



## Using the Album & Journal

First and foremost, songs are to be listened to. Take in a song first on its own terms—without heavy analysis or agenda. Good songs can work both above and below the surface of awareness. Allow that holistic connection to be primary. The journal, on the other hand, invites you into an opportunity to consider just a bit about the origin of each song, and offers you a set of “invitational” questions to encourage your reflection or journaling after your listening and lyric reading.

These songs were composed over the course of the last 30 years (1990 to 2020) and because of that, you may notice differences in recording approach, quality and stylistic choices. All of those are reflective of my journey as a composer, a musician, as a recording engineer and as an independent producer. They have all been “remastered” to fit together in this particular compilation. Each of these songs meant and still means something special to me. I’m reconnected in a new way with the original, generative experiences and thoughts every time I listen to them. I’m inviting you to make fresh, reflective experiences and personally meaningful connections to them. Come back to them as often as you’d like. If you’re like me, you’ll find that even something that has had a definite and specific meaning and use to you at one particular time will have grown and changed with your new experiences when you revisit it.

My hope is that this can be a helpful model for you in finding and immersing into music and song as a form of renewal and self-care. This approach is just one model for how that might be done. Find your way with other approaches to these songs, and with other songs that speak powerfully to you. Music and lyrics are two of our most ancient and beloved ways of exploring what it truly means to be human.

# Playdough Boy

He had a cassette recorder, he had songs in his head  
He placed them into the microphone.  
Playdough boy, Playdough boy, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Playdough boy

Middle school is a playdough factory  
Put them in and push the plunger down  
Playdough boy...  
He lost the top of his head  
He lost the tips of his fingers...  
Playdough boy, Playdough boy, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Playdough boy

Nobody ever asked him—he would have told them  
He liked drawing, you know he liked the summer grass  
Playdough boy...  
He loved the smell of the dirt  
He love to watch the ants carrying the dead back home  
Playdough boy, Playdough boy, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Playdough boy

He had a cassette recorder, he had songs in his head  
He placed them into the microphone.  
Playdough boy...  
Sitting in the Platte  
He felt the coolness steal the sand down stream  
Playdough boy...  
Nobody ever asked him, he would have told them  
He would have told them all.  
Playdough boy, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Playdough boy, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Playdough boy

The factory—they had holes like stars  
They had holes like snakes and flowers  
Holes like spaghetti  
The factory—they had holes like stars  
And everybody likes stars  
Everybody likes stars...  
Push the plunger down, push the plunger down...  
Push the plunger down...

10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14  
Playdough boy, Playdough boy, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 Playdough boy

He could have been anything, He could have been anything  
Playdough boy, there's all kinds of stars... There's all kinds of stars...  
Playdough boy, Playdough boy

10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14  
Playdough boy, Playdough boy



## 01 Playdough Boy

Playdough Boy explores some of the more challenging elements of my own experiences in school—especially middle school. Schooling is often a time when uniqueness feels devalued and conformity, elevated. Becoming and growing though, are linked deeply with discovering and valuing what is fundamentally ME.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Valuing My Uniqueness**

*What are my unique qualities? Am I aware of them? What experiences have helped me to become aware of the things that are special about me? Are their people who have encouraged me to value myself? How did they do that? Do I frame Learning and Growth as me becoming myself more fully... or as me becoming someone else? What are the implications?*



# The Company You Keep

I've walked this road behind me  
With no one else but you.  
We had some words--- got lost a time or two,  
But that road was wide enough for me to walk with you,  
for me to walk with you.

This dust upon my boots,  
I couldn't shake it off even if I wanted to.  
And who knows where I'll be when the day is finally through;  
There's one thing I know--- I'll be there with you.  
I'll be there with you.

Tell me a story, sing me a song,  
The sky is dark and the road is long.  
What keeps you together when the climb is steep?  
It's not your destination, it's the company you keep,  
it's the company you keep.

Have you ever watched the sun set,  
Or stood in the night like a single star?  
Have you ever walked an empty road all by yourself?  
Doesn't matter where you're going, you know how lost you are,  
you know how lost you are.

Tell me a story, sing me a song,  
The sky is dark and the road is long.  
What keeps you together when the climb is steep?  
It's not your destination, it's the company you keep...  
Tell me a story, sing me a song,  
The sky is dark and the road is long.  
What keeps you together when the climb is steep?  
It's not your destination, it's the company you keep,  
it's the company you keep, ooh, ooh,  
it's the company you keep.



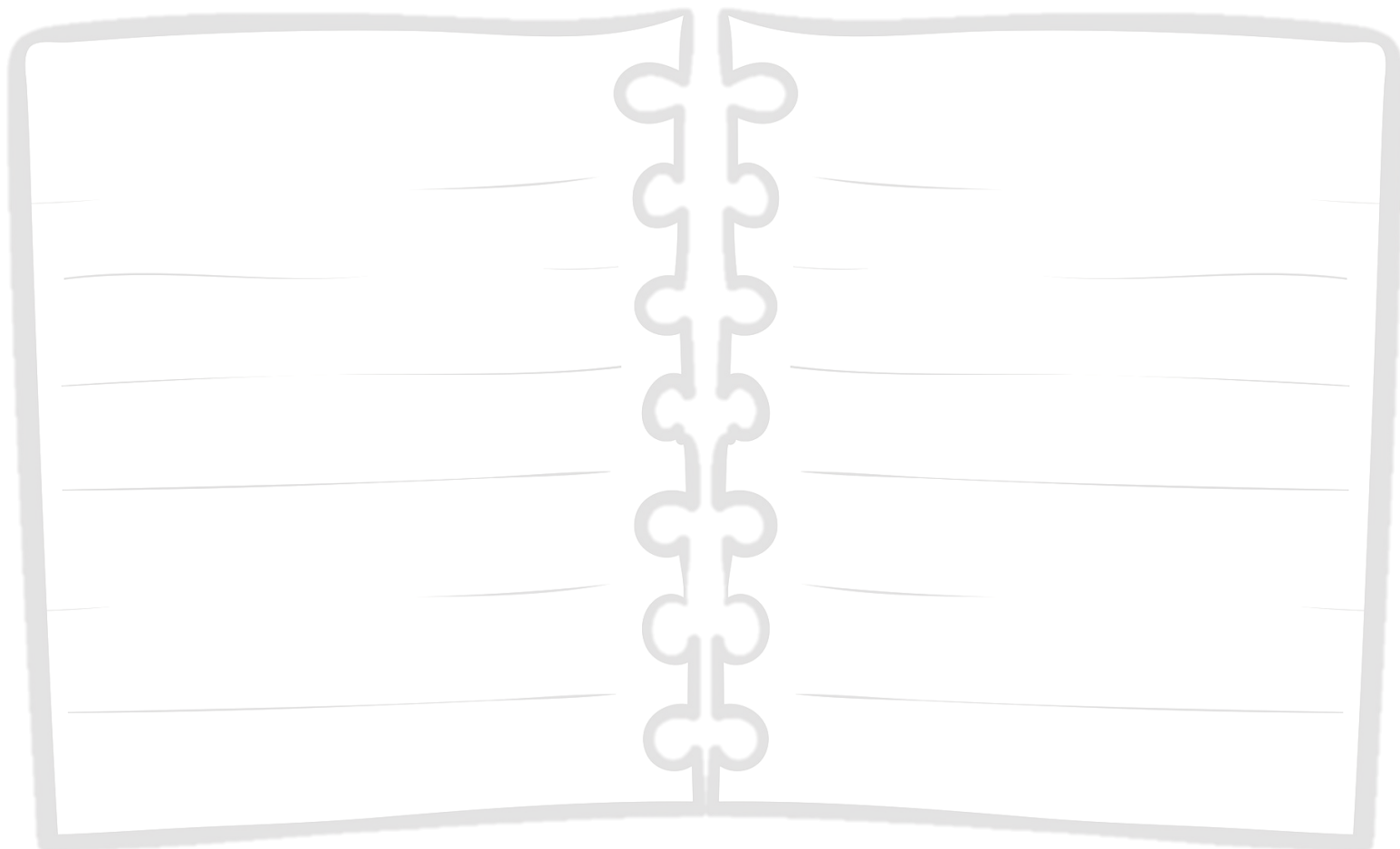
## 02 The Company You Keep

I was thinking about my wife when I wrote The Company You Keep... and then, my family, my friends, my work colleagues, the people I spend a stretch of time with because of new circumstances... I have to remind myself every once in awhile to not get so focused on where I'm going that I forget to notice who's on this road with me. My community not only shapes the travel, they often give me the stories and songs that clarify why we're all on the road in the first place.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Community**

*Who is a part of my community? Am I choosing them, are they choosing me, or did we just wind up together? How wide and accommodating or narrow and exclusive is my road? What travel "songs" or "stories" have become important to me on this journey? How have they guided me?*



# Do Not Rush the Dawn

Something's been asleep in me  
like filtered sun on the river rocks,  
like quiet breeze, almost still leaves  
or the faint hint of wild pasque.  
Oh, something's been asleep in me.  
What it is, I do not ask,  
but I let it sleep, let it dream  
oh, let it dream...  
Do not rush the dawn.

Something is at last at rest  
like tattered kites on the back-porch shelves  
like arguments worn down to tears,  
empty pulpits... broken bells...  
Something is at last at rest  
birds have fallen silent now  
beneath their wings no hunger sings...  
no hunger sings...  
Do not rush the dawn.

And I will close these eyes  
still my fear  
let my heart grow wise  
love draws near...  
midnight makes the perfect mirror  
of this muddy and troubled pond,  
so do not rush the dawn...

Something's been asleep in me  
like filtered sun on the river rocks,  
but I let it sleep, let it dream  
oh, let it dream...  
Do not rush the dawn.

And I will close these eyes  
still my fear  
let my heart grow wise  
love draws near...  
midnight makes the perfect mirror  
of this muddy and troubled pond,  
so, do not rush the dawn.  
do not rush the dawn,  
do not rush the dawn,  
do not rush the dawn.



