

THE LISTENING EYE

by

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(Continued overleaf)

THE LISTENING EYE

The dominant organ of sensory and social orientation in pre-alphabet societies was the ear-- "hearing was believing." The phonetic alphabet forced the magic world of the ear to yield to the neutral world of the eye. Man was given an eye for an ear.

Marshall McLuhan

This is the sightless cinema. Here sound is both the medium and the message, the process and the product.

Modern man is primarily a visually oriented animal. His perception is to a great extent governed by sight-- "seeing is believing" --and he tends to translate what he hears into visual terms. But hearing is in itself a kind of seeing: a watchful ear becomes a listening eye as sound yields association and words evoke images.

Whales, on the other hand, perceive the world in auditory terms. They translate objects into sound by echo location. The sightless cinema, then, might be considered the theatre of human echo location-- a documentation and expression of life in purely aural translation.

Words-- whether spoken, sung, or read from the page-- are the common denominator of man's aural communication.

Alone, or combined with sound effects or music, they are capable of evoking and communicating images which are highly visual. Eisenstein's theory of filmic montage applies here as readily as it does to the cinema of sight. It is the juxtaposition of sounds, the creating of texture within the acoustic space, that makes A + B equal more than the mere sum of the components.

The documentaries and songs in this thesis attempt to portray fragments of life aurally by combining words, sounds and music in a way that is palatable to the listening eye.

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All music in this thesis except that for "Highway to July" was composed and sung by Ann Mortifee. I am grateful to Ann for bringing both melody and performance to my lyrics.

Music for "Highway to July" was composed by Jim and Judy Valchuk, and the song is performed here by Judy and Mick Dowd. I wish to thank them and Davey Foster for their assistance in recording this song.

My thanks to Robbie King for his sensitive arrangement and piano accompaniment of "Wake Up Jesus" and to Howie Vickers for his recorded performance of this song.

INTRODUCTION: THE WHALE KILLERS
(Reference Tapes T1 & T2)

"The Whale Killers" is an hour long documentary which I prepared for broadcast on the C.B.C. National Radio Network. The challenge of sustaining interest in a single subject for a period of sixty minutes dictates certain stylistic considerations. A wide variety of sources must be tapped in order to provide sufficient material to fill an hour without "padding". The discussion must be edited in such a manner that it never lags or becomes overly complicated. There must be enough change and texture within the total framework of the program to keep the listener alert and interested. It is this last consideration which provided the most opportunity for creative tape writing.

Texture can be achieved in a number of ways. A simple question interjected into a monologue can divert what might easily become a tedious dissertation. Often it is appropriate to ask a question which the listener himself might be posing. Keeping interviews on a very informal level can provide a lot of scope in this direction. The braiding of various voices and manners of speech can create an aural patchwork which keeps the ears from dozing. Appropriate music can change the pace or augment a descriptive passage or provide a transition between speakers. And live sound can create a sense of actuality, can move in and around the acoustic space almost subliminally and still have a profound effect.

"The Whale Killers" is framed around the various and at times conflicting viewpoints of the people who have been in close contact with killer whales. The program is as much about them as it is about the whales, for in the course of the hour their individual personalities reveal themselves in a number of ways. To me the most important consideration was that the whale also have his say-- that he too be allowed to emerge as a personality and not merely as an interesting topic.

THE WHALE KILLERS

an edited transcript

published by Thomas Nelsons & Sons (Canada) Limited
in the children's textbook
Northern Lights & Fireflies
1971

THE WHALE KILLERS

from a radio documentary
by Valerie Hennell

VALERIE: In 1964, a whaling expedition in B.C. coastal waters harpooned what was to become the world's first captive killer whale. Dr. Pat McGeer was a member of that expedition.

DR. MCGEER: We didn't intend to take a killer whale alive-- that came as an accident. The original expedition was financed by an art and cultural society to make a statue of a killer whale. When we first took that killer whale, we didn't know what to feed it, we didn't know whether it was going to leap out of the water and attack us. And of course, whenever you do something new you can't predict what the outcome will be.

Unfortunately that whale died. We took the brain out to study it. When we saw its fantastic size we thought this should be a species that could do a great deal in aquariums. There we could do a lot of scientific exploration of its behaviour.

