

Lyrics for the Songs

From the Album

“Ghosts of the Old West”

By George Mann and Mick Coates

For the West

It's a wonderful day for a ride, got the wagon hitched on a pole outside
Let me take you down, past the pokies on the ground
Just you and me, Sunday riding through the town
It's a wonderful day for a ride

You can't live your life 'round a game of chance
Expecting a river that smashes the dam
'Cause it's surging now with all life has to offer
I can feel it pull me like a riptide through the water
It's a wonderful day for a ride

I've been happy for all of my life
And I'll call this my home 'til the day that I die
But there's a team of wagons heading out tomorrow for the west
And when the wagons roll their wheels, I aim to be among them
Though I'm not sure what's awaiting us

Let me take you down, past the pokies on the ground
Just you and me, Sunday riding all around

It's a wonderful day for a ride
So Mother know there's a brighter side
Two other boys will carry on, someday they also will be gone
So please don't try to tell me I'm not ready now
When I get there, I promise I'll send word back

It's a wonderful day for a ride
It's a wonderful day for a ride

That Sweet Plaintalking Country Girl

I recall the night she smiled and shook me by the hand
I was at a little country bar playing in a third-rate cowboy band
Well, my forlorn heart it skipped a beat, I stammered like a fool
And that was when I met her, that sweet plaintalking country girl

There was no city flashness in her honest eyes of blue
And from around her yeller hair there shone a golden copper hue
I'd been lonesome for awhile, and now I'm lonesome still
And I wonder what she's thinking, that sweet plaintalking country girl

Well, I done a bit of travelling and I saw her now and then
And from what I could gather, I thought she had a man
Meanwhile living kept me working, knew some ladies for awhile
But she never was far from my mind, that sweet plaintalking country girl

There's a story going round that now she's lonesome too
And once again my hopes are raised and I would be so true
Well, maybe she's got other plans, or will her love unfurl?
Or what, what if she says no? That sweet plaintalking country girl
That sweet plaintalking country girl

Written by Michael Coates

Ghosts of the Old West

Been a long time, it's been a long time since I've been anywhere near these parts
And it's been such a long time since I've let anyone near my heart
Her name was Ella Mae Johnson, and oh, I loved her so
But her father didn't like me, and he vowed he'd never let her go

All the sites and memories still haunt me
And they will not let me rest
Here I am stuck in El Paso
With the ghosts of the Old West

Ella Mae was such a fine creature, just as kind as anyone could be
She had such a love for animals, and I know that she loved me
So I gave her a little black kitten, but that made her father mad
And in a fit of jealousy, he shot that kitten dead

All the sites and memories still haunt me
And they will not let me rest
Here I am stuck in Tucson
With the ghosts of the Old West

Full of rage, I loaded my rifle, in my anger everything was red
Saw a bald head standing by a window, and I shot that bastard dead
But his brother had come for a visit, that was him lying on the ground
So I ran away, held my head in shame and I never returned to that town

All the sites and memories still haunt me
And they will not let me rest
Here I am, so close to Phoenix
With the ghosts of the Old West
With the ghosts of the Old West

Oh, I heard she died of a fever
Not too long after I'd been gone
Ain't it strange how feelings last forever
And the work of these ghosts is never done?

In Irons From Limerick City

Patrick Kelly I sentence you - July of 1820
Far from your loving family - In irons from Limerick City
I find that you are guilty - the crime of insurrection
Seven years transportation - the price of indiscretion

In the belly of the Southworth - under billowed sails
From the wretched crowded cove of Cork - Bound for New South Wales
One hundred days we suffered - In blocks and rusty chains
In stifling heat and sickness - Bitter cold and rain

We thank you Ann and Patrick for your hardship and your pain
Now you've freed us all from the landlord's bloody stain

Two years on the Woodman - convict women in the hold
Some with children, some alone - some young and some old
Into the female factory - Unknown and forlorn
A mother, Annie Joyce - A daughter from her torn

We thank you Ann and Patrick for your hardship and your pain
Now you've freed us all from the landlord's bloody stain

They married with permission - Hunter's River was their home
Kept the farm alive - but it never was their own
Annie died of fever - when her last child was born
In a lonely grave - she left them there to mourn

We thank you Ann and Patrick for your hardship and your pain
Now you've freed us all from the landlord's bloody stain

We thank you Ann and Patrick for your hardship and your pain
Now you've freed us all from the landlord's bloody stain

They Call Her “Dolly Parton”

She hears the knock upon the door
The nice young man says “Time to go”
She runs her hands over her blouse
And she straightens out her bow

She twirls her fingers through the curls
Long blonde tresses on the wall
Then she deftly puts it on
And he rolls her down the hall

