

Coming Round Again © 1994 by R.A. Gramann

Fast-food hotcakes and syrup,
Ice-busted road trip.
Breath-frosted plate glass
Traffic stuck fast.

Another cup of coffee.
Going nowhere very quickly.
Stuck on the road with you
Can't go back, can't get through

**And it's
Coming round again
Certain as the sunrise
Love gets a second wind.
And it's
Coming round again
Love's coming round again.**

Mist curtains over fresh-plowed earth,
Smell of spring, smell of dirt.
Racing dawn down county routes
Driving fast, feeling loose.

It hardly matters where we're bound,
Every place I go I've found
Where I want to be is where you are
No place like that is ever far.

chorus

Sometimes the things that happen
Are different than you planned.
They turn out to be the best of things
We travel hand-in-hand.

chorus

On our backs in August grass
Watching meteors streaking past
Travelling specks of cosmic dust
Billions of miles, they combust.

Makes us humans small again
As mosquitoes sneak across our skin.
No need to think of other stuff,
Here with you, that's enough.

You're Nothing But a Pack of Neurons

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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.**

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.

Repeat first chorus

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.

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.

**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.

Metric Time © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

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.

All Creatures Were Meant to Be Free ©
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The first day of May
Men in the shopping mall turn
To watch a silk dress
Walk into the pet store
Though her face showed an excess
Of eighty-one years.
"Sell me all those turtles
Don't give me any grief
Just put them in a box."
She signs her name to a check
And sings out as she walks:
"All creatures were meant to be free."

**Come sister, run sister.
Run through the field with me.
I'll pull the wires apart
So that you can climb through.
Leave the gate open.
We'll let all the ponies free.
They can run and play
Just like you and me.**

First day of June
Woman with a large box
Walks into the pet store
Silk dress reminds the manager
Of the sale the month before.
"Oh no, please not her again."
"You can't free all the snakes,
There's too much concrete.
They'll starve here in the city."
"I'll take them to the country
And besides, you can't stop me.
All creatures were meant to be free."

Chorus

First day of July
Family summoned by the manager
Looks across the shopping mall
Watching her buy rabbits
And trying to recall
Mom before Aunt Parmly died.
"So that's where the money goes.
I can't keep her at my house.
Can you keep her with you?
Maybe she should live
Where there's other old folks, too.
She says, 'All creatures are meant to be free.'"

Chorus

*Mom used to tell us stories
Of her childhood on the farm.
How she used to run and play
With her little sister, Parm.
How Grandpa used to yell
When they'd set the ponies free.
She said, That's the way all animals
Were surely meant to be."*

First day of September
Kids went to Serenity
Home to visit Mom.
"Don't know why she's here.
She hasn't been calm.
She's stirring up all the other folks.
You can't see her today.
She's organized a bus trip
To give the others things to do.
Took two weeks of planning,
She took them to the zoo.
She said, 'All creatures were meant to be free.'"

Different Time © 1995 by R.A. Gramann

Subdivisions built on ground
Where Lee's soldiers made their camp.
Shivering through the winter
With dreams of girls and ham.
Yerby's farm carved into rectangles
Not far from the Bloody Angle.
Regiments of vinyl-clad
Colonials make their stand.

Different time, same place
So little time with childrens' faces
Hours march in short decades.
Never retreat as childhood fades.

These tracts of hallowed battlefields
Cost more than one can earn.
So mom and dad both labor
While their children watch and learn
That things are worth a whole lot more
Than time with kids who get ignored.
Feeling farther from their parents
Than from the Civil War.

Different time, same place
So little time with childrens' faces
Snapshots on the office desk
Far from the soldiers laid to rest.

Time spent with your children
That time's its own reward.
Get a job close to home
Buy a house you can afford.
Don't work your whole life to purchase
things
Go outside, enjoy the spring
Don't be strangers to your children
Don't make them raise themselves.

Different time, same place
So little time with childrens' faces
Soldiers died where homes now stand.
The victors still don't own the land.

Plaques along the highway
History yields to shopping malls.
Automobiles and alcohol
Replace the musket balls.
Things from the past can't be reclaimed
Live it now, escape the games.
Get to know your children
While they're living in your home.

Different time, same place
So little time with childrens' faces
Hours march in short decades.
Never retreat as childhood fades.