VALERIE: Since then, more than thirty killer whales have been displayed in oceanariums. It was quickly discovered that their killer nature does not extend to include man. In 1970, a psychologist, Don White, lived for eight months on a houseboat at Pedder Bay, Vancouver Island, observing two killer whales confined in an ocean pen.

DON WHITE: Killer whales are never ferocious animals as far as man is concerned. Their tameness when I'm in the pool with them or feeding them isn't brought about by man. They're always this way. One of the animals, after she first came here, didn't eat for two and a half months. When she began eating she wouldn't touch the herring I put in her mouth until I took my hand out of the water. Now this isn't the sign of a vicious animal.

VALERIE: Through the centuries killer whales have played an important role in the myths of many cultures. The Indians of the west coast of North America give them a high place on their totem poles and some tribes include them among their gods.

DON WHITE: The Indians on the west coast have a legend of how the killer whale was first created. The story revolves around a man who was married and had two brothers-in-law. He wanted to get rid of them, so he went out to an island and began to carve an animal that would come alive when he put it in the water. He carved these animals out of several kinds of wood but nothing happened until he carved them out of yellow cedar. Then they came alive. He sent the animals out into the ocean. They waited until the brothers-in-law were fishing and then killed them. They returned to the man, who now felt sorry for what he had done. He said to the animals, "Go back in the ocean but never kill another human being. From now on you shall be known as Whale Killers." Over the centuries the name has been turned around, so we now call them killer whales.

VALERIE: Mark Perry is training whales at Sealand of the Pacific, an oceanarium in Victoria, B.C. While he's at work you will hear conversations like this.

(Recorded "conversation" between Mark Perry and Haida, a killer whale)

MARK PERRY: O.K. Haida, let's do it again. Come on, Haida, say something.

(Haida begins to vocalize.)

MARK PERRY: That's good, Haida, really good.... Running

out of breath? Hey, you running out of breath? Come on, Haida...

VALERIE: How do you build up trust between yourself and a whale?

MARK PERRY: Well, it takes a little while. Naturally it begins with food. The whale recognizes you as the source of its food. Whales are very much like large playful dogs at times. It helps to talk to them. When I'm doing whale shows I'm continually talking to the whales. I guess a lot of people think I'm crazy, but it really does help. If the whales are treated with respect the job is not dangerous.

VALERIE: Sealand is owned and operated by Bob Wright.

BOB WRIGHT: Now there have been occasions where killer whales in captivity have turned on their trainers. This has happened when they ride the whales. I've spoken to two trainers where the killer whales have closed on their legs and then have stopped. They could have crushed them like peanuts. Now I think the killer whale was intelligent enough to let the trainer know-- "Look, I don't like this: back off!" We don't ride killer whales in our oceanarium because we feel the dignity of the animal should be preserved.

VALERIE: What conditions do you need to provide for a captive whale?

BOB WRIGHT: First, we provide for its physical health-- food, vitamins, veterinary observation, testing and so on. Secondly, the relationship between man and animal needs to be one of close affection. Thirdly, the kind of enclosure they are kept in is very important. In our pool we enclose them only with nets. Whales depend on hearing in much the same way as man

depends on sight. They get a lot of information about their environment by sending out streams of echo-locating pulses which bounce back off objects in the water. In a concrete pool these sonar-type pulses just bounce back off the walls, but here their pulses can go through the nets. They feel less confined. They can hear the noises in the harbour where other fish are coming in, and motorboats are passing. They don't feel as if they're in an isolation ward or something like that.

VALERIE: Can man's company be of any compensation to a whale that is confined alone in a pool?

DON WHITE: I think man's company can be of little compensation, but I want to stress the word "limited". I've been living with these whales out in Pedder Bay for six months now, and to be honest with you, they're not much company for me. I'd hate to assume that I was any kind of company for them.

There are two pools here and the whales can go in either. At the beginning I began swimming with them, but I decided that to give them some privacy I would only swim in one pool. So I chose the pool that they spend the least time in, which as it turns out is the pool which my houseboat is tied next to. At the beginning, the bull used to come over and jump in the same pool. He was curious. As I was swimming along at the bottom of the pool, he'd come up and have a good look, then swim by and have another look. Occasionally I'd follow him around, which he didn't seem to mind.

But this has changed. Now if I go in swimming the whales never come over. They leave the pool immediately and go into the other one, and I think this points out the limited interaction which man and these animals can have.