And they call her “Dolly Parton” when she comes into the room
She just sits there in the corner, another prisoner in this tomb
She can’t hear them when they snicker, and I’m glad that she can’t see
Because I know she’s in her finest clothes, and she dressed up just for me

She hears the clapping all around
And she’s quick to join right in
Then the young man wheels her out
Back to her room again

And they call her “Dolly Parton” when she comes into the room
She just sits there in the corner, another prisoner in this tomb
She can’t hear them when they snicker, and I’m glad that she can’t see
Because I know she’s in her finest clothes, and she dressed up just for me

Yeah, they call her “Dolly Parton,” the princess of the second floor
And I can barely keep from faltering when I walk in through that door
When I walk in through that door

The Ghosts of the Old West

Whiling away my time sipping on a marguerita
In the back blocks of El Paso, in old Rosa's cantina
Marty's on the jukebox, I close my eyes and listen
As he relives the tale of a tragic love gone missing

The ghosts of the old west ride down that mountainside
Off Mount Cristo Rey, he waves to his would-be bride
With bullets flying he tumbles, she runs to where he lies
In the arms of his fellina the young cowboy dies

From the high plains to the valleys, you'll find them at rest
Boot Hills bear the names of the ghosts of the old west

The ghosts of the old west ride, good or otherwise
There's bullet holes in the stairs where Bell the deputy dies
In the Lincoln County Jail, I stared down from that window pane
I see Pecos Bob look up when Kid Antrim called his name

The ghosts of the west still ride in the shimmering desert haze
A lone rider drifts northeast through long New Mexico days
To a lover in Fort Sumner, but the devil lays ahead
And from in the midnight shadows Pat Garrett shoots him dead

From the high plains to the valleys, no matter who was best
The lilies dance upon the graves of the ghosts of the old west
From the high plains to the valleys, those who stood the test
The lilies dance upon the graves of the ghosts of the old west

Written by Michael Coates and Kenneth Barber

The Reverend Mr. Black

(Written by Mike Stoller, Billy Edd Wheeler, and Jerry Leiber)

He rode easy in the saddle, he was tall and lean
And at first you'd have thought nothing but a streak of mean
Could make a man look so downright strong
But one look in his eyes and you knew you were wrong
He was a mountain of a man, and I want you to know
He could preach hot hell or freezing snow
He carried a Bible in a canvas sack
And folks just called him the Reverend Mr. Black
He was poor as a beggar, but he rode like a king
Sometimes in the evening, I'd hear him sing

I've got to walk that lonesome valley
I've got to walk it by myself
Nobody else can walk it for me
I got to walk it by myself

If ever I could have thought this man in black
Was soft, and had any yellow up his back
I gave that notion up the day
A lumberjack came in and it wasn't to pray
Yeah, he kicked open the meeting house door
And he cussed everybody up and down the floor
Then, when things got quiet in the place
He walked up and cusses in the preacher's face
He hit that Reverend like a kick of a mule
And to my way of thinking it took a real fool
To turn the other face to that lumberjack
But that's what he did, the Reverend Mr. Black
He stood like a rock, a man among men
And he let that lumberjack hit him again
And then with a voice as quiet as could be
He cut him down like a big oak tree
When he said:

You've got to walk that lonesome valley
You've got to walk it by yourself
Lord, nobody else can walk it for you
You've got to walk it by yourself

It's been many years since we had to part
And I guess I learned his ways by heart
I can still hear his sermons ring
Down in the valley where he used to sing
I followed him, yes, sir, and I don't regret it
And I hope I will always be a credit
To his memory, because I want you to understand
The Reverend Mr. Black was my old man

You've got to walk that lonesome valley
You've got to walk it by yourself
Lord, nobody else can walk it for you
You've got to walk it by yourself

By Billy Edd Wheeler, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller
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The Ballad of Ira Hayes

(Written by Peter La Farge)

Ira Hayes, Ira Hayes

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinking Indian nor the Marine that went to war

Gather round me people there's a story I would tell
About a brave young Indian you should remember well
From the land of the Pima Indian
A proud and noble band
Who farmed the Phoenix valley
In Arizona land

Down the ditches for a thousand years
The water grew Ira's peoples' crops
'Till the white man stole the water rights
And the sparkling water stopped

Now Ira's folks were hungry
And their land grew crops of weeds
When war came, Ira volunteered
And forgot the white man's greed

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinking Indian nor the Marine that went to war

They battled up Iwo Jima's hill
Two hundred and fifty men
But only twenty-seven lived
walk back down again

To

And when the fight was over
And when Old Glory raised
among the men who held it high
Was the Indian, Ira Hayes

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinking Indian nor the Marine that went to war

Ira returned a hero
Celebrated through the land
He was wined and speeched and honored;
Everybody shook his hand

But he was just a Pima Indian
No water, no crops, no chance
At home nobody cared what Ira'd done
And when do the Indians dance

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinking Indian nor the Marine that went to war

Then Ira started drinking hard;
Jail was often his home
They'd let him raise the flag and lower it
Like you'd throw a dog a bone!

