Only

If I could only say one word to you,
I'd search for a poet's tongue.
If I could only take you one place,
I'd take you where your heart was broken.

And I'd put time in its place.
And I'd pretend that I was young again.
And I'd wrap you in my medicine,
heal you with the word I've spoken.

And all the scars that you call beauty marks,
and all the wounds that haven't healed
will be the burden that I gladly bear.
My legs have memorized the way.

And every hidden note of bitterness,
and every battle you've concealed
will be the fuel that finds and forwards me
in this melody we play.

Carry the flag. Play the fife
in battle march step for the rest of our life.
A song in my head escapes today.
The sword we've forged is the love we've built,
our hands on the head of the heart on the hilt,
steeling us for encounters coming our way.

If I could only say one word to you,
I'd search for a poet's tongue.
If I could only take you one place,
I'd take you where your heart was broken.

And I'd put time in its place.
And I'd pretend that I was young again.
And I'd wrap you in my medicine,
heal you with the word I'd spoken.

Hey Jane

Hey Jane,
does your father know
I'm taking you somewhere?
Hey Jane,
share your lies with me,
and I won't even care.

'Cause I'm taking you to my house
to show you all those things we've been talking about.
The place I live I never go without.
And if I asked you, would you kiss me on my mouth?

'Cause I'm taking you away
from that place you said you would never stay.
We'll go 1000 miles away
to live on that beach where you used to spend the day.

Seems I've unearthed a jewellery box.
Pandora's glass shines in the sun.
And when I try to make it clean,
I scrub until my hands are numb.

'Cause I'm taking you for life.
Put on this wedding ring and you could be my wife.
A little house we'd make it nice,
you'd never have to think on that other life.

Hey Jane,
does your father know
I'm taking you somewhere?



Kate

Kate played piano from when she was nine,
and believed when they said each good boy does fine.
By the light of a sunrise or the light of the moon,
she learned all her scales and could play a few tunes.
And she was a pretty bird;
she was a pretty bird.

Under stations and staves she shouldered and bowed,
Still she walked that well-worn black and white road.
But a bird cannot stay in a cage while she sings,
though you cover her eyes and clip both her wings.
And call her a pretty bird;
and call her a pretty bird.

And the truth is sometimes to true to be good.
Scarecrows and shamen are not thicker than blood.
Kat shone projections at words in the walls,
slapped in the face and kicked in the balls.

Winter will freeze the roots in the soil,
but nightmares arrive smiling like oil.
Then Kate became Katherine, but Katherine was Kate,
travelling lines she could not separate.
Still she sang like a pretty bird;
she sang like a pretty bird



Circus

They've gone and pulled the big top down,
ripped the stakes up from the ground.
The children cry, and the moon is on
the circus that becomes this town.

Searching for a painted face.
Tonight I'll turn this funny place upside-down.
I'm combing my city for a clown.

The bearded lady cries tonight
on tender knees by bathroom light.
She's thinking about a promise made
to a mirror and a razor blade.

The fire breather's buying shots
for college girls whom he should not.
They smile and laugh at every joke,
but he knows they're just blowing smoke.

The lion tamer cracks his whip
hard against a stranger's hip.
He hides the truth he's never kissed
a lioness or a masochist.

This Is Where The Wood Meets The Womb

The wood meets the womb at this instrument.
And strings rattle bones within my ear.
Crests and swells Vivaldi and Puccini,
music which I hope he can hear.

Black trees I've always known beneath the moon.
Tom Thomson could not conjure up this dream.
A frozen field reflects the sky above it.
I had to stop queer as it may seem.

This is where the wood meets the womb.
This is where the wood meets the womb.

Arranging colours has become my station.
Fumbling for creation with my hands.
Riding on a train with farmland vistas.
Inspiration that I now can understand.

Verses pulled from letters from Kilkelly,
'1860, my loving son, John'
I'm weeping in my car below the city,
while that moon is holding fast until the dawn.

When my child is born will he remember
when wood against his mother softly pressed,
and tunes were sung 'longside his very vessel,
and melodies played into his chest?