VALERIE: How do the whales get along with each other in captivity when they're placed in a single pool?

BOB WRIGHT: The three we have here at Sealand remind me of

three kittens. They're continually playing, chasing each other, rolling, jumping, talking. One just stood on its head with its tail out of the water and the other one butted it over. It's unbelievable.

VALERIE: What do you think would happen if you let Haida go?

BOB WRIGHT: Well I think with these two other whales in here-- if he could climb-- he would climb right back over the fence and come back in. It's strange to say this but the killer whale is actually a ham. Now just about three days back we had a group of school children in. There was no performance on, and our bull killer whale, Haida, played with these children for three quarters of an hour. The more they screamed and yelled and clapped, the more response Haida gave to them. He would hide and come out like a thunderbolt, jump and splash them. They enjoyed it, and I honestly feel Haida enjoyed it as much as the children.

DON WHITE: It took two and a half months for the whales at Pedder Bay to begin to eat. A couple of days before they began we injected them with cortisone and vitamin B-12 to make them hungry.

And a day later we got some fresh salmon. In the early evening I went out on the logs and took one of the salmon and held it over the water at the side of the pool. The bull, which had become friendly in that time-- I could pet him-- came over to me. He took the salmon out of my hand and gave it to the cow in the centre of the pool, who had no trust for man. She took it and she held it by the tail. She had it hanging out of the side of her mouth, and she started swimming around the pool.

And the bull came up beside her and he got hold of the head of the salmon. the other end, and they made a circuit of the pool. Then they tore the salmon apart, and each ate half. Then he came back and got another salmon. He took it

back and gave it to her. She took it. Then he came back and got another salmon for himself.

I think this shows a very high level of social interaction among killer whales. And it made me rather ashamed, because I don't know whether after starving for a long time I could give the first morsel of food I had to someone who was starving along with me.

VALERIE: The whales make a variety of noises. Is there any way of telling what these sounds mean? Are they trying to communicate with us?

BOB WRIGHT: Well, really I think they're communicating with each other. They have certain sounds that, I think, show their happiness, and certain sounds that show their frustration. Our whale Haida never quits! He's just vocalizing all the time: frustration, happiness, occasionally anger. We walk away from the pool and he gets upset with us. He wants to play some more, and he sure lets us know, vocally.

VALERIE: Dr. Paul Spong is an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia. Last summer he spent several months observing a large pod of killer whales, not captive, but in the wild at the northeastern end of Vancouver Island.

PAUL SPONG: Whales and dolphins emit two kinds of sounds. The first is the echo-locating sound, a series of sonar-type pulses which are beamed at objects in the environment. This seems to give them three-dimensional knowledge of their environment.

The second kind are communication sounds: whistles, beeps, buzzes. Whales exchange a wide variety of these vocalizations under different circumstances.

VALERIE: Do killer whales make the same sound in captivity that they make in the wild?

PAUL SPONG: You hear them make a lot of the same sounds in captivity as you hear in the wild. You hear a lot in the wild that they don't make in captivity. An isolated animal is not going to make the same kind of communication sounds as an animal living with other animals. And perhaps animals which come from different populations aren't going to have exactly the same kind of language either.

VALERIE: How do whales care for their young?

PAUL SPONG: We made some interesting observations about child-caring behaviour this summer. We were observing a pod of about fifty whales, of whom about thirty were young whales. The care of the infants was apparently organized on a communal basis.

We would see one adult-- the largest male-- swimming with up to a dozen young whales (one-two-three years old), with or without his mate. There didn't seem to be any parent-child kind of thing happening. On one occasion we saw two adult whales swim by us and stop about a mile away for about fifteen minutes. Then seven young whales came by and joined them and then they all swam off together. It would seem that the adults were waiting for the young ones to come along.

When they're feeding, the adults will allow the young a certain amount of freedom to go off and feed on their own. But if you're listening to them on a hydrophone, you can hear them calling back and forth, and the adults may go a mile or two miles away but they still maintain vocal contact with the young.

VALERIE: In your time as a whale trainer, Mark, have you seen evidence that the whales are testing you as you are testing and working with them?

