
IN PEACE WE JOURNEY HERE
& PIANO & SONGS
PHYLLIS GOLDEN

1. THE COUPLE NEXT DOOR

(My response to constitutional amendments across the US enshrining a ban on equal marriage, civil unions and domestic partnerships.)

We are the couple next door
together thirty years and more
with one another, tried and true,
love bonds us, as it does you

We are your neighbors and friends
with you through life's
twists and bends
we are your daughters and sons
we live among you, we are the
ones

who ask, "America, how can it be,
never next of kin are we?"

From all walks of life we come
all forms of work we have done
we are all colors and creeds
like you, we all have human needs

There is no you or we, just us
softly the same beneath the crust
every heart beats out its claim
until death calls each of us by
name

2. WINTER RIDE

(lyric by Wanda Brown)

If I knew the snow held jewels
the sun was finest gold
I would have kept you at my side
had your hand to hold
If I knew this lonely road
would be so long and straight
I would have stayed this morning
when you whispered, "Wait"

Your presence rides with me
in this empty car
through the eyes of a winter day
I see who you are
the vision is sharp
a glossy enlargement
clear as my love for you
caught in this moment
like so few

If I knew this longing
would blur the road ahead
I would have stayed this morning
with you, my love, in bed

3. FERRY TAILS

(Another classic lesbian sea shanty)

A cool rainy voyage,
small price to pay
to get to an island
where dreams can be made
bright gulls float beside us
we're off to BC
a sense of good fortune, my wife
and me

Clouds drift around us,
wind tousles our hair
out on the deck
salt sweetens the air
weaving her way
past islet and bay
steady she goes
as she makes her way

All aboard the Queen of Whales
lifting our hopes as she sails
all aboard the Queen of Whales
breaking the waves with ferry tails

We're leaving the country
we've been for so long
where dreams have gone sour
and government's wrong
where war reigns eternal
American greed
how can we belong
when we disagree?

Canada, oh!
your shores we behold
a place where our love can stand
true and bold
with joy we embrace,
escorted with grace
all that's ahead
we're ready to face

4 - 8. OVERTURE TO ORIOLES ON THE CANNON VALLEY TRAIL

(Begun at the Anderson Center in 1998.)

Part 1 - the first 5 notes are a song
the oriole gave me
Part 2
Part 3 - for poet Mary McGinnis
Part 4 - for Senator Russ Feingold
Part 5

9. AMERICAN EYES

(Responding to the dispassionate television coverage of the 1990 Persian Gulf war)

The world our cradle,
no sacrifice, we see
through right American eyes
we live in confidence with the lies
that rule our right American eyes

At the moment, as I sing
across the world the sirens ring
on the other side of midnight
explosions of undying light

There's a full moon over Baghdad
the targets should be clear
human agony, unreported
we are not supposed to care

At the moment, as I sing
in Gaza, Basra, Tel Aviv
terror grips the families
who gas masks will not free

Do we know their ancient story
how much blood runs
with each tear?
how easy to forget, life's a melody
that flows as strongly there as here

10. VANISHING MIDDLE CLASS BLUES

My folks left me a little
hard earned cash behind
I thought I'd see it grow but
the market robbed me blind

An ordinary person's
got the world to lose
there's an awful terror
that goes with paper loss news
my labor's fattening the cats
living in the lap of luxury
soon the rest of us won't have
a pot in which to pee

My folks are dead and gone
I wonder what they'd say
whether they'd imagine
what's happened to the mighty USA

Land of hopeless folly...

Scandal wracks the land
the wealthy skim the cream
they rob with sleight of hand
crush the little guy's dream

Terrorists abound with evil powers
wherever they are found,
or not found
in caves or corporate towers

My folks are dead and gone...

I'd tell them if I could
I'm singing with the muse
to help me through
the vanishing middle class blues

11. GREAT NATIONS FALL

Great nations fall into a pit of chaos
we've seen it all not very long ago
to heed the call,
a challenge lies before us
to work for peace and
practice war no more

When leaders lie
to frighten their own people
when they deny the ordinary voice
it kills the will to hold each other
equal
and war becomes the only
other choice

Do you know where to find America
melting pot of the brave and free
and do you know,
can anyone swear it
still exists, a place of liberty ?

If friends and neighbors
do not trust each other

wherever they are found,
or not found
in caves or corporate towers

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If friends and neighbors
do not trust each other
conflicting views become
a source of wrath
now we waken to discover
democracy is on a losing path

If the search for peace
is seen as failure
if patriotic means we won't dissent
where thoughts are not allowed
to differ
we'll soon wonder where our
freedom went

...Is it still a place of liberty?

