

Working on Wings to Fly Cindy Kallet

My Fair Lady came to town when I was between six and eight months old. My mother, always in tune with the tunes, combined baby-caring with song, and sometime during those formative months I was discovered humming, under my infant breath and to my parents' astonishment, the tune to "Wouldn't It be Lovely."

The musical contributions up to and since then have been many and varied. My sources include predominantly classical music - I studied piano and violin for several years - and folk music - from people such as Burl Ives and Pete Seeger, early on, to Mimi and Dick Farina, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, and Tom Paxton, among others. A few years later, Gordon Bok, Louis Killen, and members of the Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater* crews were among those who provided inspiration.

The songs arise from just about anything - life's trials (many), love (lost, mostly), water (the ocean variety in particular), and miscellaneous (many of those - includes State of the World songs and Style Stealing -- see "Big Dark's Fancy" and "We Rigged Our Ship" for reference).

I started writing songs when I was about thirteen years old. The first "official" one concerned the horrors of my junior high school (the chorus of the first "unofficial" one was "I'll wait for you till the end of time - I'll say no more about it!). My brother Tony was, and still is, an invaluable source of criticism and encouragement; all songs (over 130 by now) were taped and sent to him for comment. Throughout most of those earlier years, the songs stuck pretty close to home: my bedroom, the kitchen or stairwell (both acoustically encouraging locations), and were sung to the tape recorder, my sound-worn knee, and occasionally to family or close friends. It's been only in the last few years that they have ventured forth, through friends and coffee-houses, concerts, and even a fish and chips joint - over the sound of the fryolators - to this recording, where a few of them are given, with care, for your taking. The wonderful harmonies on four of the songs are provided by two good friends. I met one of them, Ellen Epstein Maxwell, a teacher on the island where I was living (Martha's Vineyard), when her husband, Timothy, introduced us to each other with the outlandish idea that we might actually enjoy singing together.

The other voice, that of Lisa Kallet, I first heard when she came home from the hospital over a quarter of a century ago. I was only a year old at the time, but could tell that she showed real promise. In addition to being a fine musician, Lisa is studying Classics and Ancient History.

Many special thanks to Lisa, Nelle, Lucy, Mom, Kevin, and, of course, brother Tony, who has kept me and my guitar strings on our toes.

-----*For Papa*-----

Cindy Kallet, Martha's Vineyard, September, 1981

1. Nantucket Sound (*Kallet, BMI*)

A journey in my mind, back to home territory. Many thoughts drifted in -- much as in a daydream....

*When we reach Nantucket Sound,
 Brave boys,
We'll haul the sails down,
Haul 'em in for awhile.
One of these days
I'll have much more to say,
When the harbor is empty
And the wind's blowing wild.*

*When we sight the Chilmark Downs,
 Brave ones,
We'll watch for the osprey
Come from fishing the Great Pond.
One of these days
These lands will be wild,
When we're all gone to ashes
And the wars are all done.*

*When we roam Katama Plains,
 Brave boys,
The sky will be night
And the stars will hang low.
I'll sing of the wars
And I'll sing of their dead,
Wondering what the ways are
To ever have them end.*

*When we round the Cape Pogue light,
 Brave ones,
We'll head her for home,
Find a place by the fire.
When the snow's blowing 'round
I'll be walking these roads,
Thinking that, without you,
There's no warm place to lie.*

*When we reach Nantucket Sound,
Brave boys,
We'll gather our strengths,
It's sometimes hard to get by.
One of these days
I'll have much less to say,
When the harbor is empty
And the tears have run dry.*

2. Wings to Fly (Crow) (Kallet, BMI)

This song was one of those "gifts;" a song that materialized in probably under a half an hour late one autumn night after a bicycle ride home. The "hammering down here" appears courtesy of a house I was shingling. The geese appear courtesy of a field that the house overlooked. The crow appears courtesy of the hawk.

*Crow mobbing up a hawk on soar,
Clouds soaring in the sky,
Me working down here on this rocky old earth,
Working on wings to fly, good Lord,
Working on wings to fly.*

*New friend's catching up a fish tonight,
He's gonna haul 'em till the stars come tumbling down.
Me, I'm riding high tonight,
Been dreaming of him coming around, good Lord,
I'm dreaming of him coming around.*

*Geese come rising out of the field
Heading to the eastern shore.
Me, I'd fly on every wing
Just to find you something more, dear friend,
Just to give you something more.*

*Shearwater swooping on a gray old wave,
North wind scooping up the sea,
These cold autumn days make me run with joy,
Looking for a way to be free, good Lord,
I'm looking for a way to be me.*

*This moon's gonna keep me walking tonight,
This sky is gonna make me sing.
All I want is to share with you
Something of this feeling, dear man,
You're something of this feeling.*

*Crow mobbing up a hawk on soar,
Clouds soaring in the sky,
Hammering down here on this rocky old earth,
Working on wings to fly, good Lord,
I'm working on wings to fly.*

3. Three-Masted Schooner (*Kallet*, BMI)

This was written a number of years ago - again, an imaginary voyage. For a long time I thought spring tides were called moon tides .

