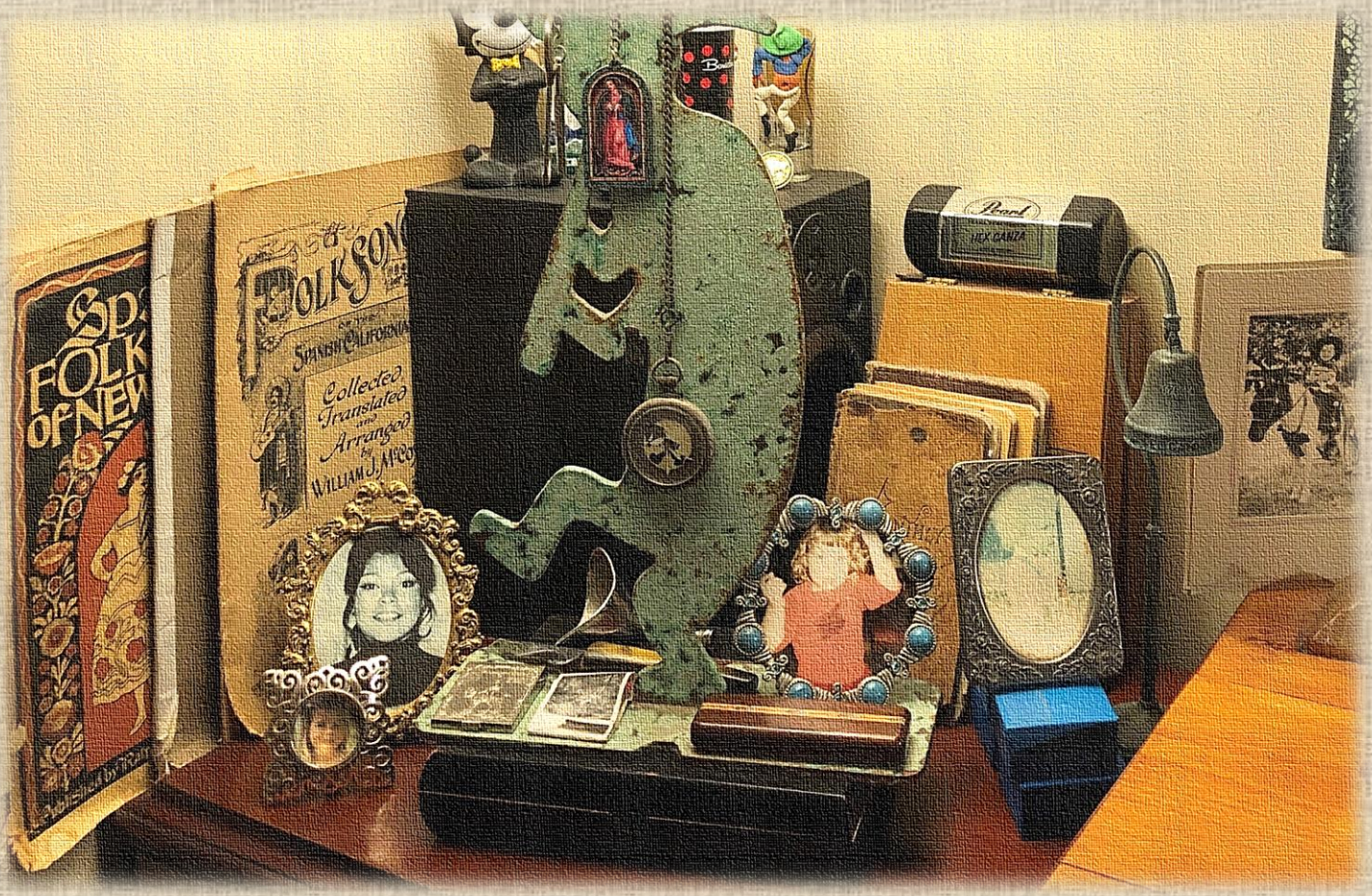
# TIME, *LAS MUJERES*, AND OTHER MYSTERIES

# DON WRIGHT




## VOLUME ELEVEN – RHYTHM IN THE WORD

HOME RECORDINGS 2022

# ---Time, *Las Mujeres*, and Other Mysteries---



Lyrics and music for all songs by DON WRIGHT
Vocals, guitars, harmonica, keyboards & mandolin – DON WRIGHT
Background vocals, tambourine & shakers – Carmelita Madrid Wright
Recording and sound mixing done in the closet studio – Los Osos, California

**Someone shot the bank manager.** First Western Savings and Loan, Natchez, Mississippi. Right along the river there. Boy, name of Teddy Rupert. Twenty-nine years old, had just advanced to manager after bein' there some eight years, after high school and two years of junior college.