He died early drunk one morning
Alone in the land he fought to save
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch
Was the grave for Ira Hayes

Call him drunken Ira Hayes, he won't answer anymore
Not the whiskey drinking Indian nor the Marine that went to war

Yeah, call him drunken Ira Hayes
But his land is just as dry
And his ghost is lyin' thirsty
In the ditch where Ira died

By Peter la Farge
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Anymore

(Written by Harry Stamper)

I can't sing about the torment of a love that's left behind
While our leaders can't agree on a future for our kind.
I can't praise those good old prison days, there's too much to fight for,
Just gets hard to sing those songs anymore.

I grew up with Hank Williams and the music of my dad,
Singing songs about the outlaws and the heroes good and bad.
When you're standing in the shadow of your last and final war
Just gets hard to sing those songs anymore.
Well I know there's a time to run, I know there's a time to hide,
I know there's a time when we should all let a cooler head decide.
And there's a time to hold on and there's a time to let go,
And there's a time to just stand up and tell them, "No!"

No more Nicaraguas, no more Vietnams,
No more rolling over, no more sitting on your hands.
When you're standing in the shadow of your last and final war,
It just gets hard to sing those songs anymore.

I can't sing about the railroads, or about the good old days,
When there's people who can end our world in 50 thousand ways,
And we pay for prosperity with the slaughter of the poor,
It just gets hard to sing those songs anymore.

I'd love to be the singer that makes everybody dance,
And I'd like to see my children grow up if they have the chance,
When the lessons of the past have become something to ignore
It just gets hard to sing those songs anymore.
Well I know there's a time to run, I know there's a time to hide,
I know there's a time when we should all let a cooler head decide.
And there's a time to hold on and there's a time to let go,
And there's a time to just stand up and tell them, "No!"

No more Nicaraguas, no more Vietnams,
No more rolling over, no more sitting on your hands.
When you're standing in the shadow of your last and final war,
It just gets hard to sing those songs anymore.

The Lonesome Plains

(Written by Charlottte Buckton)

In my time I have travelled from coast to coast
But it's here on the plains that I like the most
Where the gold light of sunrise it hits my eyes
Lays me bare to the frailties of life

Oh lay me down to rest on the lonesome plains
Where nothing but the earth will know my name

In my life I have wandered from east to west
I've traced coastlines without no rest
Oh but there is no place where I'd rather be
Than the open sands, exposed and free

Oh lay me down to rest on the lonesome plains
Where nothing but the earth will know my name
Where nothing but the earth will know my name
Oh lay me down to rest on the lonesome plains

Oh and when my time it comes to die
I'll ride out beneath the open sky
And before the morning can gift me light
I'll lay myself down in the weary night

Oh lay me down to rest on the lonesome plains

'Til the Cows and 'Roos Come Home

It's hot tonight in Maldon town, and the hottest jam anywhere around
Is round Mick's kitchen table late at night
Where the cold beer pours and the whiskey flows
Where this is going nobody knows
Anything can happen before daylight

About the seventh shot I started thinking that I should lay down
But out here you can see for miles, miles and miles around

"I think I see a cow out there, hey Mick, there goes another!"
That ain't a cow," he said to me, "it's a 'roo, my drunken brother!"
"I swear I heard it moo," said I, "or maybe I'm just stoned..."
We'll keep on drinking whiskey 'til the cows and 'roos come home!"

Don't go walking 'round Maldon town if you don't know your way around
The drop bears are waiting just out of sight
You're better off staying close to home, in the bush they'll never find your bones
Maybe we should just call it a night

About the seventh shot I started thinking that I should lay down
But out here you can see for miles and miles and miles around

"I think I see a cow out there, hey Mick, there goes another!"
That ain't a cow," he said to me, "it's a 'roo, my drunken brother!"
"I swear I heard it moo," said I, "or maybe I'm just stoned..."
We'll keep on drinking whiskey 'til the cows and 'roos come home!"

(Chorus repeat)

Perhaps the 'roos let the cattle out, and now they're running free
But cows and 'roos on the barbecue, they look the same to me
"I swear I heard it moo," said I, "or maybe I'm just stoned..."
We'll keep on drinking whiskey 'til the cows and 'roos come home!
We'll keep on drinking whiskey 'til the cows and 'roos come home!"