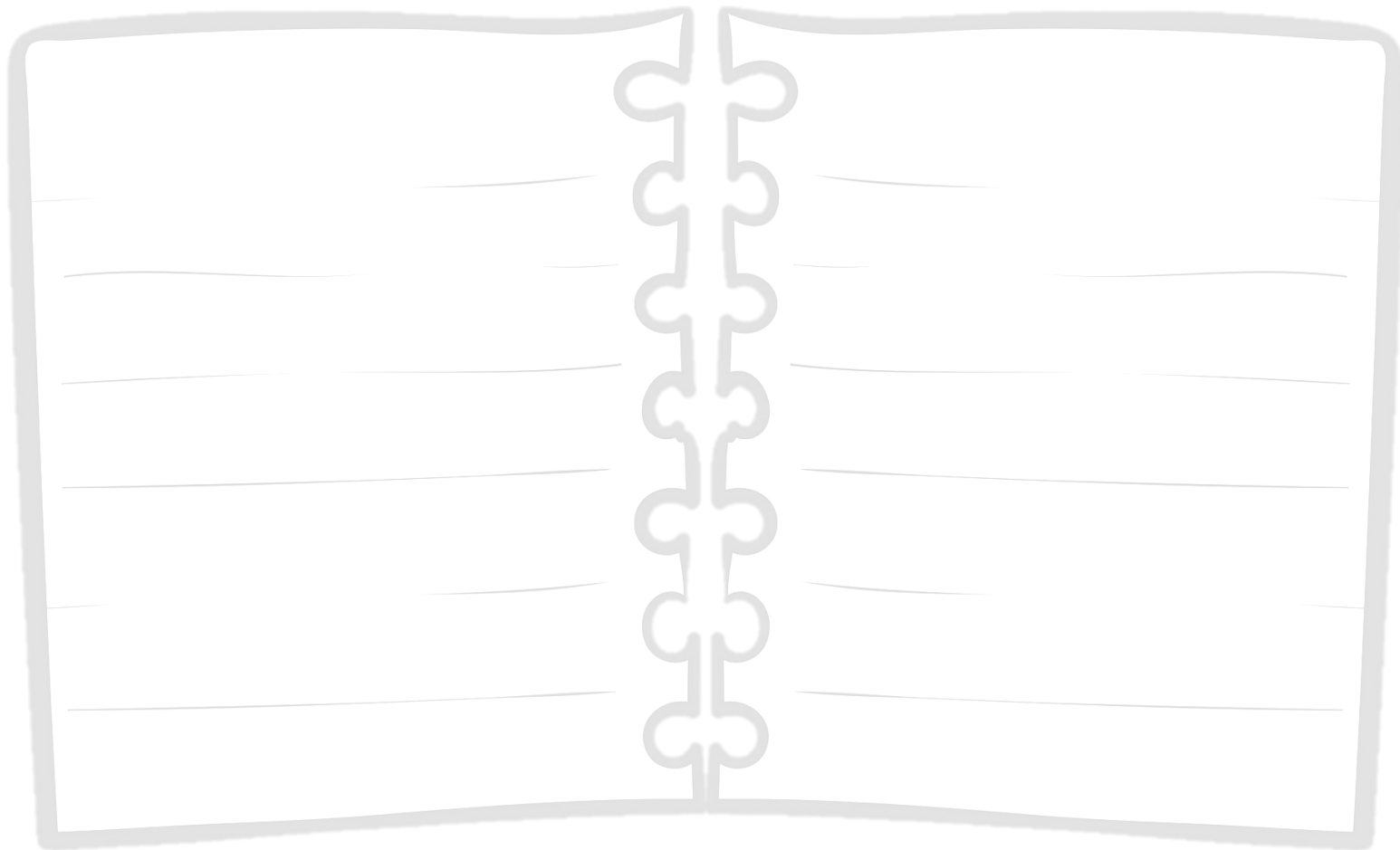
### 03 Do Not Rush the Dawn

I think my brain does its best work when I'm asleep. I don't always like my dreams, but more often than not, some problem I've hammered away at intentionally during the light of day has been solved... or at least put back into perspective by the still, mirrored pond of a restful night. Some problems are solved not by harder conscious work, but by letting them go for the night mind to tackle

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Letting Go**

*What's been asleep in me? Does it need to continue resting? What do I need to wake up to? What elements in my day are best dealt with consciously and analytically? What elements might be best left to my night mind... my unconscious... my dream-solver?*



# Don't Grow Away

I watched the sun come up this morning  
just like a million times before  
but when I watched your face awaken  
it was like something I'd never seen before

You're ever growing ever changing  
just like a river on its way  
and don't you ever stop that growing  
but don't you ever grow away.

I know the world is full of mystery  
full of pleasure, full of pain  
like the burning ache of friendship  
or the gentle kiss of rain  
but before you see the truth unmasked,  
look into my eyes  
I don't want to hold you back,  
I just can't bear to see you cry.

You're ever growing ever changing  
just like a river on its way  
and don't you ever stop that growing  
but don't you ever grow away.  
Don't you ever stop that growing  
but don't you ever grow away...  
don't you ever grow away...





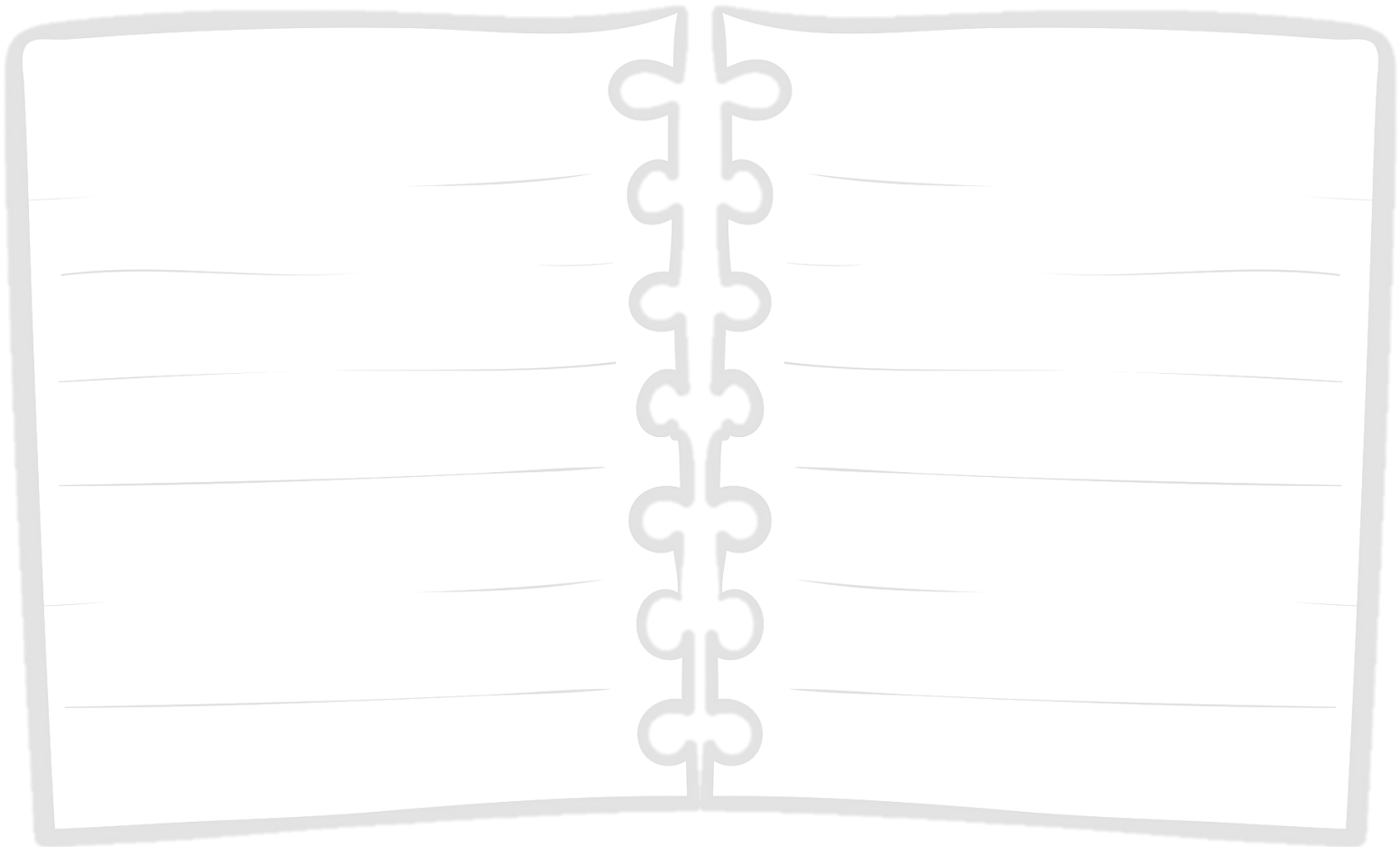
## 04 Don't Grow Away

I was a brand-new, first time parent when I wrote Don't Grow Away. When I watched my first daughter wake up, I know all sunrises, all sunsets, all *everythings*... would now be different. I also knew that I wanted two things very much: for this little one to grow and thrive... and to never create the necessity of this little one to have to, as a part of growing, separate from me.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

**Theme: Parenting / Mentoring**

*Who am I parenting or mentoring? Who is parenting or mentoring me? What is the dynamic of closeness / distance in these relationships? Is it possible to grow beyond a parent or mentor without having to grow separate from them? What might enable that?*



# Love You Perfectly

All my love  
All my doubt  
All the things I've done  
All the things I could do without...

Oh, it's you  
You are the one who sees me through  
Yeah, and it's me  
Gonna try to love you perfectly.

On the day we met  
I didn't yet know you owned my soul  
I only saw your beauty there, on the surface shining  
Waiting to make me whole.

Oh, it's you  
You are the one who sees me through  
Oh, yeah and it's me  
Gonna try to love you perfectly.

We are joined in this dance  
Every day and every hour  
We will share every delicacy  
Every sweet and every sour.

Oh, it's you  
You are the one who sees me through  
Yeah, and it's me  
Gonna try to love you perfectly.

Oh, it's you  
You are the one who sees me through  
Yeah, yeah and it's me  
Gonna try to love you perfectly.