Found him out back in the little employee parking lot between the bank and the 'Modern Look' dress shop, lying face up, with a fatal wound where you'd figure the heart was located - blood spread out in a deep, lurid red about the size of a saucer on his crisp white shirt and powder blue tie.

Everybody heard the single shot at 9:22 AM and ran out front – sound traveling the way it chooses to between buildings when you're not paying attention – and dismissed it as a car backfire or a kid with a firecracker. Wasn't until Lon Carl and Frankie Jo Weathers went outside for a smoke on their first break at 10 AM that they found out it was no such a thing as harmless as that. (cont. inside back cover)

..." We got trouble like we ain't never seen"

*Every time that sun comes up over the mountain, I wonder where I'm gonna find myself when it gets to the other side of the sky. Wonder if we're all gonna be in one piece. Life is short, so they say. People are vulnerable, so they say. Well of course, they say these things for a reason – reason is, they're time-worn truths. We're not getting any younger – true. We're all gonna end up where we started – true. The world will go on without us – also true.*

"Lacy asked me once, did I think God watches over people. I think he does. I think He's just about got to. I don't think we'd make it a day otherwise." ...*John Grady Cole, All The Pretty Horses (The movie)*

SNAKE IN THE CLOSET 

There's a snake in the closet
And somethin' crawlin' in the bed
You're gonna tell me the story 'bout what you really did

Fly's in the buttermilk, shoo fly shoo
Somebody's writing down everything you do

Turn off the light, get down on the floor
Give me the satisfaction of gettin' what I came here for

There's a snake in the closet
And something crawlin' in the bed
What in the world made you think
You could ever be ready for this

We got a fox in the henhouse, turkey in the straw
Mule's in the kitchen, kickin' around
Come right through the wall

There's a snake in the closet
Oh Lord, somethin' crawlin' in the bed
Better find out where this thing is goin'
Before the sun gets up in here

Turn off the light, get down on the floor
Give me everything you got then give me some more

Got a snake in the closet
And somethin' crawlin' in the bed
Got a story to tell
We got trouble like we ain't never seen
Deep and dark as the water at the bottom of the well

..." I been to the mountain and I been to the sea"

*None of us can appreciate the journey of another. No one can know the whole of another's passage through this life. What we see in each other, what we take from our brief encounters, is only as much as we can grasp, depending on our own capacity for understanding. As much as we might think we do, you don't know me and I don't know you.*

*I've never been to St. James infirmary but I've been to such places. And other such places. And I have been to the killin' ground.*

*(St. James Infirmary Blues, origin uncertain, possibly Irving Mills, 1928. Thank you for the platform and the final verse – more or less.)*

KILLING GROUND 

I went walking on the streets of San Pedro
Looking for a hole to crawl in
Caught a Greyhound bus headed out 'cross-country
Where the blue horizon ends

I got a dollar in my pocket and a picture of you
Just need a ride to the edge of town
I been to the mountain and I been to the sea
And I've been to the killin' ground

Well I rode through a valley where the sun never shines
Over deserts where there was no rain
Through towns of plenty and cities so poor
You'd swear there wasn't nothin' to gain

I went down to Montgomery Alabama
Had a run-in with a sheriff name of Ray
He said son you better get yourself back to California
'Fore the sun sets on this day

I got a dollar in my pocket and a picture of you
Give me a ride to the edge of town
I been to the mountain and I been to the sea
And I've been to the killin' ground

I bought a fifty-nine Chrysler Imperial
And when I come across the Colorado line
They threw me in jail and they called the judge
And invited me to spend the night

Well one night turned into fifty-five days and a month
And every night I dreamed I was free
When I got out I looked 'cross the river
To where I longed to be