Plaque down by the Wal-Mart
Tells a story 'bout Jackson's arm.
A story not so long ago
Happened on Yerby's farm.

Turtles Don't Need No 401K © 1994 by
R.A. Gramann

**Turtles don't need no 401-K
They sit on the rocks in the sun all day
Turtles don't need no 401-K
It's stuck in my head and it won't go
away.**

Buildings of bi-focals reading fine print
Monster salaries quickly spent.
In corporate caves, they never see the sun
There's nothing to show for what they've
done.

Grown up turtles still play in the mud.
Everything they do is in cold blood.
Don't stick out their heads when stranger's
around.
Spend their winters in the ground.

Run in the rain without your clothes
Feel the mud between your toes.
Feel the raindrops on your skin.
Never go to work again.

Ghost Train © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

Behind the last house on the cul-de-sac
A trail cuts through the woods
Where runners, hikers, bicycles
Escape their neighborhoods.
Raised and level, straight and true,
Goes both ways for several miles.
The pavement ends, the trail continues on.

**Sometimes I'm awakened
By a whistle before dawn
Though the narrow-gauge railroad
Is fifty-five years gone.
It always ran a little late
So I guess I'm not surprised.
Now subdivision passengers
On the railbed exercise.**

For profit, not adventure
They met after the Civil War
To build an East-West line
From Fredericksburg to Orange.
In twenty years, the PF&P
Was hauling wood past Parker's Store
And passengers from town to dusty town.

Past wheat fields, piles of timber,
Sprouting corn and muddy roads
Fifty years before the auto
Could carry farmer's loads.
Skinny-dippers at Hazel Run
Under trestle as she goes by
Only clothing in the bushes greets the eye.

chorus

Fourteen cars of lumber,
And one that's stockyard bound
Derailed near Alum Springs
Two miles from the town.
The cattle mooed through the night,
Till the tracks could be repaired,
For another day their lives had been spared.

The children found a penny
Wide and thin and green.
And a rusted bolt out in the brush
A piece of a machine.
Forty miles of track and four steam trains,
Sold for scrap in thirty-eight
The narrow gauge was finally out of date.

chorus

**except last two lines:
It's really hard to run on time
Without the rails and ties**

I'm Going Back to Bed © 1994 by R.A. Gramann

Alarm on Monday morning
Ten dollars in my wallet.
Enough to last another day
I think I'm going to bag it.

**I'm going back to bed
Work is for the greedy.
Roll up my suit and tie.
And throw it to the needy.**

A job is inconvenient
Takes up all the day.
Can't seem to get anything done
Cause work gets in the way.

When you have no money
Everything you get is free.
I'm not going to work
That's the life for me.

They say that nothing's certain
Except death and taxes
Well I can't outrun death
But I can beat the taxes.

People work in offices
Can't see clouds and trees
I see the outdoors all the time
It's where I want to be.

When I die don't bury me
Beneath a granite stone.
Bury your alarm clocks
And take off on your own.

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.

Peace Dividend © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

Saturday morning at 7:00 a.m.
The crows and the jays greet the sun
Cool air's great for sleeping
I roll over in bed
When next door neighbor's Briggs and Stratton says:

Wake up! Wake up!
Don't bother covering your ear.
Grass grew an inch since last week
I'll whack it down with John Deere
This fool that lives next door
Don't know what the weekend's for
But I know just what I'm gonna do:

**Call in an air strike on my neighbor
Spend the peace dividend for me.
Keep those engineers a'working
Building smart bombs and humvees.
No need to send it overseas
We can use the stuff right here.
Blow up a mower then go back to sleep,
You can keep the peace all year.**

So if the cold war's demise has put tears in your eyes
Don't worry 'bout losing your job.
You can still sell it all
In your neighborhood mall
Bring peace to the suburbs the mil-standard way:

Kaboom! Kaboom!
El Toro bites the dust.
Aim a wire-guided missile
And a Lawn-Boy will combust
Silencing a Homelite with a bomb's the easy way
Keep defense workers working
And keep the peace today.

Grandma's Piano © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

Crafted in New York City
Completed in 1898,
Crated and carted to the harbor
Bound for the forty-second state.
With a gilded frame and gold-leaf title
Above the polished ivory keys
The piano was shipped around the horn
To Port Townsend in one piece.

