

All for Loving You

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About the time that time began,
Before there was a past.
All was sucked from nothing,
In that giant primordial blast.
You can ask the why's and wherefore's
But from my point of view:
There's only one reason for it all:
It's all for loving you.

For loving you

It's all for loving you

It's what I do.

I'm for loving you.

That giant arrow of history
Pointing right at you.
It's all for loving you.

The fall of the Roman Empire
Dark Ages into light
Colonies in the new world
Prosperity and the fights.
All a giant conspiracy
So I'd run into you.
There's only one reason for it all:
It's all for loving you.

For loving you

It's all for loving you

It's what I do.

I'm for loving you.

All a giant conspiracy
So I'd run into you.
It's all for loving you.

The students, the theologians,
They wonder what it's for.
Why the pleasures? Why the suffering?
How come beer and how come war?
Up close and personal
I think I've thought it through
The reason that I'm here on earth:
It's all for loving you.

For loving you

It's all for loving you

It's what I do.

I'm for loving you.

Call it a compulsion
But it's just what I do.
It's all for loving you.

Turn Out the Lights ©2001 by R.A. Gramann

Fear of the unknown,
Fear of the sounds at night.
When I was a child,
I slept better with a light.
Until that night the lights went out
When I really saw the stars
Now I long for the darkest nights
To lay out in the yard.

*Turn out the lights.
Turn out the lights.
Let the darkness fill the night sky
Let the stars shine out so bright.
Peer into the universe
Feel humble and small.
May the starlight and the wonder
Shine down on us all.*

First Pleiades, then Orion
Creep across the sky at night.
There's still time to get Sirius
See Pollux shine so bright.
In summer there's the teapot
Million worlds in that steam.
Whose inhabitants watch the Milky Way
And wonder what it means.

Lights of the city cloak
The mystery and wonder.
More a ceiling than a universe
That's the sky we're under.
That brightness makes your world so close
Does it really banish fright?
See farther in the darkness
Than with the brightest light.

A fuzzy spot, a thousand stars
The telescope reveals.
And look into the blackness
Where the planets dust congeals.
Ride our planet through the history
Of all that was and is
While crickets chirp and bullfrogs burp
And meteors downward whiz.

You're Nothing But a Pack of Neurons ©1992 by R.A. Gramann
with apologies to Francis H.C. Crick

**You're nothing but a pack of neurons
In a shapely bag of goo.
All your thoughts and dreams,
Your hopes and schemes
Are electro-chemical, too.
You are what you eat,
From your head to your feet,
So watch out what you chew.
You're nothing but a pack of neurons,
But I'm in love with you oo oo,
I'm in love with you.**

Repeat first chorus

The first time I ever saw your face, dear,
My ions began to diffuse.
Your eyes aglow
Made my sodium flow
Through those membrane avenues.
When our fingers unite,
More than synapses excite,
And your lips I can't refuse.
I know we're more than just a chemical
reaction,
Cause I'm in love with you oo oo,
I'm in love with you.

**You're nothing but a pack of neurons
Controlling a bag of goo.
All your thoughts and dreams,
Your hopes and schemes
Are electro-chemical, too.
You are what you eat,
'Cept for what you excrete,
So watch out what you chew.
You're nothing but a pack of neurons,
But I'm in love with you oo oo,
I'm in love with you.**

I'd like to know how my fondest memories
Are stored in hydrocarbon slime.
I can see your face,
Feel your warm embrace,
Or just think of you any time.
Four million years of evolution,
But we only get one lifetime.
Let's go and mix our chromosomes together,
Cause I'm in love with you oo oo,
I'm in love with you.

Hard rain awoke me in the night.
That only means one thing to me.
A bunch of guys with plastic boats
Will be skipping work today.
Grandma has to die again
We all meet at the edge of town,
Driving for the eastern slopes
To ride the water down.

**I love to ride the back
Of a rushing mountain stream,
To thread between the eddies
Amidst the banks of April green.
The icy water warms my blood,
Waves splash over me,
In the river I am young, I am free.**

To rise before the mist has cleared,
To chase the rainfall down the hillside.
Climb the goat trail road
To the bank where I unload.
I dress to seal my city skin
From the icy mountain water in
Which I'll float without my boat
If I miss a brace.

As I paddle down the mountain stream
The unsuspecting beaver
slaps his tail and swims to flee
the brightly colored threat.
The drinking deer sniffs the air
and bounds into the thicket
While Blue Heron wing in front of me
Then fly back overhead.

To rise before the mist has cleared,
To chase the rainfall down the hillside.