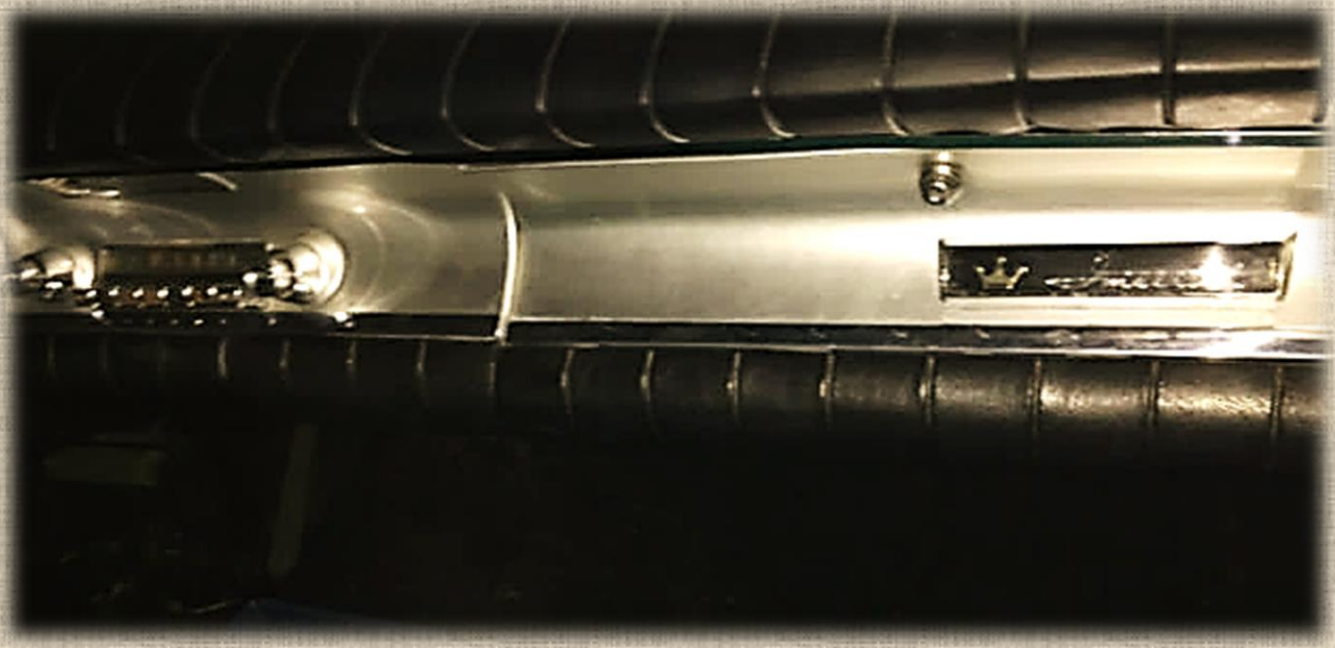
I went down to where the water was rising
And the people were gathered there
Waiting for the rain to start falling again
And carry us all somewhere

I got a dollar in my pocket and a picture of you
There ain't nothin' left to be found
Yeah I been to the mountain and I been to the sea
And I've been to the killin' ground

I went down to St. James infirmary
To see if my baby was there
She was stretched out on a long white table
So young, so cold, so bare
So young..  So cold..  So bare

I got a dollar in my pocket and a picture of you
Just need a ride to the edge of town
I been to the mountain and I been to the sea
And I've been to the killin' ground

I've been to the mountain
I've been to the sea
I've been to the killin' ground



*1959 Chrysler Imperial, somewhere in western Colorado, sometime 'round midnight. Heading west.*

..." When it's time to tell this story
I'll have to tell it on the run"

*Einstein says time is the fourth dimension, that it's a physical thing. So, to describe where you are, in addition to length, width and height, you have to know what time it is... so to speak... Eh? As smart as this guy was, I do not agree that time is a dimension. From what I can tell, time is just a man-made overlay of minutes, hours, days and weeks draped over the one eternal moment that never goes anywhere.*

*Of course, I could be wrong about this.*

TIME WILL NEVER HELP YOU 

They say for everything there's a reason
And the writing's on the wall
That time will heal our wounds
And what goes up will surely fall
But I'll tell you what I found
If you look back at yesterday
Time will never help you
Keep tomorrow from today

The sun doesn't rise in the morning
Or go down to make it night
No this old world just turns around
And we hope it turns out right
If you get right in the middle
Of a whole lotta trouble
Then somehow it ends up well
Time will never help you
If you cannot help yourself

Oh now I know
Where the light is coming from
And where it goes
It's a long long road