12. SOMEWHERE

(in memory of Bob Samarotto)

13. YOU SLIPPED AWAY

(in memory of my sister, Sherry)

You slipped away
in the dead of day
the sun won't let me cry
you made it clear
you would not stay
for me to say goodbye

You were a dark thread
in a white sheet
awake in bed
when others were asleep
you put the world to test
I failed with all the rest
Yours was a passion fed by rage
you called it love and at your age
I might have too
you wouldn't give the time it takes
to heal your heart's mistakes
I watched your spirit turning blue

You used to paint
where there is still life
you found your freedom in the
shadow and the light
every sweet sensation lingered
like a prize
until the hollows took your eyes

14. LONELY STREET

I was livin' on Lonely Street
I was doin' a hollow beat
in the Parish of Despair
the Town of Isolation
the Utter State of Alienation

Then the chill of grey concrete
rose to my soul through my feet
a message in the wind above
"My dear, you're too far north
for love"

Took on a turn on
Memorial Parkway
tried to remember who I might be
got a flash of Chanukah past
but sad to say it did not last
Just when it looked like
the road might end
there appeared a surprising bend
I found myself on Renewal
Highway
with some friends going my way

If you're livin' on Lonely Street
if you're doin' a hollow beat...
Just when it looks like
the road might end
there will come a surprising bend
you'll find yourself
on Renewal Highway
with some friends going your way

15. IN PEACE WE JOURNEY HERE

Crystals on our windows form
through the longest night
icy ferns to greet the morn
as the sun grows bright

Stirred from sleep's warm
ambience
young and old alike
marvel at the brilliance
of the scattered light

Sisters, brothers of the Solstice
sweet Earth we hold so dear
live truly by the wish
in peace to journey here

A fragile sheet of wonder
jungle of fine frost
delivered during slumber
will soon, to day, be lost

Crystals of December
bold in memory
linger like the ember
with stunning clarity

...in peace we journey here

16. RIVER LOVE

The journey's all, my darling
I've no greater wish
as the sun is gently falling
perhaps you might insist
that I dance with sweet peas
up to our front door
and invite you to stay with me
twenty five years more

River love is flowing
with our joys and fears
time vanishing and growing
through amazing years
a note of passion right from the
start
an unquenchable fire
flame so hot it fused a spot
of everlasting desire

...perhaps I might insist
that you dance with lilacs
up to our front door
and invite me to stay with you
twenty five years more

We are vines co-mingling
'round a sturdy tree
we are souls singing
of songs to be
we are no longer babes
in the woods
and if experience brings
fortune's favor to shine on us
soon we'll be babes on the wing

...perhaps we might insist
that we dance with orchids
up to our front door
turn the knob to welcome love
twenty five years more

17. TSUNAMI 2004

Waves of death, waves of sorrow
stories buried in the sands
thousands taken from tomorrow
waves of tears from stricken lands
All of them Nature's children
carried on the sails of time
when the sea rose up to claim
them
without reason, without rhyme

Asian shores will remember
the tide that seemed so tame
on a bright morn in December
'til the giant Tsunami came
Now a vast, briny ocean
gives its toll back to the shore
how I wish its rhythmic motion
could bring peace of
mind once more

Waves of death, waves of decay
we are all in Nature's hands
from Phuket and Banda Aceh
waves of tears from stricken
lands

18. FRIENDS

Friends are folks who
slow their pace
to stay with you awhile
as you endure your pain
try to find a smile again
friends are those who
by their ways
remind that life's worth living
coming there are better days
hopeful and forgiving

People filled with self importance
time so often tells
will leave you like fair weather
may not bid farewell
those with raw ambition
value you as long
as you fulfill their purpose
nothing dare go wrong

Friends are folks who

see your face
when you are not around
who make a place inside
where your essence can be found
friends are those who
trust your love
and know that you'll be there
to help them rise above the darkest times
of anger and despair

Friends don't try to be first
or want to bring out the worst
friends don't worship the ground
where human feet are found

Friends are ones who share
a wealth that has no measure
who hold each other dear
even when they're not together
friends will laugh
and friends will cry
agree and disagree
and when all is said and done
let each other be

19. FOOT DROP BLUES

- an improvisational piece

20. SAMMY

(From an odd story in Time magazine, Dec., 2000. A man was fined for damaging $8,000 of baked goods in Philadelphia. At his sentencing he admitted to the judge, "I do touch too much bread...")