*She's a three-masted schooner
Coming 'round through the sound,
 My sailing man.'s coming and we're going on home, -
Set full sail on the spring tide
And bring her around.
 Going north to the Vineyard,
 On up to the Bay.*

*(Similarly:)
Oh, we'll bring down the sails
For the winter's a storm.
Down in the cabin
Just trying to stay warm.*

*Oh, the snows are a-coming,
So we'll head for the shore.
Just to be with you now,
I can't ask for much more.*

*Well, sometimes we're dying
And sometimes we're born.
Gonna get through the bad times,
Gonna sing for the morning.*

*She's a three-masted schooner
Coming 'round through the sound.
Set full sail on the moon tide
And bring her around, crying....*

4. A Walk Down the Hill (Kallet BMI)

My sister Lisa suggests that the fourth line in the second verse be "Lovely things always seem to happen just 'cause you have to leave." I always think that line, even though I sing the original.

*A walk down the hill to the harbor in the dawn,
Early morning, thinking of you, wishing I didn't have to be gone,
Your music of the night before still flying in my ears;
Chords I'd never heard played that way before.
There's just a feeling that I have, but it feels really strong,
Sun rising over the water.
Leaving your house sleeping in the hill, wishing I could stay with you longer.
Lovely things always seem to happen just when you have to leave,
And my time's this morning.*

*You laughed a lot at things I said and did, I never knew what you meant.
There were times I knew that you wanted me there, and times I thought I should have left,
Times I felt like someone else and times I felt like me;
Wondered which way you wanted it to be.
A walk down the hill, early morning of the day.
You're a crazy man, the finest kind, how I wish I could have stayed.
How I love to listen to you play.*

5. Big Dark's Fancy Wallet, BMI)

At the time this was written, Big Dark was a young and small (she's now a young and big) Boa Constrictor that seemed to me to require a jig named after her. The idea for part of this tune (the two long, sustained notes in particular) came from Fay Baird's banjo rendition of "Tobin's Favorite." The third section is what happens when you play the first and second sections simultaneously (with one or two slight changes).

6. Blackberry Downs (Kallet, BMI)

The winter of 1976 was an incredible one for me - lots of snow, lots of work, lots of bicycling to work in the snow. The "nineteen Hoodeds" refers to the Hooded Mergansers that would zoom into the waterfowl pond at the Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary almost every evening at sunset. Occasionally, I'd sit down in the observation blind, until it got dark and colder, to watch them barrel in. There were times when I wondered if I would ever make it home.

I have to admit that the "Katama boys" are secretly my counterpart to the "Cape Cod girls," "Liverpool girls," "girls of Cascais," etc.

*There's a moon drifting up there, and a dance here for you.
Can I try and lift your spirits?
Katama boys don't waste no sounds.
Blueberry hills and the blackberry downs.*

*Nineteen Hoodeds in now, wafting by in the light,
And a gift of your answers.
Island winter's gonna bring us around.
Thickets of pine and the blackberry downs.*

*Sand spray and the snow ,drifting, gonna blow me away,
When the laughing comes easy.
Through the salt marsh the tides run in and out of the pond;
Geese in over the barriers to the blackberry downs.*

*And how high did the tides rise, and how fast did the wind blow?
You said you rode out there when the sand was snow.
Into a head wind, balance out on a north wind,
Freezing in an evening, will I ever make it home?*

*There's a moon drifting up there, and a song here for you.
Can we try to lift your spirits?
Katama boys don't waste no sounds.
Blueberry hills and blackberry downs .*

7. Roll to the River (Kallet, BMI)

This song is "dedicated" to the many new houses that appear, daily and conspicuously, on the magnificent Katama Plains. Many of them have been built extremely near the ocean. I often wish for another hurricane, just to even the score. The "rivers" refer to those created when the glacier melted.