So many nights I lie awake
Waiting
for the break of day
oh I know this road

I am the one who takes the magic
From each moment as it comes
And when it's time to tell this story
Oh I'll have to tell it on the run
Whether you believe or whether you don't
Or you're somewhere in between
Time will never help you
Make sense of what you've seen

I'll tell you what I found
And I found it in a dream
It's that time will never help you
Make any sense of what you've seen

∞

..." Do you hunger for the story that you know cannot be told"

*It's hard to imagine there is any more to life than what we can see. But hard to accept that this is all there is. Not to say that it isn't an awful lot, of course. But is it ever enough? Those of us who are gone – our loved ones and anyone who has had an impact on our life – is it possible they just no longer exist? Is it really that simple? And so without meaning? And those of us still here for now, how did this happen and why is nothing clear? Why the mystery? I've come to believe there is no explanation. But still...*

STILL WE WAIT 

When you wake up in the morning
In a warm familiar place
Do you wonder how this world
Keeps spinning ever on its way
Do you hunger for the story
That you know cannot be told
It was written down in a vision
And forgotten long ago
Still you wait for the page to turn

He has climbed the highest mountains
Walked through every open door
Now he wanders into places
That he never did before
Looking for a sign of heaven
That he knows will never come
He says he stopped believing
In the things that he has done
Still he waits for a message
Though he couldn't say why

There's nothing I have seen or heard
That speaks to me of truth
Not the ravings of a preacher man
Or the expert with his proof
I can't explain this mystery
Or the consequence of love
I have yet to hear those angels
Or any voice from above
But still I wait for a whisper

We cast our hopes upon the river
And watch them roll away
Maybe we know where they're going
Maybe we can't say
But with each question we have asked
And with no answer given
We must realize the reason is
This life is all there is
Still we wait for another
Oh we wait for another.. beyond

..." Fire came a callin' like God to Abraham"

*Do you know the difference between an opportunity that never comes and an opportunity lost? Or between a real-time moment unappreciated and a memory? Or between a love that makes you tremble and one that makes you sing? There isn't any. Now is now. Gone is gone.*

MAHALIA 

Late summer sun and the fever is high
The air is thick with the smell of the coming rain
Smoke from a fire in the valley fills the sky
And I'm feeling dead tired at the end of the day

Now comes Mahalia down the street
Here comes Mahalia, she's a sight to see
Comes Mahalia, closer now / She's got something I can't do without

Out across this country where I used to roam
There's a little old shack of unpainted wood
I'd be contented just to sit there
Until the cows come home
I would take us back there if I could

Now here comes Mahalia down the street
Here comes Mahalia, she's a sight to see
Comes Mahalia, getting closer now
The only good thing in this second-rate town

I grew up in the fields of cotton and grain
And I still work my fingers to the bone
Never did have sense enough to up and get away
Never thought of anywhere else as home

Here she comes, Mahalia, walking down this street
Comes Mahalia, what a sight to see
Oh Mahalia, come closer now
Take a turn to the music, turn me round and round

One Sunday morning not so long ago
Out across those fields in that happy little house
Fire came a callin' like God to Abraham
In a matter of an hour was nothing but ashes on the ground

I ran down to the river where I knew she was
But she was nowhere to be seen
I turned back to the ruin once filled with love
And to the realization she never did leave

Now comes Mahalia down the street
Here comes Mahalia, she's a sight to see
Comes Mahalia, closer now / She's got something I can't do without

..." I fell into a hole in the world"

*When I was a child, I had a dream of a bear walking from across the street to our front door, opening it and coming in as my father was in the kitchen, making dinner. I screamed warnings to my father but he paid no heed as the bear attacked him. I woke myself up.*

*I used to wake up within my dream and do whatever pleased me for a short time and then wake up for real even though I didn't want to. I used to rise up and fly with ease and it felt completely familiar. I used to remember everything, every unexplainable detail. At most, only bits and pieces remain in the mornings now, sometimes nothing at all. Maybe I'm all dreamed out.*

MY LAST DREAM 

I was a child on a merry go round
Then I was adrift on the sea
And I walked a thousand miles from my home
Through the fog of my last dream

You were alone and lying naked
In a house up on top of a hill
And the winter sun rose and fell in the sky
While you slept and dreamed of him

I carried water in a bucket of wood
For what reason I never did see
Until I saw you running through a field of fire
As I woke from my last dream