Sammy, don't squeeze the bread
Sammy, just use your head
remember what the judge said,
"Sammy, don't squeeze the bread."

Sammy, what went wrong
were you smothered or neglected
too weak, too strong
were there people
with whom you didn't get along
whose buns you'd maybe like to pinch?

Sammy get yourself a nice baguette
pay the cashier, don't forget
then maul it as you please
whatever you don't eat
the pigeons will pick up off the street

Sammy, it cost a pile of dough
humiliation before they let you go
"Verbatim" in the Time magazine
your name is there to be seen
you know it isn't like TV
where someone's paid to squeeze TP

So Sammy, brighten up, it's time to admit that squeezing bread is crime...

You'll be seen as a crumb
by the dent of your thumb...

21. BYE BYE BABY TOOTH

(Madeleine, at 5½, gave me some lines from her experience.)

Bye, bye baby tooth,
you got very loose
Daddy lifted you out
no more wiggling,
no more jiggling
now there's a hole in my mouth

My name is Madeleine,
I can tell the time
my front tooth
has been loose forever
but yesterday at three,
it let go of me
my new tooth
I hope will last better

The tooth fairy came,
she knew my name
under my pillow she left a bill, oh
she knew it was mine,
it's the first time
this ever happened to me

I could go next door,
see if there are more
teeth from other people to put
beneath my pillow
there must be quite a few,
hey this idea's new
I could be rich by grade two
I could walk a block,
maybe kids'll talk
sell me their teeth for a penny
this fairy comes at night,
while I'm sleeping tight
by morning there will be many dollars...

Oh but the fairy seems
to know my money dreams
she gets the truth like my mother
she might get really mad,
take away the bill I had
planned to share with my brother,
so, bye bye...

Now there's a new tooth
in my socket
and a dollar in my pocket

22. BRIDES & WIVES

(In celebration of our marriage in Victoria, BC, 2004.)

We are brides singing our song
to one another we belong
some say there's moral decay
since we married the other day

Earth is falling apart
for those convinced
that the heart
has gone sinfully astray
for them there is no gray

There are those among us
setting rules with
which to judge us

We are brides dancing on air
all the hopes we share
with rings on our hands
by law of the land

We are wives bursting
through clouds
we live our lives
casting off shrouds
I'm hers, she's mine
we're together by design

Thirty years it's taken
to show the world
our love's unshaken

Earth's not falling apart
for those who honor the heart
love's the constant theme
of life in harmony

Praise my country of birth
defending our worth
Canada, oh Canada!
you stand on guard for love

We are wives singing our song
to one another we belong
I'm hers, she's mine
we're together by design

23. THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

(by Robert Frost)

Two roads diverged
in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one
as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy
and wanted wear,
Though as for that
the passing there
Had worn them really
about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step
had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

1. **THE COUPLE NEXT DOOR** 3:24
2. **WINTER RIDE** 2:44
3. **FERRY TAILS** 2:36
4-8. **OVERTURE TO ORIOLES** 4, 3:21 / 5, 3:02 / 6, 3:10 / 7, 1:49 / 8, 3:12
9. **AMERICAN EYES** 3:35
10. **VANISHING MIDDLE CLASS BLUES** 3:07
11. **GREAT NATIONS FALL** 3:06
12. **SOMEWHERE** 3:08
13. **YOU SLIPPED AWAY** 2:29
14. **LONELY STREET** 2:51
15. **IN PEACE WE JOURNEY HERE** 3:56
16. **RIVER LOVE** 5:38
17. **TSUNAMI 2004** 3:13
18. **FRIENDS** 2:51
19. **FOOT DROP BLUES** 2:31
20. **SAMMY** 2:09
21. **BYE BYE BABY TOOTH** 2:37
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With this live album, in the style of a concert performance, I present a cross section of my diverse 35 year journal of songs and compositions. Heartfelt thanks to Robert and Carolyn Hedin and the Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Red Wing, MN, for a creative haven, constant dedication to the Arts and generous support of my work. www.andersoncenter.org
With love and thanks to my dear wife, Wanda Brown.

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All pieces composed and performed by Phyllis Goldin
(except "Winter Ride," lyrics by Wanda Brown and "The Road Not Taken," poem by Robert Frost).
Artwork by Phyllis Goldin.
Engineered and mastered by Dave Peterson. Thanks for bringing this project together faster than your broken leg healed.
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