

Soulful Songs and Stories



With a song and your stories, we co-create a soft place for hard conversations and a brave space for personal and spiritual growth.

Hi Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers,

This is the eleventh of Friday emails that we're sending out or posting on the webpage about songs, stories, storytelling, community, or personal/spiritual growth until we meet again.

By telling our stories we SOW THE SEEDS not only for our own growth and liberation and healing, but also for those who hear our stories. There's NO GUARANTEE OF THE OUTCOME; if you want a guarantee, buy a toaster; otherwise we should LET GO OF EXPECTATIONS. Consider this in song: "The Garden Song," by David Mallett, "Plant A Radish," by Tom Jones, and Ina D. Ogdon's "Brighten the Corner Where You Are." Offering perspectives in parable, story, and poetry we have Jesus, Anthony De Mello, and Gandhi, plus some unfamiliar or unexpected sources: Stephen W. Hawking, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Carl W. Buehner, and June Jordan, among others. Whether or not you like or agree these selections, we hope they will at least stretch the limits of your heart and mind. If you need **perking up** or **calming down**, we have additional musical selections for you.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in getting these emails who's not already on the mailing list, ask them to register with Jessica Pond, jpond@uucsr.org. The PDF is available (without registering) at the **Soulful Songs and Stories** webpage: www.j.mp/uucsr-sss.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE REMOVED FROM THIS MAILING LIST, PLEASE REPLY (NOT REPLY ALL) TO THIS EMAIL.

We sorely miss you and your stories. We miss hugs and laughter and coffee/tea with you. We know these mailings are no substitute for meeting face-to-face, but we hope that they, in some small way, may fill the gap until we meet again. Be well, and **please do communicate with us and each other, by text, email, phone (actually talking!)—or with proper distancing—in person.**

Take the spirit of **Soulful Songs and Stories** with you wherever you go; share it, and we hope to see you all, healthy and happy, sooner rather than later.

Namasté,

Alice and Steve

For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

—T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, “Part II: East Coker, V” 1940

what didn't you do to bury me / but you forgot that I was a seed

—Dinos Christianopoulos, *The Body and the Wormwood*, 1978



Just as we leave our fingerprints on everything we touch, from doorknobs to touchscreens, we leave our personal imprint on every person we come in contact with. Usually, like fingerprints, our imprint is hardly noticed. But, unlike a farmer who plants seeds and has a realistic expectation of a specific crop, when we plant seeds as a teacher or minister, friend or lover, parent or leader, we set ourselves up for disappointment if we expect to see immediate results. Or even gratitude.

Consider this in song: “The Garden Song”

Tommy Makem and Liam Clancy

<https://youtu.be/QJ-nGE4Ls7I?t=56>

Arlo Guthrie <https://youtu.be/2obPs5R4-ss?t=312>

“Plant A Radish,” Tom Jones, *The Fantastics*
*You don't know until the seed is nearly grown /
Just what you've sown.*

<https://youtu.be/ya0sZIZe3P4?t=18>

“Brighten the Corner Where You Are”

*Brighten the corner where you are! / Brighten the
corner where you are! / Someone far from harbor
you may guide across the bar; / Brighten the cor-
ner where you are!*

North Carolina School Of Gospel Music

<https://youtu.be/NXQ7DYctxpk?t=42>

Consider this in story:

As human beings, not only do we seek resolution, but we also feel that we deserve resolution. However, not only do we not deserve resolution, we suffer from resolution. We don't deserve resolution; we deserve something better than that. We deserve our birthright, which is the middle way,

an open state of mind that can relax with paradox and ambiguity. If we fearlessly engage with the life spread out before us, we will be rewarded with a heart that can hold it all—happiness and messiness, clarity and confusion, love and loss.

—Pema Chödrön

A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and the birds ate it. Some of it fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.

—Jesus, Matthew 13, Eugene Peterson, *The Message*

We like things to manifest right away, and they may not. Many times, we're just planting a seed and we don't know exactly how it is going to come to fruition. It's hard for us to realize that what we see in front of us might not be the end of the story. —Sharon Salzberg

I am beginning to think that in our time we will correct almost nothing, and get almost nowhere, but if we can just prepare a compassionate and receptive soil for the future, we will have done a great work.

—Thomas Merton, *Hidden Ground of Love*

With every deed you are sowing a seed, though the harvest you may not see.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox

The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me continual spiritual exercises.

—**Leo Buscaglia**

Sometimes we exist long enough to lead the next generation; other times, only to plant a seed and let its resonations of our time here on Earth ripple into new waves.

—**A.J. Darkholme**, *Rise of the Morningstar*

And when I may join with men and women to end the disease of breast cancer and the disease of race hatred and the disease of misogyny and the disease of homophobia and the disease of not caring about the victims of ethnic cleansing and the victims of our malignant neglect, I am happy beyond belief. Because this is a good fight. It feels good to me. And, yes, now I know about sadness but I do not live there, in sadness. And I am happy beyond belief to be here and to join with you to make things better.

