

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,

Songs and Stories about community and interdependence.

Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is that to go on living I have to tell stories, that stories are the one sure way I know to touch the heart and change the world. Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is that if we are not beautiful to each other, we cannot know beauty in any form.

—Dorothy Allison, *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*, ISBN 0452273404

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 *It's better to have a partner than go it alone. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down, the other helps, but if there's no one to help, it's tough! Two in a bed warm each other. Alone, you shiver all night. By yourself you're unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped.* —Eugene Peterson, *The Message*, ISBN 1631465783

“Walk with Me,” Goldford (lyrics below)

We're all in this thing together / We're gonna make it through

If you walk with me / I'll walk with you

<https://youtu.be/jFW-bGEPI6E> 2:57

A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“Declaration of Interdependence,” Richard Blanco

We're the promise of one people, one breath declaring to one another:

I see you. I need you. I am you.

Written and read by Richard Blanco

Audio & Text: <https://onbeing.org/poetry/declaration-of-interdependence>

Video attached. Text below. The bolded lines are from the Declaration of Independence. Richard Blanco is the first immigrant, the first Latino, the first openly gay person, and the youngest person to be the US inaugural poet.

I have an interesting perspective on depending on others. I think it gives people a chance to serve. And I'm not so much big on independence, as I am on interdependence. I'm not talking about co-dependency, I'm talking about giving people the opportunity to practicing love with its sleeves rolled up.

—Joni Eareckson Tada

“Take Me In,” The War and Treaty (lyrics below)

I've seen our mothers cry within / our fathers refuse to call us kin

Let's break this curse / oh won't you take me in

<https://youtu.be/upPpzatScZg> 4:10

“The Seventh Principle of Unitarian Universalism”

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

UU acknowledges that reality consists of a complex and interconnected web of relationships. Actions taken seemingly in isolation can still have far-reaching effects, and responsible behavior includes being mindful of these potential consequences.

“Do This in Memory of Me”

Edward Hays, Psalms for Zero Gravity (text below)

A mother and a father, laboring for their family, begin and end each day's work saying, / This is my body, this is my blood.

We're using this again because of the stylistic similarity to “Declaration of Interdependence,” and that, in order to recognize our interdependence, we should know and honor how others shed their blood, sweat, and tears.

A Little Light Music—for leaving dark times behind.

We just passed the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. We are soon going to leave behind dark political times. If the Covid-19 vaccine is as effective as expected, we'll soon be leaving the darkness of the pandemic. Step into the light. “If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere”—Seamus Heaney

None of us can ever save ourselves; we are the instruments of one another's salvation, and only by the hope that we give to others do we lift ourselves out of the darkness into light.

—Dean Koontz

“Waitin' For The Light To Shine,” Roger Miller (from Big River)

I have lived in the darkness for so long, / I'm waitin' for the light to shine

<https://youtu.be/SqfPEfEqPtA> 1:56 <https://youtu.be/lFIXjSoNAw8?t=36> 1:31

<https://youtu.be/X58-rEqI5CM> 1:47 Lyrics: www.j.mp/wftlts2

We do God's work for our brothers and sisters when we learn to listen to them.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“I Saw the Light,” Hank Williams, Sr.

I saw the light, I saw the light / No more darkness, no more night

Now I'm so happy no sorrow in sight / Praise the Lord I saw the light

Earl Scruggs & Friends <https://youtu.be/Ts1N2snAHZY> 3:43

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Hank-williams-i-saw-the-light-lyrics>

Many of us seek community solely to escape the fear of being alone. Knowing how to be solitary is central to the art of loving. When we can be alone, we can be with others without using them as a means of escape. —bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*

“Tomorrow,” Miner (Kate & Justin Miner)

There will be better days / I am already under / Let the wave wash over me

Miner <https://youtu.be/6L4Ojl8bVdc> 3:37

First Unitarian Society of Denver <https://youtu.be/tfCwHWIT3AQ> 3:37

The Cosmic Orchestra <https://youtu.be/B-beswk3YVo?t=2858> 5:34

One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone. —Shannon L. Alder

“Hello Sunshine Hello,” Jack Murray and Charles Tobias/Jessica Molaskey
<https://youtu.be/saToUvIHiQc> 3:28

I know there is strength in the differences between us. I know there is comfort where we overlap. —Ani DiFranco

“Comfort Me,” Mimi Bornstein-Doble (Hymn #1002, *Singing the Journey*)

Comfort me, comfort me, comfort me, oh my soul.

