

Penny on the Track

Sometimes I feel like I've been crushed to death
Growing fat on my bones and short of breath
Afraid that there will be nothing left
Under the weight of all I own

The more I make the more I starve
I'm a bee drowning in a honey jar
All the money I thought would take me far
Never takes me home

Put a penny on the track
Train rolls over Lincoln's back
You can't spend it when it's flat
But you might get free

Used to be the world was all ahead
As shiny as a kid's new sled
Undefined by a sense of dread
Every move was bold

We'd ride the ride down the icy hill
Dodge trees and take our spills
Limp back up for another thrill
When did life get old?

Chorus

Spin doctors tell you to hold on tight
Night is day and day is night
They try to sell you dark as light
They never mention the price you pay

I'm not a kid, I've seen too much of that
There's a world of weight on my back
But I'm making my way to the railroad track
I'm going to give it all away

Chorus

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Ready for Memphis

Three ties and my black suit
Shaving kit and shiny shoes
Dusted off an old suitcase
Tucked in my bible and a bottle of booze
Fifty bucks in my pocket
Try to get me a cheap room
Three days, then it's over
It's just something I've got to do

I'm ready for Memphis
There's going to be a big meeting there
A whole lot could happen
There's just something in that sweet magnolia air

Ten hours on a Greyhound
Old ladies and stale air
Hopeless men riding shotgun
I just look out my window and stare
Pick away at my sack lunch
My wife packed it before work
She thinks I'm crazy
She's afraid that I'll get hurt, but...

Chorus

Memphis streets are deserted
I guess because it's so early
Garbage piled on the corners
I pick up an old paper and read
Feels like a storm coming
The air is hot and sticky
I'd better find a motel room
So I can wash up and be ready

Chorus

I heard he was coming
I don't want to be late
I know I'm not colored
But I don't think that should matter in 1968
I know it's a long shot
But it would mean everything
If I could just shake hands
With Dr. King

Chorus

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Rich

I am rich
I have no money
But that does not make me ashamed
For my mother
And my father
Have given me their name

There are nights
The dark surrounds me
It knows my fears, it calls my name
But when your hand
Touches my shoulder
The dark somehow is tamed
I am rich

Let the world go on believing
It can dry up all my dreams
Your love is the water
And I've waded into the holiest of streams

This is not
What I expected
I had always wanted more
But you believed
That love was all I would need
You taught me that I am not poor
I am rich

Chorus

I am rich
Beyond believing
I have more than my wildest dreams
Your love is the water
And I've waded into the holiest of streams
I am rich
I am rich

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First Best Friend

We came trudging in like heroes
Football under my arm
Me and Marty, we just won the Superbowl
For the tenth time in my yard
I hit him with a pass at the apple tree
He made a cut as smooth as silk
Now it's Miller time, except when you're nine
It's graham crackers and milk

We slept out back in my dad's tent
Snuck out under the stars
With rotten apples from that apple tree
Threw the softest ones at cars
Then we'd run like two scared rabbits
And dive back into our tents
Then bargain with God and swear if we didn't get caught
We'd never do that again
We always did that again

Now Marty's got three kids up in Fargo
And he's farming or doing something with his hands
And I only drink Miller when I have to
I prefer imported brands
We catch up at funerals and weddings
We don't know quite what to say
But that apple tree remembers me
And the catch he made that day

Oh, that apple tree, it still remembers me
And the catch Marty made that day

You only get one first best friend

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Cry

I lived for those Sundays when I was a girl
In the back yard of the Kentucky sun
MawMaw and MeMa were my entire world
I'm their princess, their one and only one

They're saying, "Oh, Lord, aren't we having a time?
Yes, it's turned out the way we knew it would
Now sugar, we've got to go", and no matter how hard I try
When I wake up, they're still gone for good

And I cry, cry
Wake up with tears in my eyes
And I cry, cry
A little girl thinks everything lasts forever

MeMa smoked Salems, and MawMaw, Lucky Strikes
They are laughing and drinking iced tea
MeMa is saying, "Honey, how did you get so bright?"
And MawMaw, she's singing to me... oooh....