—**June Jordan**, "A Good Fight," *The Progressive*, Dec 1993; Jordan died of breast cancer on June 14, 2002

The real secret to charisma is making each person you meet feel that they have your complete attention when they speak to you. —**Nick Vujicic**

Do not give to the poor expecting to get their gratitude so that you can feel good about yourself. If you do, your giving will be thin and short-lived, and that is not what the poor need; it will only impoverish them further. Give only if you have something you must give; give only if you are someone for whom giving is its own reward.

—**Dorothy Day**

They may forget what you said—but they will never forget how you made them feel.

—**Carl W. Buehner**

My expectations were reduced to zero when I was 21. Everything since then has been a bonus.

—**Stephen W. Hawking**

Enjoying being insulting is a youthful corruption of power. You lose your taste for it when you realize how hard people try, how much they mind, and how long they remember.

—**Martin Amis**, *The War Against Cliche*

Set the standard! Stop expecting others to show you love, acceptance, commitment, and respect when you don't even show that to yourself.

—**Steve Maraboli**, *Unapologetically You*

When you do something, you should burn yourself up completely, like a good bonfire, leaving no trace of yourself. —**Shunryu Suzuki**

Most people tell you they want to get out of kindergarten, but don't believe them. All they want you to do is to mend their broken toys. That's all. Even the best psychologist will tell you that, that people don't really want to be cured. What they want is relief; a cure is painful.

—**Anthony De Mello**, transcribed from one of his workshops, c. 2007

Impart as much as you can of your spiritual being to those who are on the road with you, and accept as something precious what comes back to you from them. —**Albert Schweitzer**

We should be cautious about extracting market value from moral values.

—**Kwame Anthony Appiah**, "The Ethicist," *NY Times*, Jan 10, 2018

If you make people think they're thinking, they'll love you; but if you really make them think, they'll hate you. —**Don Marquis**

You are your own worst enemy. If you can learn to stop expecting impossible perfection, in yourself and others, you may find the happiness that has always eluded you.

—**Lisa Kleypas**, *Love in the Afternoon*

He was swimming in a sea of other people's expectations. People had drowned in seas like that.

—**Robert Jordan**, *New Spring*

Everyone wanted me to feed them that story—darkness to light, weakness to strength, broken to whole. I wanted it, too.

—**John Green**, *Turtles All the Way Down*

Expectation feeds frustration as it's simply an illusive form of control by attempting to grip the reins that aren't ours to hold. Breathe. Release. Let go. Allow your life to naturally, quietly unfold.

—**Victoria Erickson**

You are only responsible for the effort, not the outcome.

—**Bryant McGill**, *Simple Reminders*

I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

—**Etienne de Grellet**

God gives the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the loveable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others.

—**Jesus**, Matthew 5, **Eugene Peterson**, *The Message*

It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.

—**Mohandas Gandhi**

Every baby born unloved, unwanted, is a bill that will come due in twenty years with interest, an anger that must find a target, a pain that will beget pain. A decade downstream a child screams, a woman falls, a synagogue is torched, a firing

squad is summoned, a button is pushed and the world burns.

I will choose what enters me, what becomes flesh of my flesh. Without choice, no politics, no ethics lives. I am not your cornfield, not your uranium mine, not your calf for fattening, not your cow for milking. You may not use me as your factory. Priests and legislators do not hold shares in my womb or my mind. If I give it to you, I want it back. My life is a non-negotiable demand.

—**Marge Piercy**, “Right to Life”

Music that's

Perky/Rousing

...when you have the Covid-19 blues

“A Place in the Choir,” Bill Staines

Tommy Makem and Liam Clancy

<https://youtu.be/YSK0Np3MyvI?t=36>

St. Thomas More Choir

<https://youtu.be/UUGRdFAI8A4>

“Concerto No. 1 in C minor for Piano and Trumpet, IV,” Shostakovich/Yuja Wang, Omar

Tomasoni <https://youtu.be/U5tAyEC3igQ?t=880>

Watch, don't just listen.

Pensive/Reflective

...think on these things

“National Anthem: Arise!, Arise!,” Jean Rohe

www.j.mp/roheaa1 and www.j.mp/roheaa2

Lyrics below

“Keep on Keepin' On” Len Chandler

<https://youtu.be/6QMhjUYzK6w> Lyrics:

<https://mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=45805>

Peaceful/Relaxing

...to wash away the day's trouble in mind

“Arise,” Lynne Arriale Trio

<https://youtu.be/sz1ZNZwcSG4>

“Gabriel's Oboe,” Ennio Morricone/

Henrik Chaim Goldschmidt

<https://youtu.be/2WJhax7Jmxx>

National Anthem: Arise! Arise!

Jean Rohe

Atlantic and Pacific flow
The Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico
The land between sustains us all
To cherish it, our tireless call

CHORUS

Arise! Arise!

I see the future in your eyes.

To a more perfect union we aspire

And lift our voices from the fire.



We reached these shores from many lands
We came with hungry hearts and hands
Some came by force and some by will
At the auction block, in the darkened mill

CHORUS

We died in your fields and your factories
Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees
With an old coat hanger in a room somewhere
A trail of tears, an electric chair

CHORUS

Our great responsibility
To be guardians of our liberty
'Till tyrants bow to the people's dream
And justice flows like a mighty stream

CHORUS 2x

YouTube:

www.j.mp/roheaa2

www.j.mp/roheaa1