There's a feeling of liberation once it is done
Like finding a hiding place when you're on the run
Almost anyone would be happy to stay
I say please just please take me away

I fell into a hole in the world
Where the light comes traveling through
I looked for a way to get back where I was
But all I could see was you

Now I'm standing in the middle of a room with no walls
Suddenly unbound and free
Waiting for the sun to come up over the mountain
And shine down on me

I was a child on a merry go round
I was adrift on the sea
I walked a thousand miles from my home
Through the fog of my last dream

..."All alone with a morbid fascination
For anything that puts her out of my mind"

*Plants wither and die if you don't water them. A house deteriorates if it's not lived in. if you take a person for granted, they will seek another place, where they are appreciated. It's just that simple.*

NEVER SAW THIS COMING 

Oh I never saw this comin'
If you don't look both ways down the tracks
She gave me everything I ever wanted
I never gave her what she wanted back

That's what the story will tell when she is gone
As simple as it can be
I'm goin' down by the water
Gonna drown my sorrow
With a pint of whiskey and weed

Oh I never saw this comin'
I guess it's easy to see why that's so
Man takes a woman for granted
Then wonders why he's watching her go

All alone with a morbid fascination
For anything that puts her out of my mind
Call me crazy, call me a doctor
Is this how it feels to be buried alive

Oh I never saw this comin'
I'm blind as a man ever was
But now I know why the river bends
To the will of the rock and the falling moon
Yet finds its way to the sea when it's done

Oh I never saw this comin'
I only listened to the sound in my mind
And when the morning
Then the night come tumblin' down
I'll be nothing more than what she left behind

Oh I never saw this comin'

..." Clean out the cupboards and build a fire"

*Things wear out and you replace them with other things. Or sometimes you just add more things. Sometimes you have to thin things out, lighten up. And sometimes people change, love fades. You know the end is near and you want to keep some things to take with you. Sometimes you have to leave it all behind and move on.*
*That's what the road is for.*

EVERYTHING MUST GO 

You get up in the morning and you realize
Time has come to move on
Blow out the candle and get in the wind
And get to hell and gone
Throw out your weapons and raise the white flag
Leave the key in the door
Throw out the baby and the bath water too
Everything must go

Everything must go
Don't leave nothing behind
Clean out the cupboards and build a fire
Watch that smoke fill up the sky

There for a time she was the belle of the ball
And you were the king of hearts
Whatever happened to a love so strong
I don't know where to start
Pack up your records and your po' bedroll
Leave the rest on the floor
Ain't nothing matters but the shirt on your back
Everything must go

Everything must go
Don't leave nothing behind
Burn every treasure you ever owned
Watch that smoke fill up the sky

What is now is not what it was
Who knows what might be ahead
You got to pick yourself up and dust yourself off
Start all over again
Don't be cryin' 'bout the years gone by
Won't be the last time you know
Just like that water rolling under the bridge
Everything must go

Everything must go
Don't leave nothing behind
Burn down the house and hit the road
Watch that smoke fill up the sky

.." She's the light that remains
When the darkness descends and closes in"

*From one perspective, I suppose, we are whole unto ourselves. But then, how is it that the lightest touch from another can be so transformative? What is the explanation for how different it feels between placing my own hand on my cheek and the small, delicate hand of a woman doing the same thing? I don't think the answer lies all within the mind or all within the body. I think it lies somewhere in between. And I would guess we are not whole unto ourselves.*

THE SMALL HAND OF A WOMAN 

The small hand of a woman
A touch as light as a wisp of smoke
The small hand of a woman
Made me whole

I was broken, I was lost
Gone like the wind down a holler
Gone like yesterday, over and done
I give up my soul for a dollar

The small hand of a woman
Steady as a train on the track
The small hand of a woman
Brought me back

When every glass is filled with wine
And all have eaten their fill
That's the time to beware of the fall
That will come, and come it will
I've turned my back and I've walked away
From troubles that follow me still
She's the light that remains
When the darkness descends and closes in

The small hand of a woman
Like the spirit that rises above
The small hand of a woman
Lifted me up

The small hand of a woman
With a touch as light as smoke
The small hand of a woman
Yeah it made me whole

..." Voyages out and voyages back, all just stories now"