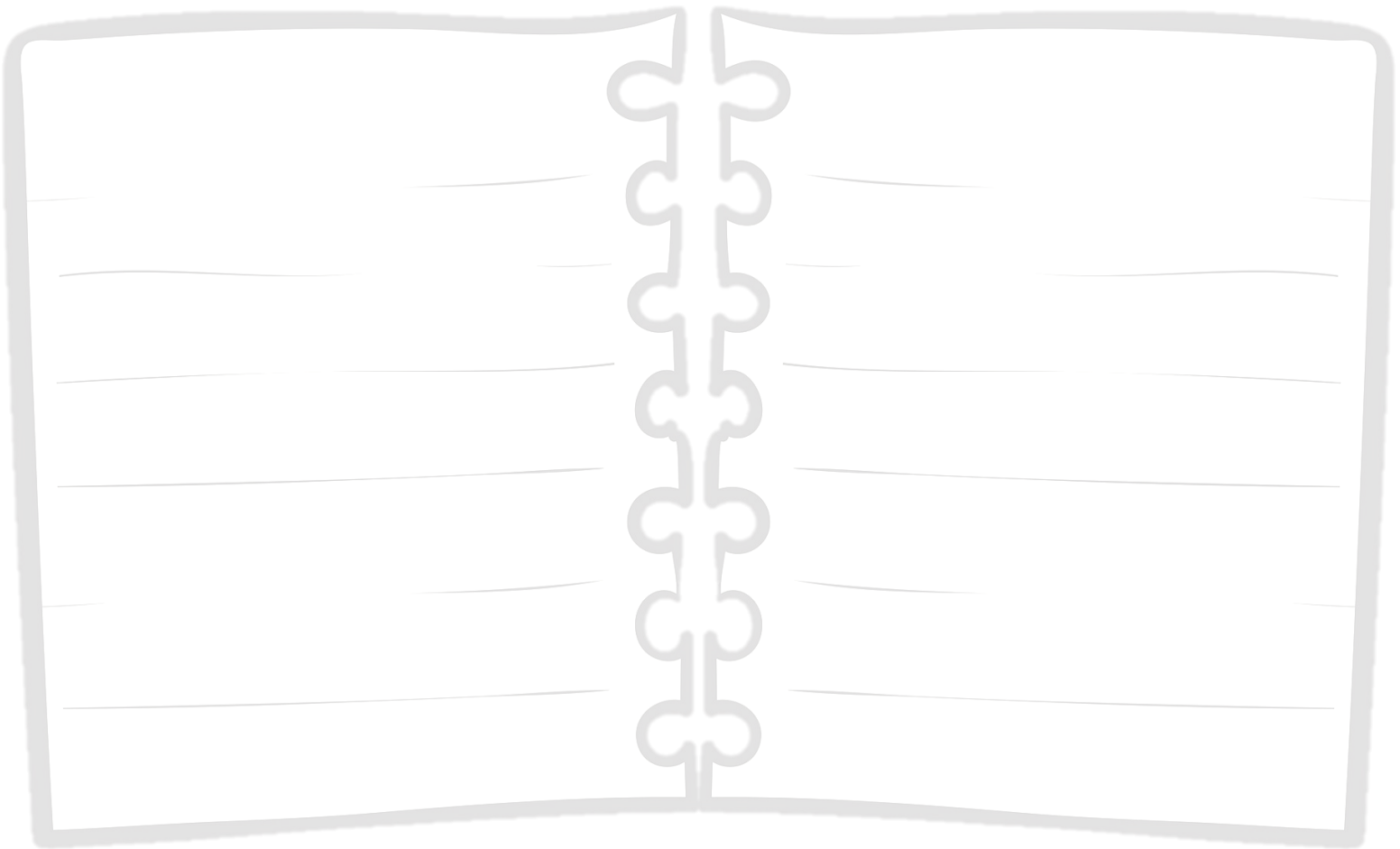
## 05 Love You Perfectly

There's really nothing "perfect" about love... except maybe that it's not holding out for perfection. I wrote Love You Perfectly first as a thank-you to my wife for seeing me through all the rough stuff; then I realized it demanded something from deep inside me. It didn't demand perfect love (I'll never make it). It demanded a never-ending stretch to love better.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

**Theme: Relationship**

*Does the person, or the people, who love me know that I'm grateful for their support? How do I let them know? What words do I use... what actions? What do I still have to work on in my relationship? Do I forgive myself for not yet doing relationships perfectly? Do I still feel the urgency to love better?*



# What I Got

I'm the poet without a pen,  
and the priest who can't hear God;  
I'm the dancer with two clubfeet,  
and the farmer who can't break the sod,  
yeah, I'm the farmer who can't break the sod.

Mine's the wagon with square wheels,  
and the house without a door;  
my only hat doesn't fit my head,  
and my feet won't touch the floor,  
no, my feet never touch the floor.  
I got the key that fits no lock,  
and the kite that has no tail;  
I got sand when I needed a rock,  
and a plan that's already failed.  
If I lost all my teeth but two,  
they'd be both on the bottom side;  
If I played hide-n-seek with a blind man,  
I'd still have no place to hide,  
because, some folks get the short end;  
I've never even seen the stick.  
Well, you might feel some sympathy  
if you saw the wounds I sometimes lick.

My true love said goodbye to me  
on the day before we met;  
the life I dreamed was stillborn,  
but I ain't through with dreaming yet.  
See, I set out to touch the moon,  
but I couldn't get past the sea;  
then the moon, she danced across the waves—  
that night she came to me,  
I sang, and the moon, she danced with me.

It ain't about how you bargain,  
it's what you give when the rest will not.  
It's an empty hand and an open heart  
when the song is all you've got,  
yeah, this song is what I've got,  
oh, my song is what I've got.  
'Cause the poem don't need the pen,  
and the priest, he can't speak for God.  
You gotta dance as graceful as you can  
'till they lay you down in the sod—  
no, I'm not afraid 'cause I know, some day,  
gonna lay me down,  
gonna lay me down to rest in the sod.



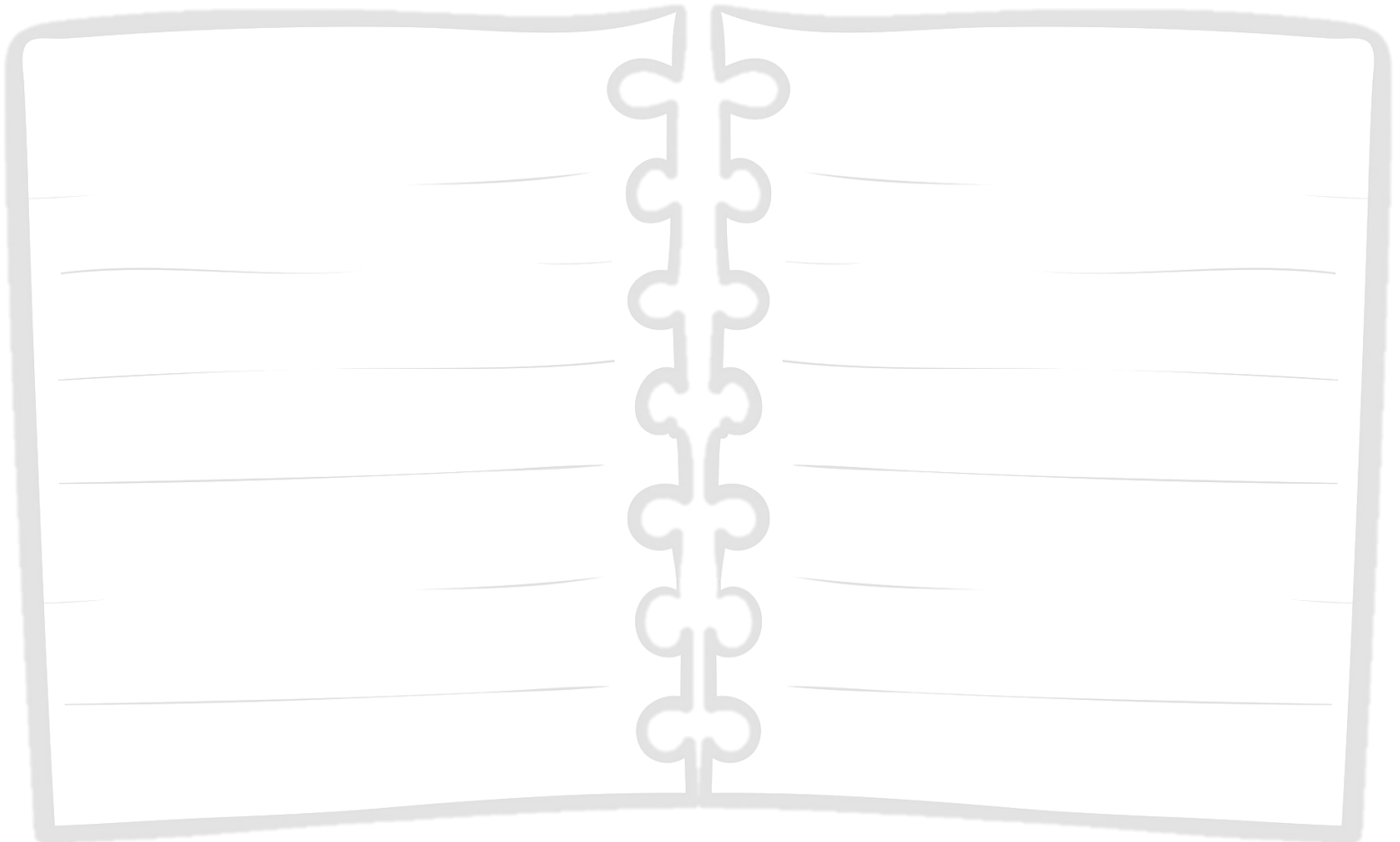
## 06 What I Got

I wrote What I Got at a time when a series of failures had left me licking my wounds. What happens when you work and work for a big dream... only to come up against an impassible barrier? Sometimes, grace happens. Sometimes, when you set out to touch the moon and can't realistically make it... then moon closes the gap... she treads across the water to dance with you.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Grace**

*Do I attribute my successes to my own hard work? Do I attribute my failures to my own mistakes or weaknesses? Is there room for something beyond me to intervene, to close the gap? Is there anything "beyond me" benevolent enough to do that? How expectant am I of the impossible somehow becoming possible?*



# One Step

I saw a man in a mirror  
I saw a man, but he didn't see me  
I saw a man in a mirror  
Just trying to get himself free, yeah  
Just trying to get himself free.

I heard a voice in the silence,  
Breath goes in and breath goes out,  
I heard a voice in the silence  
Working its way to a shout,  
Yeah working its way to a shout.

I felt a heart start beating  
Ringing in the ears, a thump in the chest  
I felt a heart start beating,  
When the stranger became my guest,  
Oh, the stranger became my guest.

I know the earth's still moving  
Never was still, it never did stop.  
I know the earth's still moving,  
Spinning through space like a top,  
Yeah spinning through space like a top.

See you can't do the dance without stillness  
You can't find love without risking loss  
You can't hear the song without silence...

One step and you're across,  
Yeah one step and we're all across!



