

# 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,**

**Introduction to the theme: *It takes more than an outfit***

Some people put on one outfit at home (or two if they're having Thanksgiving dinner), another at work, another at their congregation. Unitarian Universalists have long said "deeds not creeds" are what matter, or as Steve's mom used to say, "What you do speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say." You can buy a social justice outfit by giving to social justice organizations yet still hang on to at least a few of your racist or homophobic views. You can get an environmental outfit by contributing to the Natural Resources Defense Council and similar groups and still be wasteful and energy inefficient. Contrary to the old adage, "Clothes make the (wo)man," wearing an outfit does not give you street cred or get you a "get out of jail free card." Charitable and philanthropic outfits are not, ipso facto, redemptive. Edgar Villanueva says, in *Decolonizing Wealth*, that "philanthropy at its core is colonialism."

**"Streets of Laredo," The Smothers Brothers** (attached; 1:07; 1962)

*As I walked out on the streets of Laredo / As I walked out in Laredo one day,  
I spied a young cowboy all wrapped in white linen / Wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay.  
I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy / I see by your outfit you are a cowboy, too;  
We see by our outfits that we are both cowboys / If you get an outfit, you can be a cowboy, too.*

**Identity would seem to be the garment** with which one covers the nakedness of the self: in which case, it is best that the garment be loose, a little like the robes of the desert, through which one's nakedness can always be felt, and, sometimes, discerned. This trust in one's nakedness is all that gives one the power to change one's robes.

—James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction*

**"I used to feel terrible** when I threw out perfectly good things, like a working toaster or TV," said Francine Dahl of Lawrence, KS. "But now that I recycle a little bit, I could throw out a whole couch and not feel guilty at all." —The Onion

**The original,** shimmering self gets buried so deep that most of us end up hardly living out of it at all. Instead we live out all the other selves, which we are constantly putting on and taking off like coats and hats against the world's weather. —Frederick Buechner, *Telling Secrets*

**In every age** it has been the tyrant, the oppressor and the exploiter who has wrapped himself in the cloak of patriotism, or religion, or both to deceive and overawe the People.

—Eugene Victor Debs

**There are those** who wrap themselves in flags and blow the tinny trumpet of patriotism as a means of fooling the people. —George Galloway)

**“Stars & The Moon,”** Jason Robert Brown/Audra McDonald

*“And I was sure that all I ever wanted was a life like the movie stars led.”*

[https://youtu.be/j5Z\\_BpYCLqU?t=18](https://youtu.be/j5Z_BpYCLqU?t=18) 4:15 *Oops.* (Lyrics below)

**No one** is going to stand up at your funeral and say, “She had a really expensive couch and great shoes.” Don’t make life about stuff.

**You may** get to the very top of the ladder, and then find it has not been leaning against the right wall. —Allen Raine (1915)

**You have to decide** what your highest priorities are and have the courage—pleasantly, smilingly, nonapologetically—to say “no” to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger “yes” burning inside. —Stephen Covey

**When we live superficially** we are always outside ourselves, never quite “with” ourselves, always divided and pulled in many directions. We find ourselves doing many things that we do not really want to do, saying things we do not really mean, needing things we do not really need, exhausting ourselves for what we secretly realize to be worthless and without meaning in our lives. —Thomas Merton, *Love and Living*

**Three variations on “Streets Of Laredo”** (aka “Cowboy’s Lament”)

**“Streets of Manhattan,”** Jonathan Talbot/Lynette Hensley vocals, guitar

*“Laredo” for the COVID-19 era; “beautiful and painful”* <https://youtu.be/F7Dyv7iFuSg> 3:58

**“Streets Of Laredo,”** The Washington Winds

*puts the lament in “Cowboy’s Lament”* <https://youtu.be/ylyldrgazoM> 3:18

**“Streets Of Laredo,”** Scott B Adams & Tom Rasely, guitars

*light, airy* <https://youtu.be/qIxRtI3950I> 3:21

**“Streets Of Laredo,”** Shorty Rogers and His Giants

*West Coast jazz, instrumental, big band* <https://youtu.be/zEKHwol7Jec> 4:07

**Say farewell to outfits, say hello to being real**

*The goal of life is to become what we truly are—human. It means giving up pretending to be good and instead becoming real.* —Walter Wink, *The Human Being*, 2001

*Wearing an outfit is like talking the talk. Being real is walking the walk.*

**“Ashokan Farewell,”** Jay Ungar/The Jay Ungar & Molly Mason Family Band

*instrumental* <https://youtu.be/MaCazf36D3k> 5:48

**“Ashokan Farewell,”** Jay Ungar/Priscilla Herdman, vocal

<https://youtu.be/3UglCajpWEI> 4:49

*Wishing you the best of songs and stories; make them soulful. And real.*

**Namasté,**

**Alice and Steve**

# STARS AND THE MOON

Music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown, from *Songs for a New World*, sung by Audra McDonald

I met a man without a dollar to his name  
Who had no traits of any value but his smile  
I met a man who had no yearn or claim to fame  
Who was content to let life pass him for a while  
And I was sure that all I ever wanted  
Was a life like the movie stars led  
And he kissed me right here, and he said,

“I’ll give you stars and the moon and a soul to  
guide you  
And a promise I’ll never go  
I’ll give you hope to bring out all the life inside  
you  
And the strength that will help you grow.  
I’ll give you truth and a future that’s twenty  
times better  
Than any Hollywood plot.”  
And I thought, “You know, I’d rather have a  
yacht.”

I met a man who lived his life out on the road  
Who left a wife and kids in Portland on a whim  
I met a man whose fire and passion always  
showed  
Who asked if I could spare a week to ride with  
him  
But I was sure that all I ever wanted  
Was a life that was scripted and planned  
And he said, “But you don’t understand—

“I’ll give you stars and the moon and the open  
highway  
And a river beneath your feet  
I’ll give you day full of dreams if you travel my way  
And a summer you can’t repeat.

I’ll give you nights full of passion and days of  
adventure,  
No strings, just warm summer rain.”  
And I thought, “You know, I’d rather have  
champagne.”

I met a man who had a fortune in the bank  
Who had retired at age thirty, set for life.  
I met a man and didn’t know which stars to  
thank,  
And then he asked one day if I would be his wife.  
And I looked up, and all I could think of  
Was the life I had dreamt I would live  
And I said to him, “What will you give?”

“I’ll give you cars and a townhouse in Turtle Bay  
And a fur and a diamond ring  
And we’ll be married in Spain on my yacht  
today  
And we’ll honeymoon in Beijing.  
And you’ll meet stars at the parties I throw at my  
villas  
In Nice and Paris in June.”

And I thought, “Okay.”  
And I took a breath  
And I got my yacht  
And the years went by  
And it never changed  
And it never grew  
And I never dreamed  
And I woke one day  
And I looked around  
And I thought, “My God...  
I’ll never have the moon.”