MARK PERRY: Oh yes, continually. Every show is kind of a testing session for the trainer. They're always trying to see

how far they can push the trainer and just what they can get away with. Sometimes a whale will perform better for one trainer than it will for another. That is to say they recognize each different trainer and they have us down pat. They know how far we will push them and what we will and won't make them do. You have to establish a set line of what you will accept, and if the whale performs under that line, you make him do the trick again. Or right away he will take advantage of it and pretty soon you'll have a very sloppy whale.

PAUL SPONG: We were running some tests on hearing with one of our whales. We presented a sound and if the whale could hear it he made a certain sound in reply. If he couldn't hear it he didn't vocalize. And we were going up and down in the frequency of the sounds we produced.

Well, one particular day I was listening to the whale through earphones and watching him at the same time. I started up the scale with my voice, and he repeated each sound after me. But when I got to the highest note I could make, he kept on going up the scale, making sounds I could hear but couldn't imitate. Whales emit signals up to around 100,000 cycles per second. Humans can only hear sounds up to 18,000 cycles, and our speech usually involves much lower frequencies than that. I continued to make the highest sound I'm capable of making, and whale kept going higher, until finally I couldn't hear him, although I knew he was still vocalizing because his blowhole was quivering. After a while he came back down into frequencies which I could hear and then the sound would disappear upwards again.

This "experiment" went on for about four hours, and it seemed to me that the whale was testing my hearing system in the same way I was trying to test him.

VALERIE: Dr. Spong, it's thought that in captivity whales suffer from a lack of sound stimulation. I understand you did

some experiments at the Vancouver Public Aquarium in which you played music to the whales.

PAUL SPONG: On the first occasion we played a Beethoven violin concerto-- a scratchy old recording through a very crude speaker which was made from a one-gallon paint can with an eight dollar speaker mounted in the bottom of it underwater. About twenty seconds after we began playing the record, the whale kind of slid back out of its corner, arched its body so its head was out of the water, and it went down and its tail came out of the water at the other end. Then it proceeds to squirt water in and out of its mouth, closely in time to the music. It was slapping its pectoral fins on the water or quivering them in the air in time to the music. Its dorsal fin was kind of shaking, and its flukes were waving backwards and forwards very gracefully in the air. It was the most spectacular performance of all. The whole body was moving rhythmically. It seemed to be an exquisite kind of dance.

VALERIE: Some of the information contained in stories and legends about whales is now being supported by scientific observation.

DON WHITE: There's a story that comes to us from the Eskimos, who believed that if a man shoots trying to kill a killer whale, not only will the whale remember him and his boat, but he will destroy him at a later point in time, and also anyone else who was with him... pointing out that whales have well-developed eyesight and remarkable memory.

A few months ago I completed a study which measured how well killer whales can see. I found that they can see underwater slightly better than a cat can see on land. This information was already contained in the Eskimo legend.

PAUL SPONG: One of the most interesting stories I've heard

relates to the question of whales stranding themselves. It was told to me by Chief Jimmy Sewid in Alert Bay, British Columbia.

When he was a boy, about fifty years ago, he lived on Village Island, and there was a beach nearby. One day there was a big commotion on the beach. He went down and all the people of the village were standing there. In front of them about fifty killer whales were in the process of stranding themselves in the shallow water. No one quite knew what to do about this. So somebody went up and got hold of the oldest man in the village. He was an old, old man, over a hundred years old, and a great friend of the killer whales. He came down to the beach and stood in front of them, lifting his hands in the air, and saying: "My friends, you are making a great mistake. If you stay here, the tide will go out and you will dry up and die. Please, before it's too late, go back out to sea!" Whereupon all the whales backed out into the water and went off.

The Indians use stories of this kind to support their claim that when they speak killer whales are able to understand what they say.

VALERIE: Recently there has been concern about the possible extinction of whales. In September, 1970, the Canadian Department of Fisheries passed laws under which killer whales in Canadian waters may no longer be killed, captured, or otherwise molested. An aquarium wishing to capture one must apply for a permit and keep to a strict set of standards ensuring the safety and well-being of the animal.

DON WHITE: No one asks why we catch animals in the first place. I think it is important for us to ask why are we doing this to our animals?

VALERIE: Do you object to whales being held in captivity?

DON WHITE: Yes, I do. In the time that I've spent here at Pedder Bay I've become very aware that "animal" does not mean "sub-human". And from that point of view it becomes criminal to deny killer whales rights which we ourselves demand. It becomes criminal to put them in any situation not of their own choice.

