



SONG STORIES FROM MARK ELLIOTT'S AMERICAN ROAD

AMERICAN ROAD

This is a song about a journey, a sojourn told through the eyes of travelers who have come before. But ultimately, it asks the question of my own providence, my own American Road.

RIDE OUT OF RENO

The bonds of brotherly love know no boundaries. As intense as the feelings of rivalry, knowing your brother is in trouble and the urge to mount a rescue is as strong and natural as any law of nature and most surely any laws of man.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Some “testify” in court, some in church and some in song. Enough said.

BORN TO FLY

I was always that little kid with his “head in the sky” and his “hand out the car window just like a wing.” I dreamed of flying constantly and on several occasions did my best to emulate the Wright Brothers with my own flying machines. I not only failed miserably to break the surly bonds of earth, but also the rock-laden stretches of my own driveway. I sacrificed cuts and bruises to the Gods of fate, sparing myself the expected broken bones. Many years later I found the calling to the skies, finally in balance with opportunity and means. My pilot’s license is still my most prized possession.

PRIVATE IN PATTON’S ARMY

War is hell, even when it is just. Some never return home and those who do are changed forever. The battleground changes from foxhole and trench to patio and family room. The enemy, once foreign and easily condemned, in a word or a sound becomes family, innocent and fragile. War is never really over.

BASEBALL & BEATLES

My friend Jim and his daughter Elisa are two of the biggest Baseball and Beatles freaks I know. Between the two of them, I think they know every pitching and hitting statistic and which guitar was played on which Beatles’ song. It was actually embarrassing being “schooled” by Elisa on those facts when she was still small. Jim tells the same harrowing stories of parent –teenager battles as all of us do, but between them they always had their own, personal common ground. They had a language that always transcended parental stupidity and adolescent angst. That language was baseball and Beatles.

JACKASS FAMILY

We all have our fair share of dysfunction in our families and in ourselves. I think we'll all just pretend this song is about someone else, o.k? As the old saying goes, "everyone's crazy but thee and me, and sometimes I wonder about thee."

OLD BERLE JONES

Old Berle Jones was one man, one miner and one story. He may have been anonymous outside the hills and hollows of his home and beyond the ravages of an unnatural destruction. But his is the struggle that defined a people, a geography, and an industry. The coal mining companies used the "Broad Form Deed" to indenture the service of whole families, including their modest homes and land. The "Broad Form Deed" allowed the coal companies to own the mineral rights under the soil, without actually owning the land on top and without the permission of the landowners. The result was land, houses, livelihoods and people (both dead and living) washed away, both figuratively and literally! The greatest sin it seems, is not that it happened, but that it is happening.

JACKET

Hand-me-down clothes most often come from brothers and sisters. However, when they come from strangers, they sometimes come with a spirit and a story all their own. When you put them on you can feel it, that old story, that other life – or maybe I'm just nuts!

NEW ORLEANS

It's arguably one of the most romantic cities in the world. I've been lucky enough to walk through the French Quarter while still in love. Looking back now, it's hard to imagine how love can come undone after being sanctified by an experience like that. But, I guess not even New Orleans...

OLD DOGS

Guys have been referred to as "dogs" in relationships forever, and perhaps we have been guilty from time to time. I don't know about you, but my dogs are much better at being human than I am. Maybe it's not such a pejorative label. After all, Mark Twain said, "Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in."

FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL

We should all have someplace private and comforting to go, a safe haven to reveal our strengths and shortcomings. It should be a place of honest beauty, beyond reproach of the cruelties of life and fate.