

Compete Lyrics for The Troth Sessions

True True Love

To Vernon Tonges and Stacey Earley on their wedding

Gather all ye myrtles brown*
Watch all the queer town folk dance 'round and 'round
There's confetti in the air
Loosen up your underwear
Put on some Uncle Peter**.
Plant your lawn chair near the sound.
Listen to a few delightful lies
As the hummingbirds and the horseflies try and guess each others size
The dried flowers and fresh weeds in that bouquet you tossed into the trees
What kind of shadows do you throw when you're under moon and stars
I've never seen this man so happy
Or this woman brought so near to tears
She can't stop laughing. Can you blame her? It's been years.
Tell me, where do you think your life begins?
Listen up young feller can't you feel it on your skin
The strongest, the strangest smell in all the world that I've heard tell
Is true true Love
True true love

He will be her sword and she his shield
They'll sew Queen's Anne lace together along the Elysian Fields
They'll take the time to watch it grow
From down here it looks a lot like snow
They'll stare into each other's eyes until this winter dies
She'll lay down with him and make angels
He will piss a heart into the snow
Children learn to doubt there's springtime if desert winter's all they know
You can take your stupid little smirk
You can shove it up your ass, you lost and lonely cynical jerk
'Cause the sweetest , the deepest smell
The purest water from the well
Is true true love
It's true true, true true love

*Milton' Lycidas

**Peter Stampfel

August 2002

Charlie Guitar

for the late great Charlies Koster & Christian

Swing souled Charlie Guitar

Blue as nostalgia

Versatile as coal tar

His head's out the window, like he's late for a train.

The King's down the station, pan-handling for a chord change.

And then the President steps forwards. He begins to blow.

His first breath's impression is felt clean in the back-row.

And Charlie's dressed easy, like a rhythm well-wore,

And he'll play a song written long before you could have been born.

Tonight the club's packed in three-deep, all these walls can take.

While all may be dreamers, some are more than awake.

And the club owner's well rested, has no trouble with sleep;

He drifts off easy, counting the evening receipts.

But these cats will catch it once Charlie's begun.

He's more ways to skin 'em, but hey it only takes one.

Put your head to the track, feel the train on its way.

That Bandstand-To-Your-Heart Express, every Saturday.

And you'll be blown back when it rolls on by.

This train is richer. He'll paint you a picture

From his underground rainbow, Charlie's intent

On mining colors that no German chemist could invent.

Beware imitators who might toss you a bone.

Only Charlie blows kisses hewn out of stone.

Some look to critics. Some look to gold;

Some look to flags 'cause they can't feel the wind blow.

But if you look to Charlie Guitar, be forewarned,

He'll play a song written long before you could have been born.

Catch a train to the stars.

Swing solid forever.

Swing solid, my Charlie Guitar.

Swing solid.

-June to August 1988

Love Is Gonna Break The Fall

Broken at the bottom of a red-green hill
Do she love me? Yes, she will
I gotta a felling my heart's gonna take a spill
And love is gonna break the fall

She's all the way from Baton Rouge
I want to be the one she choose
I'd gladly give her all I got to lose
Love is gonna break the fall

Sure, there's lots of problems
Big surprise, I've always had a few
Life is bound to knock you to and fro
At least we know there's somewhere to go

When all the hope and the help is in the hinter land
It's not a problem if you understand
Just how I feel when I hold your hand
Love is gonna break the fall

I could have wandered forever
For better or, more likely, for worse
But you bound me in your arms, you came and set me free
We are a party. Let's remarry

For you, I'd sail across the ocean in a paper cup
I get to you, I'm gonna drink you up
Ain't gonna stop until you've had enough
Save the last, it's the best of all
Ain't gonna worry
Love is gonna break the fall.
-December 1986

Amazing

For Scott and Wendy Hermes on their wedding day

I find this amazing

I do

To look out on all these honored guests

The last time I came here

I wore a look of panic and a flower on my chest

Let me show you the pictures

Of my brother laughing

And your father staring

As he walked you toward me

And your hands were trembling

And somehow

You're still here with me

Well I guess it took

And it took about an hour

And the hour passed in a moment

And at this moment I'm being haunted by every detail

I swear by these ghosts

They've a flair for dramatics

You'll find you're down on a knee

Holding a hand

And thinking "Carpe Diem"

And then asking 'Won't you stay with me?

I'll love you forever won't you please stay with me?"