That cherry Steinway upright
In the Adelma Beach Saloon
Its ivory keys for thirty years
Beat out stride and ragtime tunes.
Grandma bought the building
In the depression business gloom.
My aunt played scales and Fur Elise
In that honky-tonk great room.

**The frame of that cherry upright
Shown like gold in the evening light.
Rich bass notes were the motor
Driving dancers through the night.
Fingered hollows in the ivory
Remembered tunes on the old keyboard.
Every one in the house sang along
Hearts feeling every chord.**

Late one autumn Saturday
Driving back from town.
We smelled the smoke at the top of the road
Grandma's house was burning down.
Dad, he's not a big man.
On his toes he's five foot four.
As soon as he could stop the car
He ran into the burning door. We watched the
door where he disappeared
Crying in our fright
Then a Steinway with two sailor's legs
Walked out into the night.
The firemen couldn't save the house
Passing buckets across the lawn.

Ninety men, four chimneys, smoking ash, and
me
Were there to great the dawn.

chorus

Grandma rebuilt across the road
To flee the ghost of old Calhoun
A Portland man who died one night
Upstairs in the old saloon.
The Steinway stands in my living room
Where my daughter learns to play.
Houseguests play it way past dawn
Singing into another day.

chorus

Music from my childhood
Is with me every day.
Put your ear against the piano
You can hear my grandma play.

Virginia Songwriter's Grant © 1993 by R.A. Gramann

I always wanted to write
A song about sex
This ain't it.
It's about how I go down to the Circle K
And twice a week
Throw a dollar away.
To make an application
For the State Songwriter's Grant
In Virginia.
So I can quit my job
And sleep till ten
Write a couple of songs
But I never win.

With my songwriting skill.
I always wanted to write a song
With a yodel
At the end:

**Stuff happens.
It's only a matter of chance.
You make your luck,
You make your bed,
You make ...**

Guess I'll never write a song
About a chunk of airplane ice
Out of the sky.
Where it crashes through the roof
And melts on your rug
Makes a smelly green stain
You can't blame on the dog.
The sign at the Fas Mart
On the corner near the school says
Three point five.
Says you've blown another buck
That nobody won.
Could have been some gas
Could have been some fun.

chorus

Objects in mirror
Are dumber than they appear.
Take warning.
Every week I don't play
I win two bills.
That's more than I win

Virtual Girl © 1994 by R.A. Gramann

Staying home tonight
Got a date with my virtual girl.
Gonna do dinner and a movie
Go up to her place in her virtual world.
Strap on the goggles
Slip on the gloves
Ain't nobody listening
When we talk about love.
Staying home tonight
Got a date with my virtual girl.

She puts the SX
At the end of four eighty-six.
She's my virtual fantasy
She really makes me feel rich.
Hard to believe she's just
An image on the Tube
Every thing about her's silicone
From her buns to her...
Virtual reality ain't very real or true.
The circuits let you do any thing
That you want to.

She's six foot tall
She's my tower of joy.
But my virtual girl
Ran away with Virtual Boy.
Programmer's fantasy, electronic beams
I'm a loser at love
Even in my dreams.
My virtual girl
Ran away with Virtual Boy.

The Ballad of Bob Whaley © 1994 by R.A. Gramann

Just because there's rain
On this side of the mountain
Doesn't mean that there's rain
On the other side.
We've been bouncing in this van
For what seems like six hours
Looking for a put-in
On this little stream.

**The sign said "No trespassing"
But that didn't stop the whale.
Rig a Z-drag on the window bars
Get Whaley out of Jail.**

A couple of dozen
Rich Carolina land-owners
Banded together to keep this stream
Clear and pure.
Swaim County Sheriff
Never gets a day off
Protecting this stream
From the likes of Whale.

Never drive away from water
When it's low but adequate
Sheriff won't arrest me
If I don't touch the banks.
"Not so" says the Sheriff.
"There's stuff there in the water
When you climb around,
You'll be trespassing."

A canoe on mountain water
Can outrun a mountain sheriff.
So Whaley ran a new creek
And escaped without a fine.
So all you paddlers from Virginia
Let me give you a warning
Never take a drink from a cup
You find in Whaley's van.