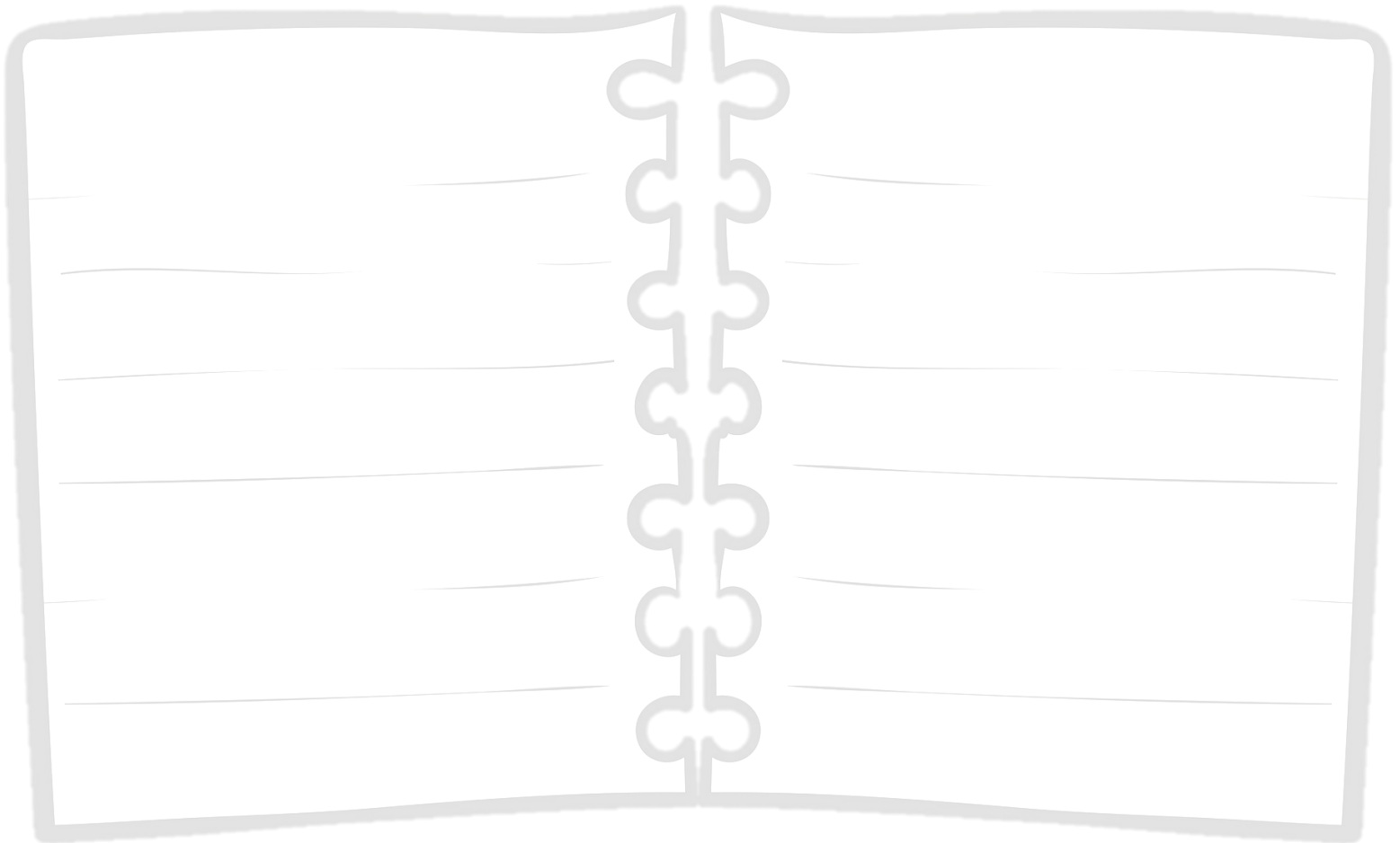
## 07 One Step

I wrote One Step the morning after a national election didn't go the way I wanted it to. It was also the day that millions of women and others rallied around the globe to express support for each other, for humanity and for a better world. I happened to be at a retreat with teachers, a bit cut off from both the sorrow and the celebration... but this song was my participation in both!

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

**Theme: Initiative**

*What situations or crises tend to steal my initiative and make me feel paralyzed or hopeless? How do I find my first step out of that? What role does a broader community play in my taking initiative for important things? How do they encourage me... and how do I encourage them?*



# Place the Flowers

Place the flowers in water  
throw some seed out for the birds  
stop to hear the children's laughter  
work a kind thought into words  
into words

We are only here a moment  
but a moment's all you need

Watch the sun climb up the mountain  
see the mist rise from the lake  
catch something flash beneath the surface  
know something hidden can awake  
can awake

We are only here a moment  
but a moment's all you need

Go walking in the moonlight  
ancient wisdom in her glow  
tiny sparks that leave the campfire  
burn so bright before they go  
but they must go

We are only here a moment  
but a moment's all you need

You can never reap the harvest  
till you pause to plant the seed





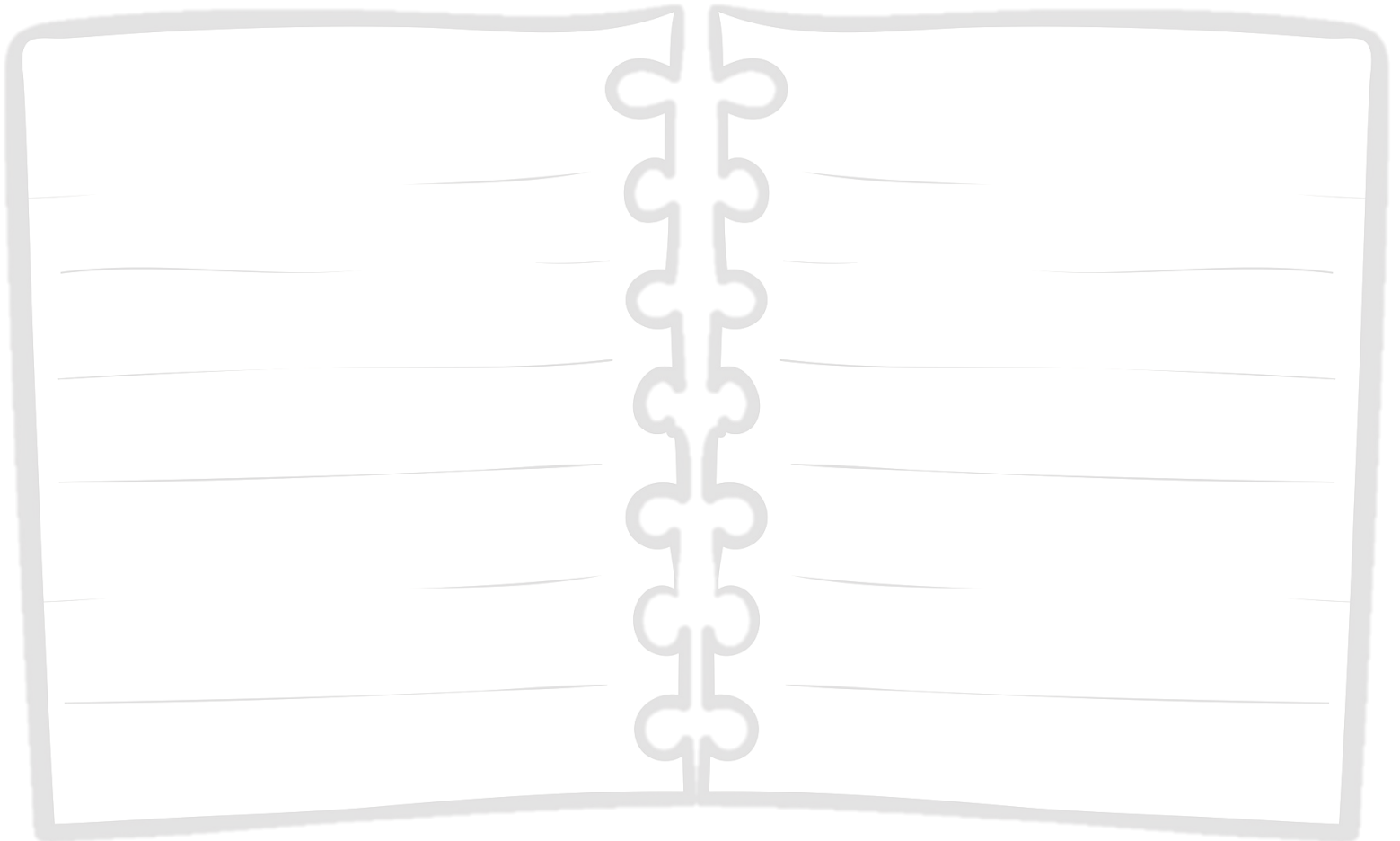
## 08 Place the Flowers in Water

Sometimes I suddenly become aware of something that should have been clear and obvious for a long time. Sometimes that thing is beautiful. I wrote Place the Flowers in Water just after having watched my wife do just that... and realizing that she just gave a few days more of life to these short-lived, severed, destined-for-the-trashcan... but nevertheless stunningly beautiful, complex ambassadors of LIFE. How small a thing is too small to be song-worthy?

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Awareness**

*What do I notice that often goes unnoticed? Is this awareness mine alone, or do I share it? How might it be shared, valued, nurtured? How might a small thing like this become life-changing or life-affirming?*



# Home

We moved to town on a Monday  
The house was empty and so were we;  
We ordered pizza from a man on the phone.  
This town ain't bad, but it ain't home.

I took my daughter to a brand new school,  
New faces, new rules; on the playground,  
She was all alone.  
This town ain't bad, but it sure ain't home.

And the wind will blow  
Catch the dreams we sow  
Steal us far away...  
Far away from home.

Don't know the names of the streets I drive  
Can't find my house, don't know why  
Some people want to be a rollin' stone.  
No, this town ain't so bad, but it sure ain't home.

We wake up between strange walls,  
We get up and we pace the halls,  
Try to remember why we ever set out to roam,  
Pray the good Lord's gonna bring us home...  
We pray the good Lord's gonna bring us on back home.

And the wind will blow  
Catch the dreams we sow  
Steal us far away...  
Steal us on back home.

And the wind will blow  
And catch the dreams we sow  
Steal us far away  
Go on...  
Steal us on back home.