*Walk down this street with me. This street we know so well. This street where all the stories still live. Within each story, lies a memory. And within each memory, a little piece of each of us. A life is a remembrance – at every age – but as we grow older, that naturally becomes the larger part. We do less, we remember more (if we're lucky). Well, anyway, just walk along a while with me please. Tell me a story. I would like that.*

DOWN MEMORY LANE 

Won't you walk with me awhile here in the twilight
We can talk about the things we left behind
And of the love left unreturned, oh I promise
I won't take up too much of your time

Just bear with me as we look into each window
There's a story behind every bolted door
Cold and long forgotten 'till this moment
But underneath still burning like before

Sometimes I can remember
Some feelings like they happened yesterday
But oh so many memories like dust down a back street
Are caught up in the wind and blow away

It's too bad we only get a lifetime
We never seem to play it as it lays
Let's take this chance to see it all at once
On a walk down Memory Lane

That little house dark and quiet on the corner
Once was full of light and happiness
And what is now just an empty field, well I can tell you
Was filled with hopes as many as would fit

Voyages out and voyages back, all just stories now
Old friends and lovers, they appear only in dreams
Oh if we could keep it all in a little room of our own
I would crawl inside and never leave

It's too bad we only get a lifetime
And all to learn the value of one day
So come with me
And we can chase this sun until it goes
To setting down on Memory Lane

Yeah we only get a lifetime
As fragile as a candle's flame
Take my hand and we'll watch one more sunrise
Walkin' down Memory Lane
Walk with me down Memory Lane

..."She made her living on the street
Up in North Beach in those days"

*I met her at the Columbus Café, on Broadway, near Columbus Avenue. We both ordered the same thing there at the lunch counter – sweetbreads and mushrooms in Marsala sauce with pasta. I said something incisive, along the lines of, "It's good isn't it?" She said it was. She was small and pretty, soft-spoken, a little tired looking but clear-eyed and would look directly at you, unafraid. We became friends. Good friends. She was honest, kind and loyal. I never met a better person in my life. I still haven't.*

BIBI TAYLOR, SAN FRANCISCO, 1968 

See that sun falling into the ocean
Through the Golden Gate
Was the one thing that brought her comfort
At the end of the day
Oh those lonely nights
In the company of men she didn't know
Bathed in a murky light
Like the fog they would come and go
There ain't much to life she said
As we lay there in her bed
In the end there ain't much to show
She was good to me, that's all I know

Bibi Taylor came out from Texas
Wouldn't hurt a fly
Never had much luck picking out a good one
From a bunch of guys
She made her living on the street
Up in North Beach in those days
And I remember her in my dreams
Under the neon of Broadway
There ain't much to this life my friend
Once it's done and all is said
In the end there ain't nothin' to show
But she was good to me and that's all I know

Abel Dunnough he built him a city
Out south of town
Never heard the sound of the grinding wheel
Or a hammer come down
Just roamed around in his thirty-story tower
Back in Frisco all alone
Paid his call girls by the hour
Then sent them home
There's nothing in this life he'd say
Where I cannot have my way
All that matters is the money
And what it does for me
What it does for me

One night he called in Bibi T.
And she knew he liked it rough
It made him just go that much harder
When she said she'd had enough
He left her laying on the floor
She was just some used-up whore
Had his man clean up the mess
"Just be sure to burn the dress"
Well it's like she always said
There's nothing for it once you're dead
They won't be crying when I go
She was good to me, that's all I know

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I remember the night I found him
How he looked so satisfied
Holding court in a bar down on Union Street
Untouchable and high
I followed him out into the alley
And as he turned to close the door
I looked him in his face and I sunk the knife
Underneath rib number four
I made him say her name, I told him
This is for her and her alone
I might pay with what's left of the rest of my life
But she was good to me, that's all I know

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She had a smile that made the sunshine
Want to run and hide
Had some habits she could not break
On her darker side
You can judge me all you want
You can judge her too
But listen close, I tell you what
You never know what you will do
There ain't much to life, like she said
You take your chances and whatever's left
Maybe in the end you got nothin' to show
Oh she was good to me, that's all I know

Postscript:

- Brigette Marie Taylor was born in Texas in 1944. She was murdered in 1968. She never hurt a fly.
- Abel Dunnough was found in San Francisco in 1970, dead of an apparent knife wound, directly through the heart, by an unknown assailant.