There are still nights when I wonder why
It was the one time I felt that I belonged
And I know they'd tell me, "Sugar, big girls don't cry"
But sometimes, I'm not that strong

Chorus

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Firefly

It's a beautiful thing, a floating star
A firefly caught in a mason jar
In there it won't go very far
Before its light goes out

Little by little, in a trance or a spell
The light is stolen leaving just a shell
Like a soulless man, or a ringless bell
Or a saint consumed with doubt

Who can fly from a jar?
Who can float like a star?
Who can live with the scars life has given us?

It's an unusual thing, an angel's voice
That you hear through the crowd over all the noise
Saying, "you're not alone" when you feel destroyed
And that angel knows how to sing

But then it's gone and you shake your head
Was it a dream, what the angel said?
You want to believe, but you think instead
Maybe you didn't hear a thing

Oh, to fly from a jar
Oh, to float like a star
Oh, to live with the scars life has given us

It's a holy thing, a merciful hand
That reaches beyond all our meager plans
And pulls us to the promised land
In spite of all our fears

It can open the lids of firefly jars
And trace the path of our ugly scars
When love has flown and life is hard
That's when the hand appears

You can fly from a jar
You can float like a star
You can live with the scars life has given us

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Wish I'd Never Gone Away

Another town, another day
Feels like my heart is made of stone
Seen a million different faces
But I don't recognize my own

I dive for crumbs that others throw
What pride I had is wearing thin
I eat with people I don't know
And I'm a stranger to my kin

Had a pretty good family
Worse than some, as good as most
That wasn't good enough for me
That was a thousand years ago

Maybe I'll make it home this year
They think my pockets are full of gold
I'll tell them what they want to hear
If I can borrow some good clothes

Wish I'd never gone away
Wish I'd never gone away
Wish I'd never gone away

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Less of You

You were the water
You rolled right over me
Over and over and over again
Carving a channel as smooth as satin
Down from the sky, up from the ground
You wore me down
I said,

Go ahead and roll right over me
Do it 'til there's nothing left of me
But when you do
There'll be less of you

You were the wind
You blew right through me
Day after day after day and then
Chiseling slowly with needles and pins
In all those years you cut a canyon
Where my life had been
I said,

Go ahead and blow right through me
Do it 'til there's nothing left of me
But when you do
There'll be less of you

Now the fire
You burn all around me
Closer and closer and closer yet
Bent on devouring whatever is left
The water's run dry, the wind's a train
But I won't pray for rain

Go ahead. Burn me.
'Til there's nothing but ashes left of me
But if you do
This time, you're going down, too
And there will be nothing left of you

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Take Me Down to the Water

When I was twelve I was baptized
They pinched my nose, I scrunched my eyes
Preacher Willis laid me back
When I came up the air I gasped
Didn't feel any different

Take me down to the water
Lead me into the water
Lay me down in the water
Let me drown in the water
And I will be set free

When I was fifteen I had a child
People said that I was wild
But I know who the daddy was
I kept my mouth shut because
It wouldn't make any difference

Chorus

When I seventeen my baby died
I shook her hard one night when she cried
It should have been me or her preacher dad
When she closed her eyes and breathed her last
Everything was different

Chorus

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Roll Away the Stone

Something happened so long ago
Too shameful for you to say
So you built a tomb deep in your heart
And sealed it all away
Now you throw yourself against that rock
But you don't push it aside
Nobody living is ever gonna know
What's buried there inside

Tell the truth
Cut it loose
Roll away the stone
Tell the truth
Cut it loose
Roll away the stone

Sometimes you forget to watch yourself
Someone stumbles on the grave
But you become a junkyard dog
If they try to get in the cave
You guard that rock until it wears you out
And then you lie down and try to rest
But you dream all night about that boulder rolling down
And crushing your very last breath

Chorus

Mama, I don't want that rock
Daddy, I'm so afraid
They'll all know who I am
I just can't today

Chorus

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