Congratulations

And the best of luck

Now that everything is changed

And if you two don't feel any different right now

Hey that's okay

You're never alone

And though you're probably stunned

The one thing I can tell you is

This is the hardest thing you two have ever begun

Congratulations

You'll find this amazing

I'll love you forever

Hope this stays with you forever too

-November 1991

The Ballad of Mary O'Connor

Music and lyric by Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis

Additional Lyrics by Rich Krueger

By the mid-afternoon of September eleven,
Mary O'Connor had emptied her drawer.
She was saying goodbye to her office in midtown,
Four-sixty Lex, on the fortieth floor.
Ride, ride, Mary O'Connor,
Down to the street, to the sirens and cries.
The fortieth floor ain't no place for you, Mary,
The air's filled with paper.
Ash chokes the skies.

So for months she stayed home; she was taking no chances.
Her city still smoldered with fire and fear.
But she found an old photo of her as a child,
Her hair lit with sunshine, her eyes brave and clear.
So high, Mary O'Connor,
Up on the top of the Empire State.
Your mother would take you 'cause that's what you wanted.
From up there you'd dream of the life you'd create.

So twelve months, and a line winds along Thirty-Third Street.
The mood, it is quiet, the faces are grave.
When a guy makes some joke about bombs and bad timing,
His wife twists his arm and says, "Can't you behave".
Ride again, ride, Mary O'Connor,
Back to the top of the Empire State.
The wind up there whispers of all that you hoped for.
It's waiting for you on the eighty-sixth floor.
So ride, ride, Mary O'Connor,
Up to the deck on the eighty-sixth floor.
Remember, this city still has hopes for you, Mary,
And you'll see 'em all from the eighty-sixth floor.
Nov 2001

The One You Love

I don't tell fortunes

My days reading tea leaves are through.

But I don't have to gaze at your palm

To know what you'd like me to do.

How we got here we'll never know.

The future is a prison and you back in slow,

When the bars come down over the windows

You're caught by all you thought you needed to do.

I doubt this is something a free man would choose

You've held me 'til your knuckles were white,

And you wonder how your fingers got bruised.

I've hardened my touch. I've pulled out the crutch.

Excuse me if I fall too much,

But I've stood trial already convicted

Of taking everything we had to lose.

So don't bother dusting for fingerprints;

You don't need to find even one.

You can ignore the latencies,

I'm standing here holding a smoking gun.

The vows we've sewn wait by the telephone.

Is it the governor's call or the midnight walk alone?

You were the last one I thought of

When I killed the one you love.

They say that the last Ice Age went on too long.

We could stand and watch the next glaciers pass

Before either of us admits we're wrong.

If I could just remember what you saw in me.

If I knew what the future used to be.

But you just stay hurt and angry

And all I do is write these songs.]

So don't bother dusting for fingerprints;

You don't need to find even one.

You can ignore the latencies,

I'm standing here holding the smoking gun.

They pack the court to come and see

The talking corpse that once was me.

He was the last one I thought of

When I killed the one you love.

We were the last one I thought of

When I killed the one you love.

-May 1987

The Uncertainty Principle (After Heisenberg)

The move was handled with care.

I taped up that last box, then threw it down the stairs.

Bound what physically remained down with rope

And drove away slow, hoping against hope.

I turned on the radio and listened to the AM whine.

1200 kHz of 'It's hard to say goodbye'.

And the last great hopeless romantic

Steps to the blackboard and explains love with Quantum Mechanics.

There's a problem of balance and grace

In a world spinning off into time and space

Stand still one moment you're bound to lose your place,

And everything that mattered will be out-of-date and scattered.

And as this is the last love song,

If you don't mind, I'm gonna sing along.

It's just a simple tune running through an idiot's head.

Get a bit too serious and your face turns red,

But at least, for this one moment,

There is nothing left to be said.

- December 1988 to March 1989

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy (Red Book #493)

Music by Rich Krueger

Lyric by Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea
There's a kindness in His justice
Which is more than liberty

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than heaven
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgement given

There is welcome for the sinner
And more graces for the good
There is mercy with the Savior
There is healing in His blood

There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this
There is room for fresh creation
In that upper home of bliss

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of men's minds
And the heart of the eternal
Is most wonderfully kind

There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head

'Tis not all we owe to Jesus
It is something more than all
Greater good because of evil
Larger mercy through the fall

If our love were but more simple
We should take Him at His word
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of the Lord

Heaven

Two lovers are alone
In a room smaller than this
They gaze into each other's eyes
And then they share a kiss
It's Walt Disney and James Thurber
Lying in each other's arms
Swapping spittle and new fables
No man lets his brother fall to harm

It's their world and welcome to it
A Magic Kingdom on the bed
Jim and Walt start getting mousey
They've got Mick's ears up on their heads
Then they get out the crayons
And draw cartoons on the spread
If you whistle while you're working
You can forget that you are dead.

Up in Heaven
Whose to say things do not happen this a-way
Pablo Picasso said today
'I'm gonna make Henri Matisse eat hay.
Then ride him to the town hall
Where I'll have him prance and neigh.'
And Toulouse-Lautrec has grown to eight feet tall.
-February 1993