Rappahannock Running Free © 1993 by R. A. Gramann

Again, the eagle beats his wings
To climb above the trees
Over the locks on the Rappahannock
What's left of history.
Where the Council and the contractors
Over quality disagreed.
Where the present meets the past
And some things never change.

**For a man can only hold
A piece of earth
For a lifetime.
Water leaks through fingers
You can't hold it at all.
I love the Rappahannock
And its water running free.
In the rapids of this river,
That's where I want to be.**

From Carter's Run at Waterloo
It drops three hundred feet.
Forty-seven locks in fifty miles
1849 complete.
With first year's drought and railroads
So quickly obsolete.
A canal system for just four years
And history ever since.

An aqueduct and wood crib dam
Fed power to the mills,
And factories and tanneries
The foundations are there still.
The concrete dam in 1910
Electric generators until
Only thirty years ago
And now a poor man's home.

Poison ivy coats the bank
Where you climb around the dam.
A century and a half of portages
Canoes across the land.
The damn dam blocks the spawning fish
Floods rapids behind the span.
I say its time to blow it up.
There's no need for this dam.

The Battle of the Squirrel and the CEO

© 1992 by R.A. Gramann

Captain of industry,
Corporate leader,
Retired to the country,
Set up a bird feeder.
Finch-colored plumage,
And not before eight,
The chorus of birdsong
Not boardroom debate.

But the squirrels eat the birdseed
Frighten finches away.
The squirrels they get fat.
They pig-out all day.
Chased away from the feeder
They're back when your gone.
Scourge of retirees
The fiends of the lawn.

**When you fight the squirrels,
You get no holidays,
No vacation, no weekend.
The squirrels elude your grand designs.
Each day they eat again.
When you fight the squirrels,
Don't let your guard down,
Keep your wits sharp till the end.
There's nothing else that matters,
You've got that birdseed
To defend.**

He put the birdfeeder
Up on a pole.
But that didn't deter
The squirrel from his goal.
A coating of Crisco
Didn't get in his way.
The squirrel climbed right up
To a birdseed buffet.

A flange on the pole
Just slowed him down.
The squirrel shook the pole,
Knocked seed to the ground.
The angry retiree
Will try anything.
To avoid defeat
By this takeover king.

Chorus

The feeder was hung
By a rope from a tree.
But squirrels can climb ropes
When the birdseed is free.
A sheet metal barrier
Didn't stop him for long.
He gnawed through the rope
And he ate all day long.

So if you have wondered
Why the world's such a mess,
Look what men do
When they're doing their best.
Outsmarted by rodents,
Too proud to give in,
They use up their retirement
In a fight they can't win.

Kid's Talk © 1998 by R.A.&M.L.
Gramann

It might be oral tradition.
It might be in the genes.
They didn't learn it from their parents.
Did they hear it in their dreams?
March of civilization
Hasn't changed the playtime screams.
Voices from the children
Still reflect the same old themes:

It's mine.
Give it back
I'm gonna tell.
I don't care.
You're it
No tag backs.
Me first.
It's not fair.

If it hadn't been said before,
They'd have to make it up.
When you're only four years old,
Your feelings just erupt.
If you can't remember
What it's like to be so small
Walk by any playground
Listen to the calls.

They say the world is changing.
Not like when we were young.
Folks are mean, the ozone's lean,
Even children carry guns.
But if you listen to the little kids
You might suspect that they're the same.
Try remembering what it felt like
To play in children's games.

Kickball, football, slides and swings.
Race and fight, roll on the ground.
Jumping rope, they dance and sing
Might be loud, that's how fun sounds.

Childhood is for learning
About other times than today,
About life and love and planning
And why all things can't be play.
About the little deals and big deals,
And how to wait your turn,
And when it's best to walk away
And when you should return.

Try to Change It © 2000 by R.A.
Gramann

Must have been the onions
Caused this funny state I'm in.
Another try, you'll have to pry
Your way under my skin.
Thank you for the onions
That really touched my heart.
I feel just like that vegetable
With layers come apart.

**Try to change it.
But I can't change it.
Locomotive rolls on
Through hills, and snow, and rain.
Try change it
Why can't I change it?
Strength of will, push and pull,
I'm bettin' on that train.**

Gotta focus
Time is growing short
I beg for concentration,
I count on your support.
If it weren't so difficult
I'd a finished yesterday
Ask me just what I need
I need another day.

*Thinking 'bout mortality
Thinking 'bout the truth
More likely gonna slow that train
Than slow the loss of youth.*

That sad song on the radio
It didn't bring the tears
Thinking 'bout the ones I loved
And haven't seen for years.
Can't be like it used to be
No comfort from the past
What have you done for me today?
What's ever built that lasts?