VALERIE: Do you think it's possible to have whales in captivity-- for men to watch and study them-- by their own choice?

DON WHITE: Of course I think it's possible. All you have to do is begin spending time discovering what you can offer the animals, instead of trying to control them. Can you imagine what would happen to aquariums and oceanariums if a man decided that he was going to build one down on the sea and instead of trying to hold whales there with net or concrete he would attract them and keep their interest with things they enjoy, so they'd want to stay there!

I think that until man is willing to think more about the happiness of animals, and less about how to make money from them we will never have an honest relationship with other species.

INTRODUCTION: THE SUNWORSHIPPERS

"The Sunworshippers" is a tapestry. It is the most experimental documentary I have attempted to date. A theme as abstract as this allows for innumerable possibilities of approach. I chose to use rapid aural montage as the basic vehicle of the program.

It required an entire summer to collect enough voices to orchestrate "The Sunworshippers". To weave the visual pattern I was striving for I needed a large spectrum of sound. The texture of the show hinges on the variety of tones and colourings I was able to compile. But for one major exception, the content of the program is entirely thematic and therefore could easily be manipulated to achieve maximum aural mood without sacrificing logic or coherence. For the most part I tried to use music for pace and mood rather than for its lyrical content, although obviously the most appropriate music had lyrics relating to sunshine. But in the case of the background music for the two poems I used, I was more concerned with creating an acoustic space appropriate to the feeling of the poetic image than in attempting to force the music to add additional content.

The question arose-- "just how much quick blitz bombardment can an audience take before the technique becomes predictable and tiresome?" The only other experimental documentary I had attempted in this vein had fallen short of its aim because of an overload of technique. The logical solution seemed to be to give over a portion of the program to more conventional style. This is the major exception mentioned above-- an eight minute discussion with a dermatologist on the effect sun has on skin. It is sheer good fortune that the doctor has a personality which fits in so well with the general tone of the program. Fragments of his interview interspersed among other voices in the thematic collages go completely unnoticed. Thus he is the force which combines the two extremely different techniques used in "The Sunworshippers".

LYRICS

Eleven Songs

(reference Tape T4)

One Man Sally Ann

She walks into your life and your eyes are full of nothing
 but her eyes are full of living so you let her take your hand.
 And you say you only follow as you've nowhere else to go
 and you call her an oasis in a dark and barren land.
 And you've heard her name spoken by other men and wondered
 why she's drawn to those so broken they can hardly stand...

Well she's the local lost and found
 she's got more stray dogs than the pound
 she is a one man Sally Ann.

She takes your ragged dreams and she sends them to the laundry
 she mends the jagged seams she sews new buttons on.
 And though she may look lean still she'll see you don't go hungry
 she'll see you on your feet and then she'll smile and move along.
 And you love her for your life, and you think of her at night
 though you know she's somewhere with another man...

cause she's the local lost and found
 she's got more stray dogs than the pound
 she is a one man Sally Ann.

And somewhere in your basement she unearths an ancient shrine
 it only needs a little dusting, you only need a little time
 and she feeds you love and vitamins and sacramental wine
 to toast your rising sign- she always finds the time...
 she is a one man Sally Ann.

They talk about her lovers and there's some who shake their fingers
 at the ever larger numbers of men she's taken in.
 And there's some who call her evil while they lock their doors
 to strangers and suspect their next door neighbours or trying
 to break in...

But you love her for your life and you think of her at night
 though you know she's somewhere with another man...

cause she's the local lost and found
 she's got more stray dogs than the pound
 she is a one man Sally Ann.

Look Where We Are Now

When you came with the rain and the leaves
all falling down around your shoes-
I was just passing through
seems so were you
look where we are now

and all the towns that passed us by
while we hid beneath the trees and waited
for the streets to dry- they are behind us now

and this one little room is much closer to heaven
than the castles we had built in our minds-
so let's stay here till the day we're
on the road- on the road again.

When you came with the night and the right
kind of feeling for a woman who's been too long alone-
I had some loving to do
seems so did you
look where we are now

and all the times we turned our heads
to other lovers' laughter as they went
towards their beds- they are behind us now

and this one gentle night makes the ones that stumble coming
just that much easier to bear-
so let's stay here till the day we're
on the road- on the road again.