Sing with me / Speak for me / Dance with me / oh my soul.

Asher Davison & Brielle Nelson/First UU Society of San Francisco

<https://youtu.be/mlZPINVOJog?t=3> 3:10

Some people think they can find satisfaction in good food, fine clothes, lively music, and sexual pleasure. However, when they have all these things, they are not satisfied. They realize happiness is not simply having their material needs met. Thus, society has set up a system of rewards that go beyond material goods. These include titles, social recognition, status, and political power, all wrapped up in a package called self-fulfillment. Attracted by these prizes and goaded on by social pressure, people spend their short lives tiring body and mind to chase after these goals. Perhaps this gives them the feeling that they have achieved something in their lives, but in reality they have sacrificed a lot in life. They can no longer see, hear, act, feel, or think from their hearts. Everything they do is dictated by whether it can get them social gains. In the end, they've spent their lives following other people's demands and never lived a life of their own. How different is this from the life of a slave or a prisoner? —Eva Wong, tr., *Lieh-tzu: A Taoist Guide to Practical Living*

“Crazy Love,” Van Morrison/Cassandra Wilson

Take away my trouble, take away my grief/Take away my heartache, in the night like a thief/make me mellow down into my soul https://youtu.be/qqOHwJJsY_k 3:12 Lyrics: www.j.mp/cl-vm

I believe that dialogue is the key to breaking through our tendency to separate and isolate. Dialogue changes isolation and loneliness into connection and interdependence. —Vinessa Shaw

“Get Happy” (from 9:15 Revue), Harold Arlen/arr Stephen Prutsman

Jenny Lin, piano <https://youtu.be/zfsCFsTHC-g> 4:51

WALK WITH ME • Goldford

Walk with me
I'll walk with you
Down these troubled roads
We've stumbled into
We're all in this thing together
We're gonna make it through
If you walk with me
I'll walk with you

Be there for me
I'll be there for you
When we're runnin' out of hope
When we don't know what to do
Like a candle in the darkness
Shinin' bright and true
Be there for me
I'll be there for you

Whoa, everything
Is gonna be, gonna be, gonna be alright
Everything
Is gonna be alright (alright)
'Cause you and me got better days comin', yeah
Everything
Is gonna be alright

Walk with me
I'll walk with you
I know the rain of today
Will bring tomorrow's bloom
When we can't see where we're going
Where the world is coming to
You walk with me
I'll walk with you

Gonna be alright
Walk with me
Gonna be alright
I will walk with you
Gonna be alright (alright)
Everything
Oh, walk with me
Gonna be alright
And I will walk with you

Is gonna be, everything
Is gonna be, gonna be,
gonna be alright
Everything
Is gonna be alright
Gonna be, gonna be,
gonna be alright, baby
Gonna be alright
Gonna be alright
Gonna be alright

Walk with me
And I will walk with you



Declaration of Interdependence

Richard Blanco, *How to Love a Country*, 2019, ISBN 0807043079 (pb); 0807025917 (hc)

Such has been the patient suffering...

We're a mother's bread, instant potatoes, milk at a checkout line. We're her three children pleading for bubble gum and their father. We're the three minutes she steals to page through a tabloid, needing to believe even stars' lives are as joyful and bruised.

Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury...

We're her second job serving an executive absorbed in his Wall Street Journal at a sidewalk cafe' shadowed by skyscrapers. We're the shadows of the fortune he won and the family he lost. We're his loss and the lost. We're a father in a coal town who can't mine a life anymore because too much and too little has happened, for too long.