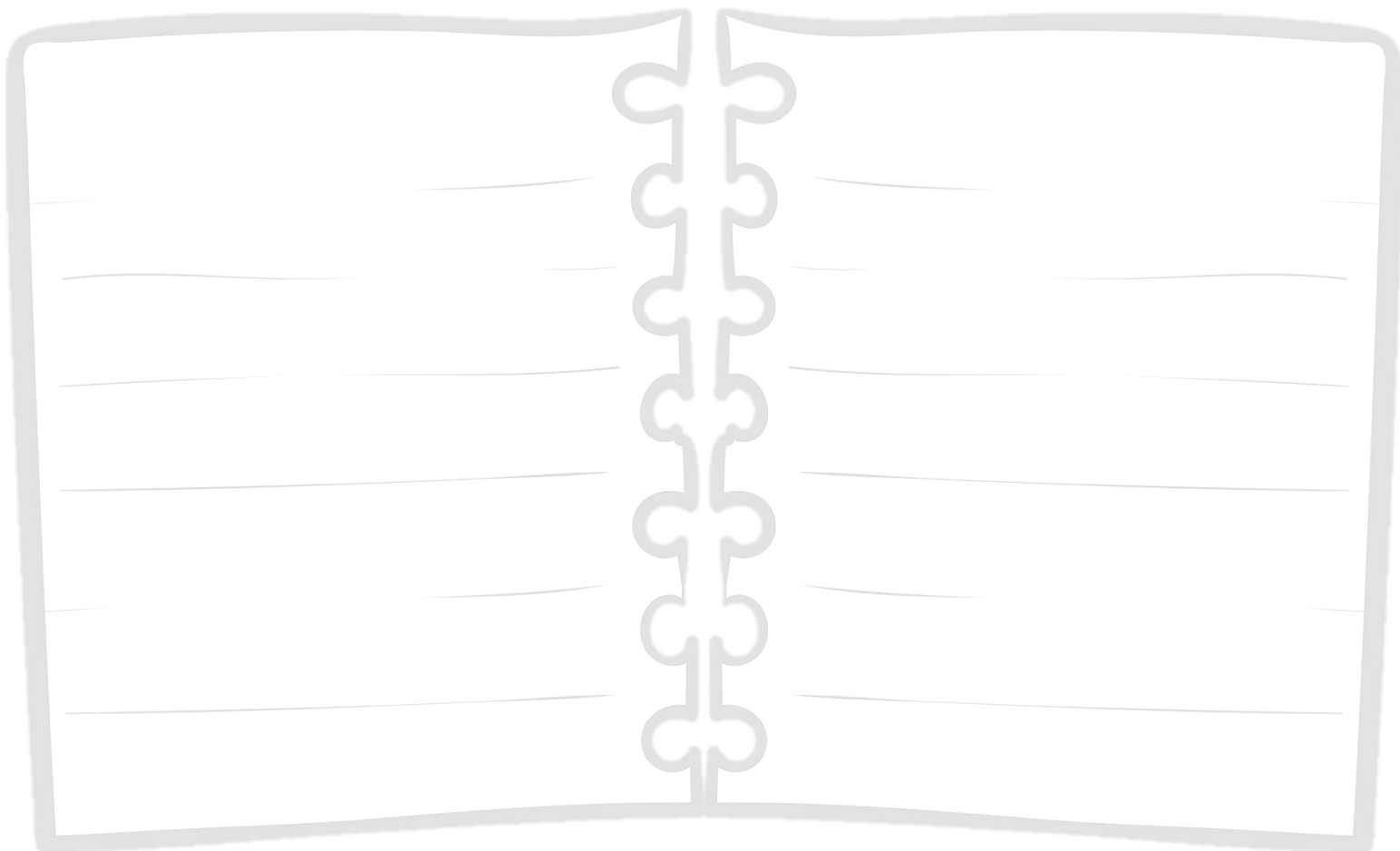
## 09 Home

After a series of moves that took me and my family across many states, several times, and left us feeling dislocated and disoriented... I wrote Home. Sometimes I have wondered why any old place can't just feel like home. Maybe any old place can... but that hasn't been my experience. Maybe it's me, but I do tend to know I'm home when I am... and know when I'm not.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Home**

*What is home to me? What makes a place feel like home? Do I have more than one home? How does that happen? What am I willing to sacrifice in order to be somewhere that feels like home? What things are so important to me that I'll sacrifice being "home" to possess them?*



## Love Now

When I was a child,  
I would look into the sky—  
See every bird, see every cloud  
Know the native state of me was flight...  
At any time, I just might fly...

Now that I am an older man,  
I'm doing well just to see  
And gravity seems the master here—  
Just might hit the ground if they set me free...  
I'm sure to fall if they set me free...

But here she comes again...  
The sun she climbs these canyon walls  
She lights mid-winter like a distant star—  
Bright but cold as hell,  
You gotta dance before you fall  
Love now or not at all.

Time's a drip that leaves a stain  
Every storm's a brownish smudge  
This house is shake and stone and timbers turning soft  
Every corner stores a grudge  
I try to lift... they just won't budge.

But here she comes again...  
The sun she climbs these canyon walls  
Bright but cold as hell,  
You gotta dance before you fall  
Love now or not at all.

So here I go again...  
I try to scale these broken walls  
Heart in hand like a beacon— bright...  
Bright but cold as hell,  
To learn to fly, you learn to fall...  
Love now or not at all...

Love now and that is all.



## 10 Love Now

I started writing Love Now, I think, as a song about getting older and losing my belief that I could do anything... but I ended up writing about holding grudges. Maybe I can do anything... maybe I can fly... if I can drop the silly grudges that weigh me down. Am I waiting for them to “deserve” it or “earn” it? Well, then I’ll be weighed down by this crap forever.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

**Theme: Forgiveness**

*What hurts am I holding? What grudges are still piling up in the corners of my house? How can I deal with the real pain of these injuries but not let that pain define me or limit me? Do I have friends or others who know my pain, know my grudges? Can we help each other not wait to love... but rather, love now? What would that look like?*



# Silent Time

The silent time is always filled with sun  
In summertime or winter, even at night with the curtains drawn  
Curtains drawn... curtains drawn

I have dreamed such dreams of massive cities... complicated landscapes  
Where friends and enemies and strangers live and die, are born again  
In silence... ooh the silent time. In silence... ooh the silent time.

This song is mostly made of silence between the notes,  
This song is mostly made of space between the words,  
This song is mostly made of breath between the lips,  
This song is mostly made of rests beneath the beats.  
Oh silence... ooh the silent time. Silence... ooh the silent time.

The people, the places... the props the faces...  
Elements and atoms... knots and fathoms...  
Substance and perception... fabric and confection...  
This is that, and that is so important... ooh, oh

Silence... ooh the silent time. Silence... ooh the silent time.  
Silence... ooh the silent time. Silence... ooh the silent time.

The silent time is filled with sun  
In summertime or winter, even night with the curtains drawn  
Ooh the silent time. Silence... ooh the silent time.  
Silence... ooh the silent time. Silence... ooh the silent time.  
Silence...



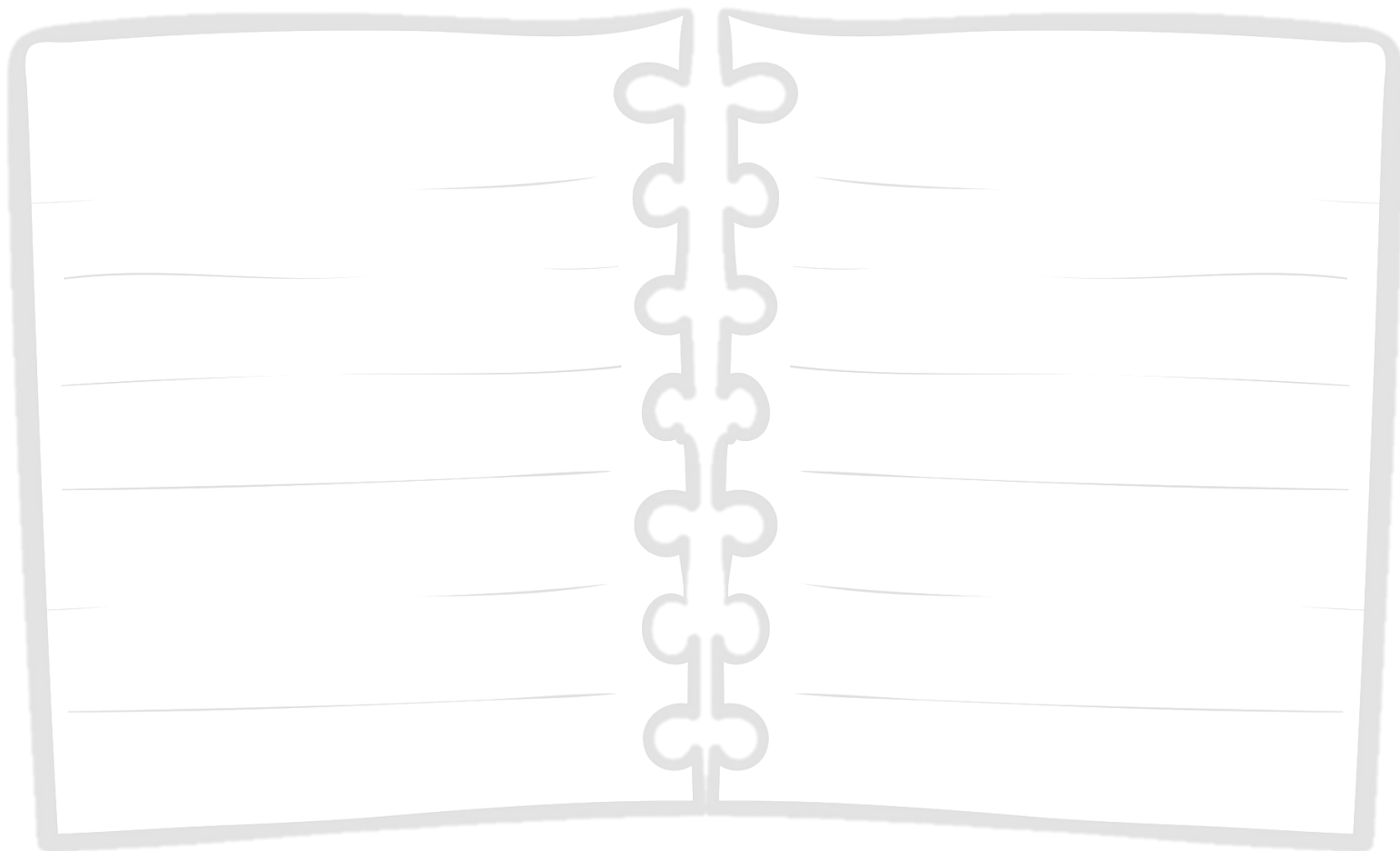
## 11 Silent Time

In retreats that I sometimes lead, we have an afternoon of “silence and solitude”. That’s really difficult for some folks because most of us are very out of practice. Noise and distraction define our hours, minutes and days. I often crave silence. As an introvert, I’ve had many positive experiences that came about because of silence. Silent Time was composed during one of those afternoons... exploring the rich silence that all of our doings swim in.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Abundant Silence**