And no don't make those promises you know you'll never keep-
I'm a rambler too.
No need to say forever when you know there's still a thousand
miles of walking in your shoes...

When you go with the moon and your knapsack all packed up
and sitting on your shoulder-
that'll be another day
until that day
look where we are now

in this one little room that's the end of a journey
that we both know has only begun-
so let's stay here till the day we're
on the road- on the road again- again
on the road- again.

My Lover Is...

My lover is a rambler
 he doesn't need bed and board
 he lives on the seventh storey
 of the aurora borealis
 in an ebony palace
 with ice on the floor.

My lover is a seeker
 a maker of rhymes
 an acre of riddles
 a fiddler of songs
 that help pass the time.

He walks alone
 but he walks my way
 from time to time
 with his abalone smile
 and his mind a million miles
 behind the sky.

He never stays too long
 though you know sometimes
 I think he longs to stay.
 It's getting late, he says
 and vanishes again-
 good-bye.

My lover is a drifter
 on a ship made of clay
 he should have been a shepherd
 or a sultan born in a country
 warm and golden
 but he's cold and he's afraid.

My lover is a loner
 he won't take my bed and board
 for he lives on the seventh storey
 of the aurora borealis
 all alone in an ebony palace
 with ice on the floor

but I try to keep him warm
 I do my best to keep him warm.

Highway to July

I'm packing up my summer suit
and I'm heading for the sun
I'm kissing all my friends good-bye
with thanks to every one

won't you put something familiar
on the stere-ere-o
one more listen to today
then I guess I'd better go

but my friends
I will see you again
and I'll sing you on the highway to July
and next time I'll do better
at least you know I'll try
and I'll sing you on the highway to July.

I'm putting down my schedules
and picking up my keys
now there'll only be that southbound wind
to keep me company

I'll have the north star for a compass
and sweet moonlight for a bed
oh but don't go looking sad now
or I might stay here instead

but my friends
I will see you again
and I'll sing you on the highway to July
and next time I'll stay longer
at least you know I'll try
and I'll sing you on the highway to July,

If you should chance to see me
on the highway to L.A.
and you're heading north along the road
that wanders back this way

won't you stop around and see the folks
I had to leave behind
just tell them I am doing well
and keeping them in mind

oh my friends
I will see you again
(repeat 1st chorus)

I Had An Artist

I had an artist
 he painted a world
 avocado and wine.
 I crossed his canvas
 now the pictures he paints
 are no longer mine.

Find me the artist
 who can paint me
 an evertime of ambergris-
 he knows the colour
 of the joylight and dayshine
 they were all mine
 in that onctime.

Find me the artist
 who sketches down echo lines
 of sound out of the grey.
 He caught the eagle flight
 of yesternight and set tomorrow down
 in an eiderdown of afterday,

He took his textures from the sun-
 he gave me one- oh touch
 the petals of his face:
 two children christened
 in the blossoms of a mountain
 and a man and woman rising
 through the rhythm of that place.

Where is the artist
 who braids all of the colours
 of sunset with colours
 colours of the rain?

Where is the artist
 who took my life from charcoal
 and turned to water colour
 laughter out of pain?

Where is perspective?
 a tall man growing smaller
 moving back from a picture i wonder
 if i ever ran my fingers
 through that distant waterfall.

I had an artist
 where is the artist?
 tell him I'm watching for his etchings
 in the matching in the mating of the earth
 with the wind.

Tell him I see his hands
 in the swelling of the ocean
 in the blooming of the orchard
 say that my sometimes still carry
 in a nutshell a very
 life-sized portrait of him.

Funny

Funny how you sometimes get to feeling
lonesome- now and then
funny how you sometimes get to needing
someone to help you smile again

Funny how the fun gets left behind sometimes
funny how the emptiness slips in
and funny how a man you thought you'd shut out of your mind
creeps in- every now and then.

Funny how you sometimes get to feeling
wasted- for a time
funny how you sometimes get to thinking
that maybe all, all the good days have died

Funny how it isn't quite so funny anymore
funny how it hurts to live this way
funny how the ramblin' life don't leave you satisfied
it would be nice to stay- every now and then.

Funny how you sometimes get to living
further from your face
and funny how you have to keep a-movin', movin'
into some wider space

Funny when you get there how it still seems small
funny how it just don't feel like home
funny how you find you just keep travelling after all
alone- every now and then.