*And it's roll to the rivers that once shaped these sands,
And it's roll to the river upon me.
And it's fly to the waves that still pound these shores;
And it's less than a mile to sea.*

*I climbed the high hills to search for the sea,
Took to the treetops in flight,
Saw water in valleys where blueberries once grew,
Watched red-tail hawks soaring out of sight.*

*I watched as the houses spread over the plains
And I prayed for the sea to crash in.
And the reasons they gave were so righteous and so grave;
Don't they know that in the end no one can win?*

*I roamed the Great Plains where the juniper grows
And I climbed the morainal north shore.
And I ran out to Wasque to catch the four tides,
And rose high on the bluffs to see more and more and more.*

*They call the land theirs; I call the land ours,
For those who can care to walk free.
How many houses can rise, how many roads can scrape through
Before we drive into the sea?*

*These times come by hard, there's no need to explain,
One look in your eyes and I know.
We've seen the hills green and we've watched the plains bare
And we've known the sands covered with snow.*

8. We Rigged Our Ship (Kallet, BMI)

This is an "inland shanty," made up one evening in Vermont as I sat, with a map of the world over my head, trying to concentrate on some school work. I started dreaming about faraway places I'd have rather been at that moment. Enter this shanty

*We rigged our ship with lines of silver,
Way, hey, and we'll all comedown,
And we set her sails in New England waters,
Way, hey, gonna bring her round.*

(Similarly:)

*We scraped her decks till our backs were strong,
And we caulked her seams with strands of oakum.*

*We oiled her rails with hands of linseed,
And we sailed her up to the Beaufort Sea*

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*We sewed her sails with threads of seaweed,
And we sailed her into Takoradi.*

*We filled her decks with bales of hay,
And we ran her down to Casco Bay*

*We filled her holds with rum for the winter,
And we ran her into Oak Bluffs harbor.*

*We rigged our ship with lines of silver,
And we set her sails in New England waters.*

9. Far Off of the Mountains (*Kallet, BMI*)

Another dream.

*Far off of the mountains
I can see the sea;
If I had my pick,
A sailor I would be.*

*I'd find the finest timber,
Haul it to the shore,
Build me a sailing ship like you've
Never seen before.*

*Well, the clouds gave the oceans
And the sun gave the earth;
The wind gave the music
And the moon wrote the words.*

*First from the sailing man
I learned the rhythm of the water,
Felt the flying of the wind
And guessed what I was after.*

*If you had your pick, lady, lady,
What would you be?
I'd be a sailor,
Live my life on the sea.*

10. Out on the Farthest Range (*Kallet*, BMI)

Again from Vermont - much of this song was inspired by the purple Green Mountains and the valley west of the range. The "trees falling to the ground" refers to the diseased elms that were being felled at the time.

Out on the farthest range

Where the forest meets the sky

And the dying sun peeks over

For a look at where I lie.

Down at the pond the redwing blackbirds

Flying towards the sun,

They'll be far away by the time

Tomorrow has begun.

As it is, I'm falling

With the rain (trees, leaves, dreams) to the ground.

As it is, I'm falling all around.

Come take a look out the window, love,

There's so much more to see

As the clouds dance the sun down

And the leaves fall from the trees.

Up in the meadow the daylight goes

As swiftly as it came;

I didn't get much done today,

I couldn't see through the pain.

Come run to the edge of the field with me, love,

Take in the evening's breath;

If I felt like I was living,

Why do I think so much of death?

Away in a dream and a summer's gone

And I'm lying in the sand,

Waiting for the sun to rise

And reaching for your hand.

*So, I'm not waiting for any answers now,
I've got little more to say;
There's so much I'm supposed to do,
And yet I sing away the day.
Up in the clouds there's a shadow of
The blackbirds going by;
If there's one thing that I've learned today,
It's that I can't begin to fly.*

11. Hey-O (Kallet, BMI)

This is a fun, absurd song that, fortunately, doesn't take itself too seriously .

*Hey-O, just once let me sing to you
While the sun sits resting and the gulls come calling
Out in the marsh where the geese are nesting,
And I just keep falling, it's just up and down, up and down.*

*Out on the island let me think of you
Without feeling so doubtful of myself and of you, too.
Sometime in the night I'll sing you gently to the moon,
Tell the stars about you, let the wind caress you,
Carry you to a finer light.*

*Carry me to a calmer night.
I keep falling and it's just up and down, up and down.*

*I don't know whether to remember or forget you
While the marsh hawks are swooping and the red-tails soaring.
Why is there no way I can accept your silence,
Though I understand it well?*

*When I think of the few hours I knew you for,
I don't understand why I feel this way,
And it gets stranger every day.*

*Hey-O, let me think on you
While the sea swells are rolling and the waves come crashing
Up on the hill where the berries grow for picking,
And maybe I'm just crazy, but I don't know what to do, what to do.*

12. Hang In There (*Kallet, BMI*)

This was written for a friend who was living through an extremely rough year. Some philosophy, some reminiscence - the (in)famous winter of '76 drifting back to remind us that there can and will again be times of being really happy with what we are doing.