## Passage

Dali's clocks and memories of wheelbarrows
Being filled and emptied, and filled again
Discarded minutes and hours piling up uncounted
Spilling out from forgotten homes
Houses now with nothing but thin echoes
Of voices remembered and voices lost
Tears, laughter, indiscretions, secrets. Acceptance
And a leaving behind of everything once cherished
Everything once possessed
Everything already gone

## Encounters

As you drift out from the shore and into the undertow
You might feel uneasy, helpless
And alarmed at the power of the sea
Maybe you didn't read the signs
Or maybe you did and waded in anyway
The truth is,
You're stuck with making the best of where you are
And how far things will go is not entirely up to you
A horizon that once had little meaning
Now must be contemplated,
Weighed for its validity
Though it doesn't appear to be stable, fixed, definable
And any returning will be to a different shore
You can wander out here awhile
But time is not on your side

## Soledad

Without a sound
Without light
And beyond any sense of understanding
Lies the wholeness of our rapture
*Las respuestas a las preguntas no formuladas*
Questions that never came to mind
And answers that change nothing
The fire that burns at the center of a beating heart
Does so without purpose
We are only what we have chosen to be
And we are nothing more at the end
Than we were at the beginning

(cont.) There he lay, wide-eyed, lifeless. Not yet stiff. Not yet cold. Not yet looking like you might expect a corpse to look exactly but gone, nonetheless. Gone as could be. Twenty-nine years old and now thirty was out of reach. Just a boy really. And now never to know such things as he'd been looking forward to, like we all do,

When Lon and Frankie Jo come running in, frantic and shocked and all, of course all hell broke loose in the bank. Customers were escorted out, the doors locked, police was called and the alley cordoned off and the onlookers started showing up.

Across town, Lana Rupert was tending to something out back of the house when Detective Tillotson of the Natchez PD called to her over the side yard gate. When he told her, after she'd come out through the gate, of the death of her son, he had to scramble to catch her and keep her from falling onto the cement walkway, as she simply fainted and crumbled upon hearing the words.

I don't know if you ever had one of those little plastic toys, as a child – a little statue on a base with a button underneath that, when you push it, the figurine of whatever it may represent – person, animal or such – completely collapses into a heap because the button releases the spring connected to the thread holding all the body parts together. That's as apt a description as one could give - it was like that more'n anything other.

Detective Tillotson scooped Mrs. Rupert up best he could and carried her into the house and laid her down on the sofa then went to the kitchen. All he could think to do was fetch her a glass of water and as he did, he could hear her start to whimper and then a low moan and then the bawling and screaming filled the house with such a weight, it left him with only enough strength to pull up a nearby chair, sit down and hang his head.

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Brie McDaniel, a young woman, twenty-two years old, was crossing the street three blocks up from the Savings and Loan and headed to the 'Modern Dress' to look for something to wear to a job interview when she heard the shot at 9:22. She recognized it as not having come from a car or firecracker or any other such benign source and was concerned. She was familiar with firearms, being in a family of hunters, two of whose members were also employed in law enforcement. Her brother Claude was a Natchez PD officer and her uncle by marriage was Duane Tillotson, Detective.

Brie was also familiar with Teddy Rupert. She, in fact, had strong reason to believe, on that Friday morning she was attending to her shopping, that their dinner plans in the evening were sure to include a marriage proposal. And she knew what her answer was going to be. It was foremost in her mind as she fanned through the racks of the 'Modern Dress' – just feet away from the little parking lot where Teddy now lay – a job interview was one thing, but a marriage, a family, a future!

She had settled on a sleeveless, cotton print, just the right combination of enticing and sensible and started down the hallway to the dressing room at the back of the store when something caught her eye from out the small window in the employee entrance door at the end of the hall. It was a man's body, stretched out on the ground across two unoccupied parking spaces, in a crisp white shirt and powder blue necktie. She uttered not a sound. She simply fainted and crumbled onto the floor where she had stood. (cont.)


## Song List

1. Snake in the Closet.....3:58
2. Killing Ground.....5:14
3. Time Will Never help You.....4:25
4. Still We Wait.....3:28
5. Mahalia.....5:21
6. My Last Dream.....4:00
7. Never Saw This Coming.....3:55
8. Everything Must Go.....3:34
9. The Small Hand of a Woman.....3:54
10. Down Memory Lane.....4:18
11. Bibi Taylor, San Francisco, 1968.....9:00



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