A history of repeated injuries and usurpations...

We're the grit of his main street's blacked-out windows and graffitied truths. We're a street in another town lined with royal palms, at home with a Peace Corps couple who collect African art. We're their dinner-party talk of wines, wielded picket signs, and burned draft cards. We're what they know: it's time to do more than read the *New York Times*, buy fair-trade coffee and organic corn.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress...

We're the farmer who grew the corn, who plows into his couch as worn as his back by the end of the day. We're his TV set blaring news having everything and nothing to do with the field dust in his eyes or his son nested in the ache of his arms. We're his son. We're a black teenager who drove too fast or too slow, talked too much or too little, moved too quickly, but not quick enough. We're the blast of the bullet leaving the gun. We're the guilt and the grief of the cop who wished he hadn't shot.

We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor...

We're the dead, we're the living amid the flicker of vigil candlelight. We're in a dim cell with an inmate reading Dostoevsky. We're his crime, his sentence, his amends, we're the mending of ourselves and others. We're a Buddhist serving soup at a shelter alongside a stockbroker. We're each other's shelter and hope: a widow's fifty cents in a collection plate and a golfer's ten-thousand-dollar pledge for a cure.

We hold these truths to be self-evident...

We're the cure for hatred caused by despair. We're the good morning of a bus driver who remembers our name, the tattooed man who gives up his seat on the subway. We're every door held open with a smile when we look into each other's eyes the way we behold the moon. We're the moon. We're the promise of one people, one breath declaring to one another: I see you. I need you. I am you.



This poem was originally read by Richard Blanco in the On Being episode "How to Love a Country" on November 27, 2019. <https://onbeing.org/poetry/declaration-of-interdependence>

Blanco was selected as President Obama's inaugural poet in 2013.

TAKE ME IN • The War And Treaty

Take me in
Like I've never been
Lead me now to your hearts chagrin

Take me in
By the rivers bend
There I can wash away my sins

Oh won't you take me in

Walk me down
To the hallowed ground
There I promise not to lose my crown

Walk me down
To the batter's mound
The shouts of victory are the only sounds

Whoa won't you walk me down

'Cause I've been there once and I'll go again
Just as long as you're the one to take me in
Like a free-bird circling in the wind
I'll fly to your cage so you can take me in

Oh won't you take me in
'Cause I've seen our mothers cry within
From our fathers who refuse to call us kin
But I've sunked my hands and nails in their skin
Let's break this curse oh won't you take me in

Oh won't you take me in
Oh won't you take me in
Oh won't you take me in

Let's go!

Ya, ya, ya
Ya, ya, ya, ya

Oh won't you take me in

Ya, ya, ya
Ya, ya, ya, ya

Oh won't you take me in

Ya, ya, ya
Ya, ya, ya, ya

Oh won't you take me in
Oh won't you take me in
Oh won't you take me in

<https://youtu.be/upPpzatScZg>
on their debut album *Hearts Town*



Do This in Memory of Me

Edward Hays, *Psalms for Zero Gravity*, 1998, ISBN 093951642X

A mother and a father, laboring for their family,
begin and end each day's work saying,

This is my body, this is my blood.

An adult child nursing a sick elderly parent
with compassion and patient care says,

This is my body, this is my blood.

A volunteer giving time to a needy cause
without thanks or acknowledgment says,

This is my body, this is my blood.

A preacher, with prayerful study, preparing a homily
that no one may remember or be moved by, says,

This is my body, this is my blood.

A singer forgetting self and the audience,
making love out of the music, says,

This is my body, this is my blood.

Artist or teacher, dancer or doctor, auto mechanic
or office worker attending to each detail of their
work with full-hearted involvement, proclaim,

This is my body, this is my blood.

Ten thousand thousand consecrations occur daily,
as all heaven's angels chime in, "Holy, holy, holy," to
the thunderous praise of a thousand silent silver bells.

Listen. Listen.