*Does silence feel empty to me? What positive experiences have I had with silence? What are some of the less positive experiences with silence that I’ve had? What is my relationship with silence or solitude?*



# Down

Autumn's come around again  
and the world is turning brown, brown  
something's fallen from the highest limb  
all her friends, they say, "She don't come around  
anymore

There's a sidewalk running past her gate  
and a welcome sign on her front door  
but they're just throwbacks to another time, another place  
and no one knows her—no, I don't know her  
anymore

Let me know if you hear me  
give me some kind of sign  
cause I've got to know if you're still breathing—  
you've been down such a long, long time

And the world is like an ocean  
you never know how deep till it's too late  
the more you struggle, the more you struggle  
and every rise makes you hesitate

But Autumn's come around again  
all the leaves are falling down again  
oh, don't you believe in the empty sound of wind  
no, you know you'll come around again  
I know you'll come around, around again

Just let me know if you hear me  
give me some kind of sign  
cause I've got to know if you're still breathing—  
you've been down such a long, long time  
give me a sign  
cause I've got to know if you're still breathing—  
you've been down such a long, long time





## 12 Down

I've grappled with plenty of depression—both as the depressed one and as the one trying to help. Both are fraught with pitfalls. I wrote Down at a time when my wife was struggling with some postpartum depression and a major move on top of that. One thing I was grasping for was the knowledge that seasons pass. This one may be dark... but spring follows winter.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Depression**

*What experiences with depression have I had? What role have I played in relationships that were impacted by depression? What has helped me or others in my experience to make it through?*



# Refuge

You're not on your momma's hip anymore.  
You left your Daddy's shoulders—  
Now you're standing on the floor  
Always ready to open up  
Another door  
Sometimes all this world wants to teach you  
Is how to keep score.

There are hills you climb sometimes  
Just because they're there...  
There are things worth learning even if the grade isn't there.  
Oh, you've got to take them when they come—  
They may not come again  
Just like the desert flower  
Always be ready for the rain.

Everybody's got something they want from you;  
You're gonna need a refuge—a place to run to.

You're gonna need some friends  
Along the way,  
The kind that will stand with you  
Not get in your way.  
And some are gonna last,  
And some for just awhile...  
It's more about the faces  
Than the miles.

The best advice  
Will always take you by surprise.  
It's okay to be scared  
Just don't let it close your eyes;  
There's so much,  
So much you need to see.  
And don't forget...  
You can count on me.

Everybody's got something they want from you;  
You're gonna need a refuge—a place to run to.  
Some days you're gonna wonder what this world's come to;  
I want to be your refuge—the one you run to.  
Please let me be your refuge—the one you run to.



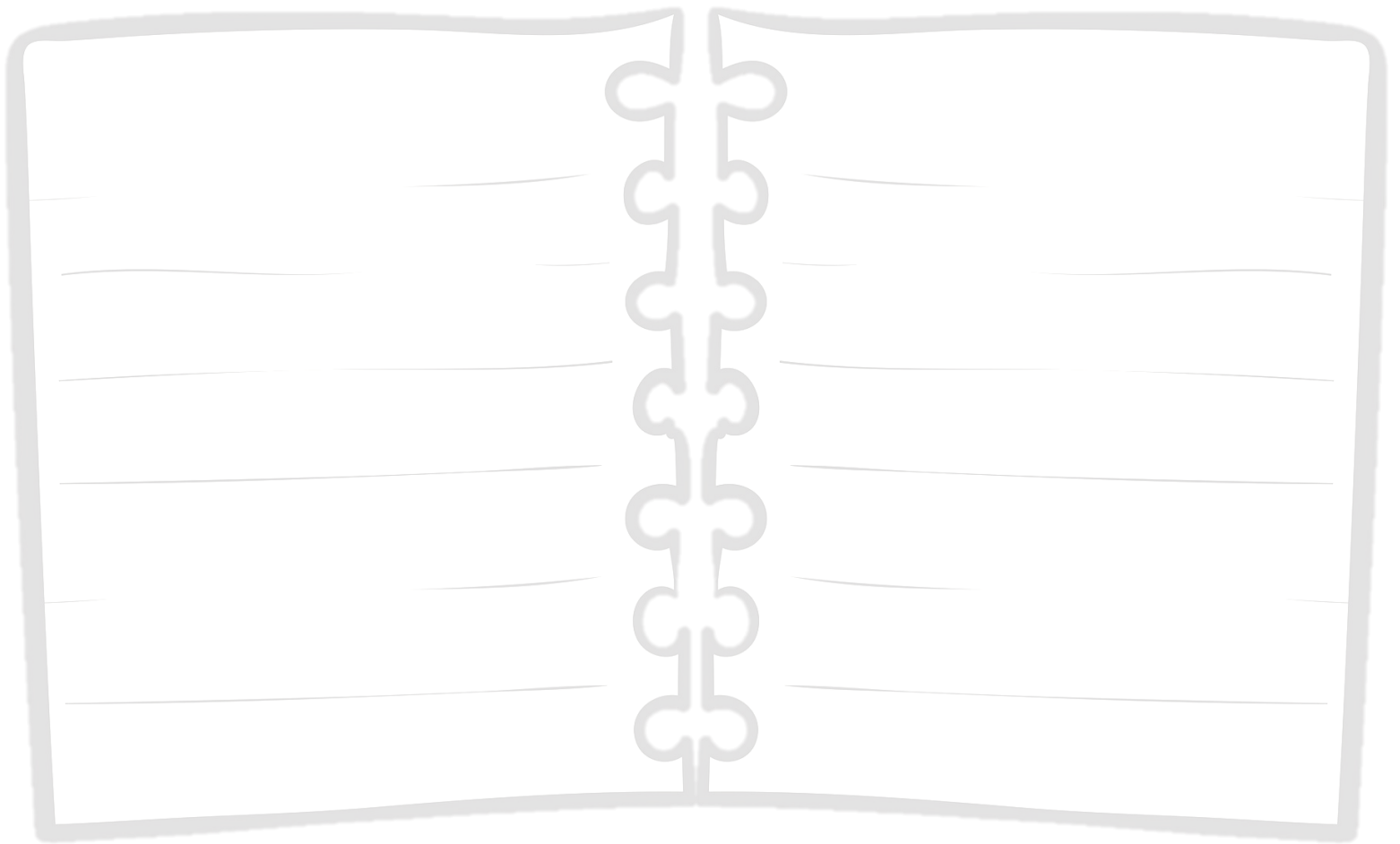
## 13 Refuge

I'm not a big fan of advice-giving, but this song's about as far into that as I've ever gone. I wrote Refuge for my daughters, and it does give some advice. But more importantly, I'd hoped, it would let them know that they can always come to me for help, shelter or refuge. I've had parents and others who have been that for me, and we all need to know we do have a place we can run to if needed.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Offering Shelter**

*Where have I found shelter? Are there others who I offer shelter to? What might it look like to "stand with" someone as a friend, without getting in their way? Have I experienced that?*



# Deepen the Well

In the fall, my ego needed sleep;  
He sat up nights composing poems I could not keep.  
My strong root is when the quiet reveals my voice;  
My strong root is when stillness makes my choice;  
My strong root is at the bottom of this hand-dug well;  
How far the bucket has to drop? I cannot tell.  
I cannot tell.

The winter came and the snow began to fall;  
I built no shelter, had no covering at all.  
I am unveiling something ancient inside;  
I am uncovering all I've tried to hide;  
I give up speaking for listening;  
The wisdom's in the air—it's glistening.  
It's glistening.

In the spring, the horses roll and play;  
They sun their bellies, they upend an April day.  
I'll place the earth beneath my head;  
Of mud and early grass I'll make my bed;  
I'll show my teeth and snort at the sky;  
Can't you see the idea of summer in these wild mustang eyes?  
Mustang eyes...

And in the summer all the world's in bloom;  
Sun brings down the snowmelt, waters this colorful loom;  
My strong root is deep in this soil;  
These Camas lilies don't labor, they don't toil;  
They don't toil... they don't toil...  
There's no fence could mark the edge of what it means to live;  
You'll never dig so deep you'll hit the end of what you have to give;

The deeper the well, the more life there is to give.  
The deeper the well, the more life there is to give.  
The deeper the well, the more life there is to give.  
The deeper the well, the more life there is to give.