On Hearing of Lori

When Lori lived with the woods in her eyes
 in a hut by the edge of the sea-
 she was an eagle- how she could fly!

When Lori spun the sun on her loom
 in a forest room- Lori was peaceful
 under the sky

But Lori died walking city streets
 while the sky looked the other way.
 And the needle stare of a face worn bare
 is a woman without a name...

I think of cliffs on a mossy day-
 bodies in the sun.
 Her clean strong hands tending wilderlands.
 Whiskey cut with a mountain stream-
 she was toasting the open sky- that's where
 Lori chose to fly but not to die...

And Lori was a lady when the mountains
 could be seen.
 But the city, it closed all around her
 with its blankets of sin.

And I heard they tore her body down
 to build their thoroughfare. And when a woman fell
 in her private hell there was no one there to care...

Well- take your morgue to the ocean shore
 and open up the gate!
 Let a body scarred with disregard be buried
 in state!

For they've raped her of her ocean
 and bartered for its salt.
 They drained the sunshine from her face
 until her eyes grew dark...

Walk me down by the railroad tracks
 if you can spare the time.
 I want to look the harlots in the eye
 and tell them-

Lori.... was a friend of mine.

Hey Dark Bird

Hey dark bird, where are you flying?
eagle of night, where do you go?
in a dark house a young girl is crying-
what does she know?

against a mountain the darkness is broken
in a dark house there's little to say
little is left once this night has spoken-
send us the day!

Hey dark bird, I see you falling
lost to the earth, lost to the sky
eagle of night, it's God who is calling-
so you must die.

into the rain your feathers are scattered
in a dark house your feathers remain
to a young girl it's memories that matter-
repeating your name:

Father, father, am I forsaken?
are your wings broken, am I alone?
be this a dream? if so let me waken
to find you at home.

Father, father, where are you flying?
eagle of night, where did you go?
in a dark house your daughter is crying-
she misses you so.

Wake Up Jesus

Something's bringing me closer back to Jesus and his kind
 sometimes I'm a long long time away
 Seems to be some sullen spaces in this life of mine
 I find myself just sleeping, sleeping most of the day

Spent some time just sitting in a house where I have grown
 I can't quite remember how the stories go
 Seems this winter's meant to be a time for being alone
 No matter how I try I just can't, I just can't seem to grow

Won't you wake up, wake up, Jesus
 I've been sleeping in your hands
 and it seems like I'm slipping away...

When I stop to listen I can hear myself enquire
 most times I just put a record on
 I know that if I leave it late enough the questions will
 get tired
 and most times by tomorrow, by tomorrow they are gone

But the days get weary when you never are quite warm
 and it's colder than I think it's ever been
 Hey Jesus, I used to keep you in a corner of my mind
 but now I only open the door to let the rain in

Won't you wake up, wake up, Jesus
 You've been sleeping in my mind
 and it feels like you're slipping away

don't slip away now

The Muse

There's a little man who lives right down,
 right down inside my guitar- and every time I'm feeling blue
 he pops his head right up on through, and says-
 he girl, let's play!

and he gives me a tune and I learn to play it soon
 and he gives me a song and I learn to sing along
 and we sing and we play till the end of the day
 but never think it's me because you see
 it couldn't ever be without that little man and me.

There's a little man who lives right down,
 right down inside my guitar- and when my heart is weakening
 he does some chin-ups on the strings, and says-
 hey girl, let's play!

and if I break a string, well it's no big thing
 'cause if I don't do well, well he'll never tell
 'cause that little guy's insane and he will always take the blame
 so never think it's me eventually
 I'm sure that you will see it's only the little man
 and me.

He has a little kettle and he brews his cup of tea
 and when my voice is weary, well he shares his tea with me.
 He has a little sofa, he has a little bed
 and he has a little map of the inside of my head...

There's a little man who lives right down,
 right down inside my guitar- and every time I want to cry
 he has his cue sheet standing by
 he snaps his fingers, counts the time
 and starts me on the opening line, and says-
 hey girl, let's play!

and I don't know what I'd do if that little guy got blue
 and I don't know where I'd be if he wasn't here with me
 but he loves his little home I guess I'll never be alone
 it'll always be that little man and me.