Each One's a Little Bit Different ©2001
by R.A. Gramann

I'd like to take each one of 'em home.
Now, wouldn't that be fun?

*And each one's a little bit different
Some with piercing notes,
Crisp and vibrant.
Some more mellow
Like a bell.
Or, a little warmer
On the bottom.
'Sides, I never held the view
That I had to pick just one.
I'd like to tickle each and every neck,
And it's time that I begun.*

Mahogany's a stable wood.
Sings out loud and clear.
Bass is strong and airy.
Richness everyone can hear.
So says the Taylor catalog.
With guitars of every style.
You know it's hard to pick just one,
So I'll just play awhile.

And there amongst all the woods
Rosewood's lovely grain
Deep brown shiny body,
Rich harmonics, long sustain.
Then there's koa, walnut, and sappel.
Great sound from every one
I'd like to take each one of 'em home.
Now, wouldn't that be fun?

Then there's beer:

Beer from every nation
Malt and hops and yeast.
No way to put 'em in order
From the greatest to the least.
Pilsners, lagers, ales, and stouts,
Flavors on the tongue.
All the beers I love to savor
So I'll drink every one.

Then there's women...

Instrumental break.

Chorus, then
repeat last two lines with these words:

Best of Friends ©1998 R.A.Gramann

Thursday morning rainfall
East side of the mountains
Drops form into rivulets
And gullies into streams.
Sun was high on Monday
When swirling Thursday's water
Rode the river past the town
But the river's still with me.

**River stays beside me
Though the water's always changing.
Waters blend, Best of friends.
Best friends last all life.**

Want to finish 'fore the night falls.
Start early in the morning.
I'll carry up the shingles
You hammer, then we'll trade.
Side by side, we work along
Words that matter weave among
Our patter through the heat and sun,
My best friend's here with me.

**We've stood so long together
Though we both are always changing.
Like waters blend, Best of friends.
Best friends last all life.**

*Round my body like a favorite chair
Wrinkles, folds, familiar air
Details no one wants to know
Each day I love you even more.*

Dusted by the grey sprite
Just another milestone overnight.
Memories from my childhood
Don't seem so long ago.
Yet every day, you're someone new.
Each day, I fall in love with you.
More certain than the sky is blue
You'll be my friend for life.

**We've stood so long together
Though we both are always changing.
Best of friends, Next-of-kin.
Best friends last all life.**

Thursday morning rainfall
East side of the mountains
Drops form into rivulets
And gullies into streams.
Sun was high on Monday
When swirling Thursday's water
Rode the river past the town
But the river's still with me.

**River stays beside me
Though the water's always changing.
Like waters blend, Best of friends.
Best friends last all life.**

**Best of friends, Next-of-kin.
We'll be best friends for life.**

Last Sunday in October
At 2:00 a.m.
All the trains in the nation
Stop right on plan.
It's time to wait for
The return of Standard Time.

But time goes on
No matter what we do,
The clock keeps on ticking
Even when we're through
I think it's time
To talk about time reform.

Metric time
Makes it easy to count
Your days away.
Those powers of ten
Make figuring when
As simple as ...decimal addition.

The basic unit of time
Is still the day.
You say, "Back in a milliday,"
You mean "more than a minute."
Eighty-six point four seconds
To run to the room in back.

A football quarter
Takes a centiday.
The whole game is
Forty millidays of play.
The time clock has no colon,
It just has a decimal point.

Metric time
Makes it easy to count
Your days away.
Those powers of ten
Make remembering when
As simple as ...decimal addition.

The year can't match the sun
Use the kiloday.
Christmas comes once a kiloday
It came too often, anyway.
The downside is:
Teens are middle-aged.

First you drop the months
With crazy lengths you can't remember.
Each hecto has one hundred days
Unusber to December.

The days in a decaday
Are numbered one through ten.
You'll have to wait 'till Nineday to
Have a nice deckend.
And a scheduled dayoff
Is still called a holiday.

chorus

So, I hope you can see
How metric simplifies
It eliminates confusion,
It makes us all wise.
Hear that train whistle,
It must be the nine eighty-two point forty four.
Right on time.

On the Edge

©2000 by R.A. Gramann

Drinking from a spring
Sleeping in the leaves
Eating shoots and berries
Live among the trees.
Body growing dirty
Body growing lean
Body finding home
Where it happens to be.