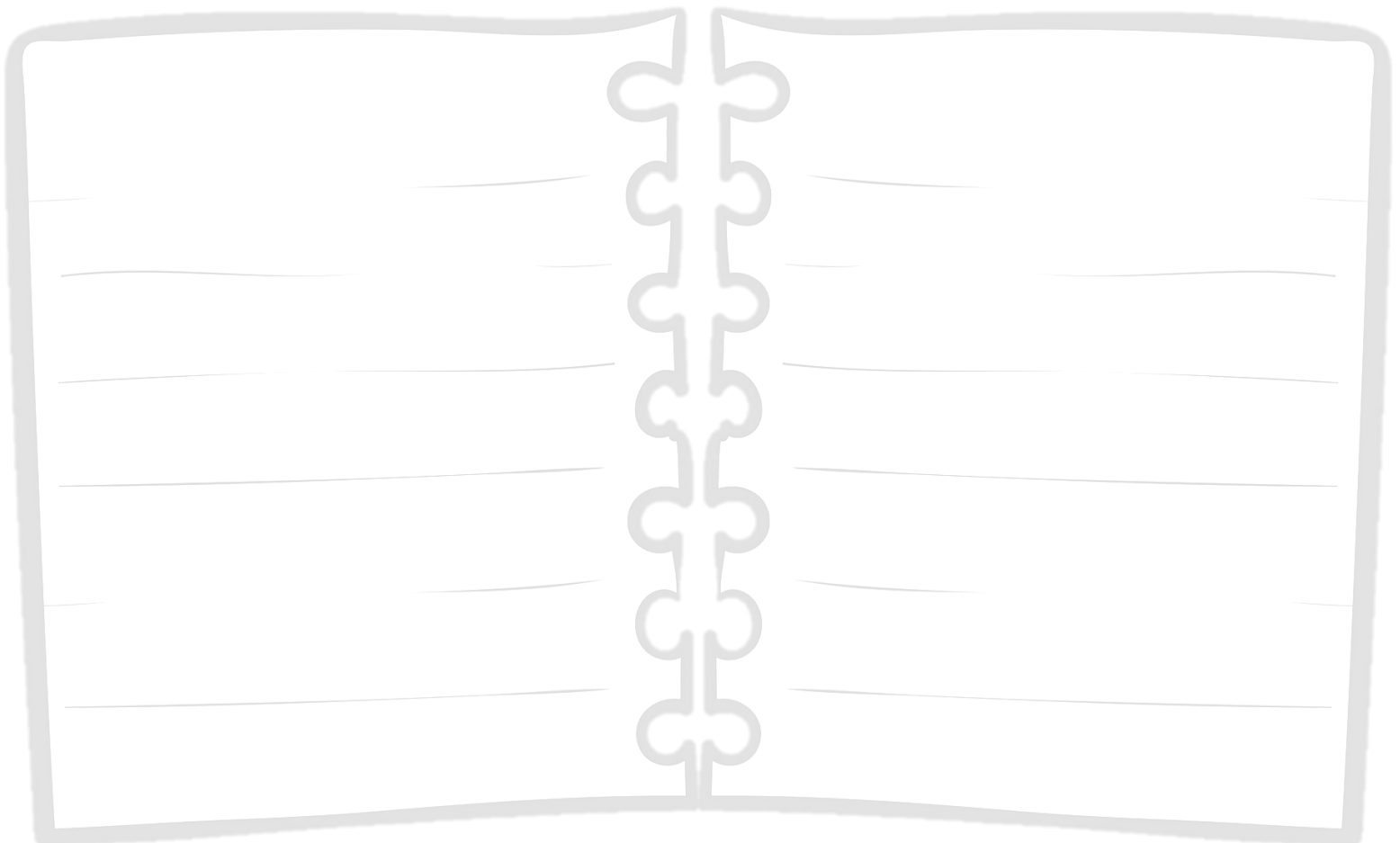
## 14 Deepen the Well

I facilitate a seasonal (fall, winter, spring, summer) retreat series. We do a good deal of journaling and making connections with lessons each season has to teach us. I wrote Deepen the Well from notes I'd taken throughout each season during the series one year. Looking back, I can see how important it is to know that life is both dynamic and constant—changing and cyclical. Like the best songs... “repeat and vary... repeat and vary...”

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Seasons of Life**

*What season speaks most powerfully to me? Do I have a favorite? What lessons have I learned from each season? Do I tend to lose myself within some seasons and forget that change is coming? Do I tend to long for a coming season and miss the one I'm actually in?*



# Cracks

What is broken in me  
is open in me...  
Where you see me split apart,  
you catch a glimpse of my true heart...  
my true heart.

It's song that opens the cracks.  
Each beat divides me front from back, yeah.  
I'm opened up by melody;  
I'm laid bare with harmony...  
with harmony...

Unmusical days limp by.  
Instead of dancing they  
heave and they sigh.  
To stay intact  
is not to act on beauty...  
beauty...

I want to live disintegrated,  
all full of holes, obliterated  
into shards, released at last  
into beauty like colored glass...  
colored glass...

What's broken in me  
that's what's open in me...  
Where you see me split apart,  
you catch a glimpse of my true heart...  
my true heart...



## 15 Cracks

Cracks was written in homage to Leonard Cohen's famous lines from Anthem, "There's a crack in everything, That's how the light gets in." Cohen claimed brokenness as holy. I think a willingness to BE broken by beauty is a willingness to be open to the full experience life has to offer.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Vulnerability**

*In what situations or with what people and I willing to be vulnerable? What causes me to be less concerned with being hurt somehow that with not being open and real? How do my past hurts push me to be more self-protective? How do they help me open up?*



# Lovely Now

I worked as hard as anyone could do  
I worked for them, I even worked for you,  
Am I lovely now, tell me, am I lovely now?  
I felt as useful as any tool,  
Just fold me up next to the carpenter's rule  
Am I lovely now, tell me, am I lovely now?

Whose field is this?  
Whose sunshine and whose rain?  
Whose plot is this?  
Whose plow and whose pain?  
Oh, would you cut me now?  
Is that the marketable plan?  
Even the mower  
Sometimes lets the lily stand.

Birds conspire with the summer clouds  
No bottom line, no cheering crowds...  
Am I lovely now, tell me, am I lovely now?  
(whistling)  
Am I lovely now, tell me, am I lovely now?

Whose field is this?  
Whose sunshine and whose rain?  
Whose plot is this?  
Whose plow and whose pain?  
Oh, would you cut me now?  
Is that the marketable plan?  
Even the mower  
Sometimes lets the lily stand.

Some need to bloom, others need to sing  
But the sweetest work is in the Being  
In the Being, in the Being,  
Being Now...

Whose field is this?  
Whose sunshine and whose rain?  
Whose plot is this?  
Whose plow and whose pain?  
Oh, would you cut me now?  
Is that the marketable plan?  
'Cause even the mower  
Sometimes lets the lily stand.





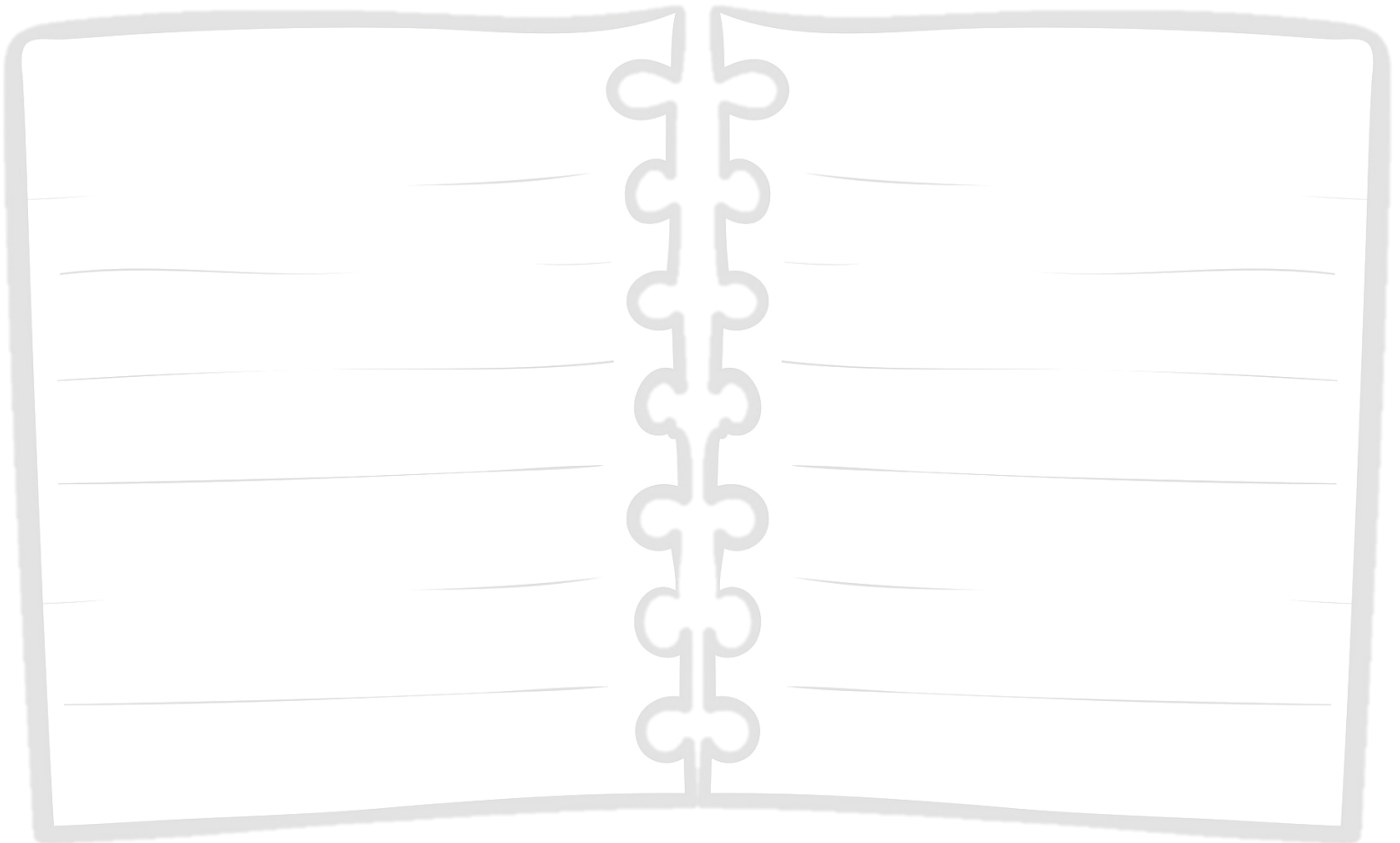
## 16 Lovely Now

Lovely Now was inspired by the combination of two poems: *Camas Lilies* by Lynn Ungar, and *Tuft of Flowers* by Robert Frost. Both are worth your further reading. Lovely Now, though, is mostly about a question: Have I done enough... enough to earn your appreciation? I usually feel that way when I've lost my internal sense of who I am... where my true value lies.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Self Value**

*Where do my deepest insecurities come from? Are they from experience? Failure? Worry? Who are the people who remind me of my value? How can I be reminded without developing a craving TO BE reminded of my loveliness? How do I strike a balance between the warmth of the "applause" and simply knowing I'm good?*



# Gifted

The puppy, the raindrop,  
the blade of grass  
a playmate, an ocean,  
a bridge to the past...  
the eyes of the child  
are filled with ways  
to spin gold of gum wrappers,  
to make centuries of days...  
I have been gifted from birth  
to live on this planet called Earth

The shyness, the smile,  
the girl with blonde hair  
across the room,  
the curious stare  
your hand in mine,  
the warmth of love's touch  
one being of two,  
so little, so much...  
I have been gifted by you  
and all things old are made new,  
made new...

Grandfather, your daughter,  
my mother, my source  
your eyes dim with seeing,  
still steer the good course  
this long line of vessels  
travels dawn to dusk  
'til we're one with the ocean,  
all driftwood and rust...  
We have been gifted with sails  
with stars and harbors and gales  
an Armada of family and friends—  
the gift of horizons that never end  
Never end... Never end...

The gift of horizons that never end.