*Wait, hold on just a little;
It will all turn out all right.
I've been, I've been thinking,
I've been awake all through the night.*

*You say, I say we can't take it,
There's got to be an end to all this pain;
Maybe we're gonna have to hit rock bottom
Before we can rise, rise up again.*

*Nothing, nothing's simple,
We always seem to think that it can be.
Take all the wars, the anger and the fear,
It all just comes down to who we will be..*

*Come on, now, I've been wondering
Just what it is about these times.
Remember when the snow drifted six foot on the fields
And the cold days were never unkind.*

13. Come Down... (*Kallet, BMI*)

I was fooling around with a friend's newly acquired 12-string guitar when this song appeared. I hadn't had a 12-string for years and it was like playing a completely new instrument - such fun! The harmonics, particularly, captured me.

The lines: "We'll take all our sorrows... and lay them away in a box of gold" come directly from a poem (I can't remember the author) I found years ago that read something close to "I'll wrap my dreams in a silken shroud and lay them away in a box of gold."

*Come down, my love,
We'll walk to the water
Where the ships glide by
And sooner and later
You can tell from me, I love you.*

*Come down, my love,
We'll run to the river
Where the geese glide by.
I'll make you my lover,
You can have me your lover.
I can tell from you, you love me.*

*And soon it will be the finest day,
With the wind rising round
And the snow on the bay.*

*And we'll take all our sorrows
And tales we once told
And lay them away in a box of gold.*

*Come down, my love,
I find that I need you.
In these crazy, mad times
I want to be with you.*

*And soon it will be the finest day
With the wind rising round
And the snow on the bay.*

14. .Ladies Come in Jewels (Kallet, BMI)

The words and melody to this, the shortest "official" song I've written, were made up in an airplane as I went to visit my brother in Colorado. The guitar part was applied after arrival.

*You're used to greater style;
Your ladies come in jewels.
But I can't satisfy;
I feel so like a fool.*

*I'm going down river,
Gonna stay away awhile.
Gonna get rid of some of my dreams;
I'm gonna live my own style.*

*You're used to living *in pleasure;
Your ladies aim to please.
When I was once your lover,
I was never once at ease.*

*I'm going down river;
I'm tired of all this pain.
Not gonna lose any more of my mind;
Not gonna play any more of your games.*

15. One for the Island (Kallet, BMI)

This song commemorates a(n) (in)famous wrestling match. It is for a very special place and two very special friends.

*Come roll me around, here's one for the island.
Tonight it's the wind, the rain, last night we made the storm.
And I'll roll you around, you're a fire in the sand.
We'll be one for the island; we'll go one more round.*

*Come bring us around, I think we know what you're thinking.
Once in a while there are things we'll never have to explain.
Do you wonder where you've come sometimes, does it leave you
enough freedom?
For all you may want, it's still close to your dreams.*

*And it's one for the island, two for us rumbling,
Three for us all when we are free.
Well, what is this freedom and where has it come to?
To leave room for the wild and space for the sea.*

*High above the sea below, we're three for the island.
Life spirit going strong and you say you're in love
With the night wind, the dune grass, the fires we keep glowing.
It's time to be going, but I feel like I'm home.*

16. Shores of Africa (Kallet, BMI)

,This is another song that arrived quickly. The guitar part came first, followed immediately by the words. After I'd written down several verses (all but the last), I surveyed the scene and found it to be a grim one - not particularly the way I was feeling at the time. Hence, the final verse's glimmer of hope.

*I sent a bottle out on the sea,
Tied to a leaf and tied to a tree,
It's going to the shores of Africky
And I won't be back till (in) the morning.*

*I stepped out in the city today
With the glass and the stones and the dogs at bay.
They say a person's not safe on the streets these days
And you'd better stay in till the morning.*

*I walked out along the sand
When by zoomed a jeep and out boomed a band.
When the roads keep tearing up all of this land,
What's gonna be left of an island?*

*I walked out along the road,
Thinking on the hard times, bearing up a load.
You can carry the world on your weary shoulders,
No one's gonna bring you home.*

*Lately I've been wondering what's it for?
We're feeling less, we've hardened more,
We're talking peace and we're doing war.
We're gonna be dead in the morning.*

*I went into the forest and I found a tree
Tied to a sail, will you carry me
Away to the waters of an ancient sea?
I don't want to come back in the morning.*

*I sent a bottle out on the tide;
The bottle to a leaf to a tree was tied.
If we're lucky, it'll reach a kinder sky
With a word of hope for the morning.*