On the edge of daylight**On the edge of woods****On the edge of habitation****On the edge of gone for good.**

Couple miles an hour
That's fast enough for me
Walking through the mountains
A tunnel through the trees.
Always kind of hungry
Always getting by
Drinking independence
Sheltered by the sky.

So far from city lights
Hardly ever see the stars
Muscle pains, exhaustion
Fast sleep when it gets dark.
Wakened in the night
Hear the possum waddle round
My tent blocks his ramble
A stranger on his ground.

So far from city lights
So far from city life
So far from city schedules
So far from TV Guide
So far from calculations
So far from bank accounts
Where money can't buy nothing
Where you shave off every ounce.

*Some edges sharp and well-defined
Like cliffs or knives or mother's scolds.
But I live in fuzzy in-betweens
Where it's hard to tell
What's in the shadows.*

Is it magic in the shadows?
Is it love of simple ways
Is fleeing from the tech world
Keeps me hiking every day?
Is it touch with things that matter?
Or disdain for things that don't
Some days I think I'll go back
Some days I think I won't.

All my food and home
Riding in my pack
A smelly but a simple life
I carry on my back.
Sometimes, I hit town for a shower
And a restaurant cooked meal
But soon I'm ready for the woods
And that lonesome outdoor feel.

The Barns © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

White was once the color
Of this old wood grey garage
Back behind the farmhouse
Next to the leaning barn.
Decade since the last corn
Neighbor cuts hay once a year.
No more working fields at dawn.
Only wildlife living here.

The smells of clay and gasoline,
Old canvas, rope, and straw
Greet the nostrils of the curious
Who explore the old garage.
Throw back the dusty canvas
Worn out '47 Ford.
Must have been to Richmond
A hundred times or more.

Hey, look up in the rafters:
A cedar-ribbed canoe
With peeling skin and rotted seats
And a hole that goes right through.
The day he caught that catfish,
Camping on the south sandbar,
A childhood eighty years ago,
In the boat above the car.

I still love to drive here
To see the stars at night
Though the city's glow
Is brighter every year.
Hear the barn creak in the summer breeze
Watch the sky for satellites.
Imagine that old farmer standing near.

And the weather, bugs, and fungus
Make the barn lean more each year.
The earth pulls on all things
That stand above.
Neglect surrenders to the wind.
No reason left to stand
Next generation's memories
Will be town and not the land.

When I Grow Up © 2001 by R.A. Gramann

When I grow up,
I want to be a cowboy.
Yodel.
Cowboy does what he wants to do
Sleeps under the stars
Rides across the open range
With his horse and guitar.
Spends his hard-earned money
In smokey cowboy bars.
Cowboy, that's the life for me

*The All American Hero
Is independent and free
Yodel.
You might be thinkin' John Wayne,
Well, I'm thinkin' it's me.
Yodel.*

When I grow up,
I wanna be a politician.
Yodel.
He does what he wants to do.
Tries not to get caught.
Makin' promises and kissing babes,
Thinks he's really hot.
Serving some constituents
Claiming he's not bought.
Politician, that's the life for me.

*The All American Hero
Is independent and free
Yodel.
You might be thinkin' Rostenkowski,
Well, I'm thinkin' that it's me.
Yodel.*

When I grow up,
I want to be a CPA.
Yodel//Nunt uh?

When I grow up,
I want to be a folksinger.
Yodel
Folksinger does what he wants to do
Sleeps until 10,
Sings till after midnight
Writes songs now and then
Never has much money
Doesn't matter to him
Folksinger, that's the life for me.

*The All American Hero
Is independent and free
Yodel.
You might be thinkin' Woody Guthrie,
Well, I'm thinkin' it's me.
Yodel.*

*You might be thinkin' John Wayne,
Well, I'm thinkin' it's me.
Yodel.*

Gravity © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

When gravity
No longer holds you down
In a dream,
You float through the sky.
Past poles and wires
Over roofs and yards
Trying to swim back down
Yelling below to people you know.

Laws of nature
Don't seem to hold anymore.
Time can't keep
All things from happening at once.
An ugly baby,
Beautiful, full-grown,
Launching from the nest, now
Hair blowing behind you
You're on your own.

*We all need time to wonder
We need time to sit and stare
At the stars, clouds, and people,
And birds soaring through the air.*

When gravity
No longer holds you down
You've come of age,
It's time to fly.
Your dreams will lift you high
Your dreams make the universe
What it might be
When you build your dreams,
Build a room for me.

*We all need time to wonder
We need time to sit and stare
At the stars, clouds, and people,
And birds soaring through the air.*

When gravity
No longer holds you down
You've come of age,
It's time to fly.