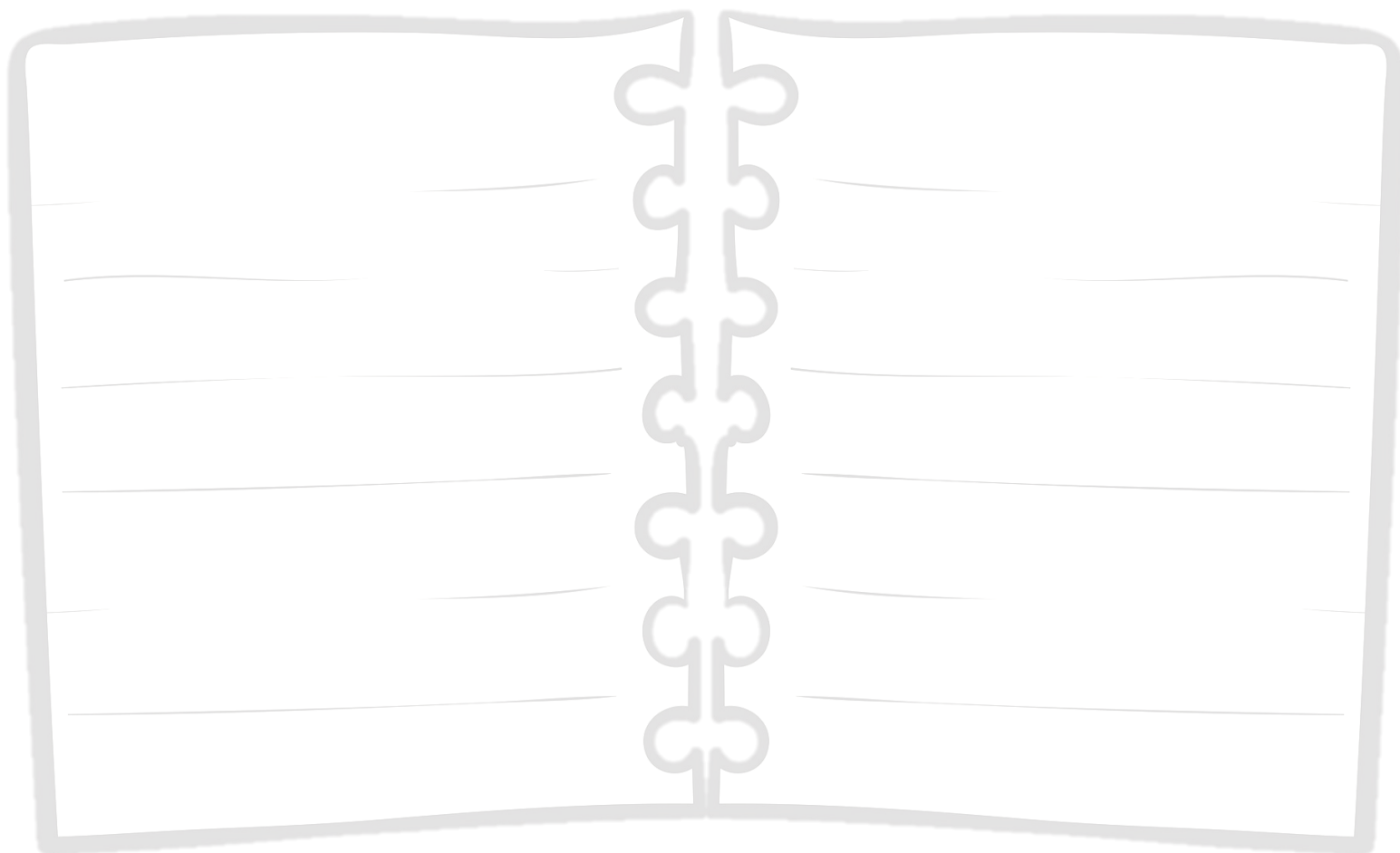
## 17 Gifted

I wrote Gifted thinking about the “gifts” I’ve received through different stages of my life. While young, it was beauty, imagination, wonder. As a young man, it was the gift of love, relationship, companionship. As an older man, though, I’ve become more aware of the breadth of gifts I’ve received—family, parents, grandparents, joys, challenges... and time. The time to simply BE with those I love and look to an open horizon, expectant for the future.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Thankfulness**

*What am I most thankful for? How often am I mindful of this? Are there things or people that I have failed to see the gift in? Is it possible I’ve overlooked gifts that felt like problems or annoyances?*



# Dreams

Woke up at three am  
Couldn't get to sleep again  
Damn dreams won't leave me alone.  
Don't know just what they bode,  
But after every episode  
I have to relearn what it means to be home.

And dreams may come like a friend  
But dreams don't care about you in the end  
Cause dreams give life to possibility  
But these dreams will be the death of me.

I saw a vision of my birth  
Seemed like the smallest thing on earth  
Until love lifted me to look into her face  
I had an image of my future  
But fate is fickle— you can't choose her  
Acceptance is my saving grace.

And dreams may come like a friend  
But dreams don't care about you in the end  
Cause dreams give life to possibility  
But dreams don't always show the best of me.

They say the dreamers will be gone  
Once the realists can move on  
And make the planet follow all their rules.  
But it never made sense to me  
How random every fence can be  
How perfect angles can construct a ship of fools.

And dreams may come like a friend  
But dreams don't care about you in the end  
Cause dreams give life to possibility  
And dreams cross boundaries toward the rest of me.

And dreams may come like a friend  
But dreams don't care about you in the end  
Cause dreams give life to possibility  
But dreams can be their own destiny.



## 18 Dreams

I dream a lot. Sometimes they are bad or stressful dreams... sometimes they are just weird. I have confidence that my dreams do whatever dreams need to do, and that I'm probably better off for having had them. However... sometimes they take me out of reality. They plant seeds that may be helpful, or not. I have to take them with a grain of salt, otherwise, too much weight on a dream risks bringing unwarranted fear or overblown expectation.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Contentment**

*What's the upside to contentment? The downside? What role do dreams play in my life? What scenarios, stories or mental movies do I return to—consciously or unconsciously—and what do I do with that? How do I strike the right contentment/urgency balance?*



# Ragged Set of Claws

I am not the man I used to be  
I am not the boy I was  
Some days I have trouble getting use to me  
Some nights I fight a ragged set of claws  
They're a ragged set of claws

Brave adventures were my future  
Back when I dreamed myself a hero's cape and hood  
But every time I leave my bat cave these days  
Some clever joker shows me why I should stay cave bound for good  
I should stay cave bound for good

My hours have grown narrow:  
Eat, sleep, do my job  
My friends increase their distance  
It's taken years to grow this ragged set of claws  
This ragged set of claws...

Just starting out is always lovely  
It's when we write the stories we believe  
But down the road we meet the monsters  
In the battle is when we see we've been deceived  
Yeah, the monster is me,  
I've been deceived.

My hours have grown narrow:  
Eat, sleep, do my job  
My friends increase their distance  
It's taken years to grow, just to grow, oh...

My hours have grown narrow:  
I Eat, I sleep, I do my job  
All my friends they seem so distant  
It took me years just to grow this ragged set of claws  
This ragged set of claws...  
Took me years to grow  
This ragged set of claws...  
This ragged set...  
This ragged set of claws.



## 19 Ragged Set of Claws

Wow. Another song about growing older—seems like a recurring theme! Ragged Set of Claws is about growing older... but also about growing more honest. It's easy to fail to see that it may be ME who isn't easy to be around. Early on, I made plenty of stories that painted me as the hero. If I'm honest though, sometimes I've been the villain.

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

**Theme: Self Honesty**

*Am I honest with myself about both my strengths and my weaknesses? Have I fooled myself trying to present the image I wanted others to see? What sort of pressures do I feel to maintain a certain appearance that I've grown accustomed to showing? Do I risk losing myself when I put on my hood and cape?*



# My First Song

I was only six or seven years old,  
You must've been a worn-out thirty-two.  
Don't know what stories you'd been told;  
Don't know what you went home to...  
But you brought a tiredness behind your eyes,  
And you brought a shuffle in your walk.  
They only left when your anger flared--  
Felt like hell made out of ditto ink and chalk, yeah  
Felt like hell made out of ditto ink and chalk,  
Felt like hell made out of ditto ink and chalk.

It was a song—my very first,  
The kind a first-grader would like to write,  
Full of wanna-be Maurice Sendak and Dr. Seuss,  
Full of possibility and light...  
It went like this...  
One day I was a-walkin' down the street, street, street  
A funny old man I did meet, meet, meet  
He was walkin' on his big old feet, feet, feet  
'til he fell right on his seat, seat seat...  
Yeah that's what I wrote...  
My first song... yeah

You'd given us a few minutes and a  
Blank sheet of lined paper.  
I had no idea what I was  
Supposed to do...  
Maybe I wasn't listening, or  
Maybe I was scared,  
But knowing me, it was probably just  
That song I HAD to write...  
My first song...

I made language into music  
I gave it a beat, gave it a rhyme  
Made it funny—made a story, yeah  
One that didn't exist outside of right there—  
What I did in my mind...  
I wrote my first song...  
I wrote my first song...  
I wrote my first song... yeah  
On that paper you handed to me...



What I wanted to see was what you might think of it  
Would you laugh? Would you smile?  
Would it brighten that darkness there behind your eyes?  
Would you sing it out loud?

But your tired, angry eyes,  
Well, they looked, and read, and were more tired.  
You could've just put it down now...  
Too bad you couldn't just retire.  
No—you stole my poetry  
You went and stole my literary device...  
You wrote, NO, NO, NO in big red letters across the top  
Wrote NO, NO, NO on my first song...  
You wrote, NO, NO, NO in big red letters across the top  
Wrote NO, NO, NO on my first song...  
On my first song...

So, I became a teacher,  
A teacher with a guitar in his hands.  
I may sound corny, may sound "un-rigorous"  
But someone's got to take a stand  
For singin'...

YES, YES, YES... You've got a song to sing!  
YES, YES, YES... I won't give up on you!  
YES, YES, YES... We're gonna let FREEDOM RING!  
YES, YES, YES... You are the BEST when YOU are YOU!  
YES, YES, YES... You've got a song to sing!  
YES, YES, YES... I won't give up on you!  
YES, YES, YES... We're gonna let FREEDOM RING!  
YES, YES, YES... You are the BEST when YOU are YOU!

When you are you...  
You are the best when You are You!  
When YOU are YOU.

I was only six or seven years old,  
You must've been a worn-out thirty-two...



## 20 My First Song

My First Song actually contains my first song in the little stanza near the start. The song is based upon an experience I had in first grade. I do have great empathy, as an educator, for my teacher that year—I'm sure she was dealing with her own stuff. But her stuff was deeply impacting our first-grade stuff... and for years to come. It took me awhile to really know that "I am best when I am ME" I don't think I'm alone in that. We all have a song to sing that's no one's but ours!

**Choose a question or word or line(s) from the lyrics to guide your meditation or journaling as you listen.**

Theme: **Identity**

*What is my song? Do I sing it? Do I hide it? Am I ashamed of it? What kind of space do I give others so they can sing their songs? How might we work together to make schools, work places, every place a place for singing our true songs?*

