

and Laurie Lewis

notes

You Are My Flower

(traditional, from Carter Family)

I fell in love with this quirky and happy song the first time I heard it, on the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's collaborative album, "Will the Circle be Unbroken." I learned the song by osmosis over the years, and now, listening to the original, I realize I have quirked it up in my own peculiar way. A combination of Flatt and Scruggs and the Carter Family. As a little kid, Molly's presence (along with her dad, Jack) was a constant at the California bluegrass festivals. It has been a great pleasure to watch her grow into herself.

Molly Tuttle: guitar, vocal

Laurie: guitar

Baby, That Would Sure Go Good

(Cindy Walker)

Todd and I used to play this song in our live shows on occasion. I learned it from the singing of Leon McAuliff, on Bob Wills' last recording. I later learned that Cindy Walker wrote it as "Baby, That Would Sure Go Good," and that she was irritated that "sure" and "would" were switched on that recording. But you send these little children out into the world, and who knows what will happen?

Todd Phillips: string bass

Laurie: fiddle

Rooster Crow

(Laurie Lewis/Spruce and Maple Music, ASCAP)

Sometimes my thoughts are like an old fiddle tune that won't leave me alone. Craig and I met when he was probably 17 or 18, at the Golden West Bluegrass Festival in Norco, CA. He immediately became my favorite banjo player, and I treasure the opportunity to record with him again. Craig is not "just" a banjo player. He is a consummate musician who happens to play the banjo.

Craig Smith: banjo

Laurie: fiddle

My Last Go-Round

(Rosalie Sorrels)

I first recorded this song on a massive 4-CD set, as a tribute to its author, the Travelin' Lady. At Rosalie's memorial concert, Nina accompanied me with her soulful guitar, and we've been performing it together ever since. I was lucky to be able to share the stage with Rosalie on numerous occasions. Her unique artistry shone a light for me on how to be one's own person.

Nina Gerber: electric guitar

Laurie: acoustic guitar

Old Friend

(Laurie Lewis/Spruce and Maple Music, ASCAP)

Thirty years ago, I first recorded this song, on my "Love Chooses You" album. At that time, I had only been singing and sharing life with Kathy for 15 or so years. The fabric remains untorn.

Kathy Kallick: guitar, vocal

Laurie: fiddle

Mama Cry

(Laurie Lewis/Spruce and Maple Music, ASCAP)

I heard a story from a broken-hearted mother, came home, had a good cry, and wrote this song. I first met Tatiana when she was 7 years old, at Bluegrass at the Beach, a music camp on the Oregon coast. We have grown together.

Tatiana Hargreaves: fiddle

Laurie: banjo

The Lonely One

(Emily Mann)

It feels fitting that Molly and I would record a song from the First Family of Country Music, and another from one of the new young lights of the genre. I first met Emily when she was just a kid at the Big Sur Fiddle Camp. Now a full-grown adult, her writing feels deeply traditional and wholly new at the same time.

Molly Tuttle: vocal, lead guitar

Laurie: guitar

Ain't Nobody Got the Blues Like Me

(Dick Oxtot)

Barbara Higbie and I met when she was 19 and I was 28, on the bandstand with Dick Oxtot's Golden Age Jazz Band. The opportunity to play with those incredible horn players—chiefly Jack Minger, Jim Rothermel, Bob Mielke, Bill Napier, Bill Bardin, and Richard Hadlock—and to delve into the music of the 1920's through '40's busted my little musical world wide open. Barbara and I have remained friends ever since. This is an homage to our old boss, on the occasion of his centennial year.

Barbara Higbie: piano, vocal

Laurie: fiddle

Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

(lyrics: Ada R. Habershon, music: Charles H. Gabriel, from the Monroe Brothers)

Tom and I originally learned this song to sing at our annual Bill Monroe birthday celebration, held at the Freight and Salvage in Berkeley. On first listening, I misheard the chorus lyric as "Is" rather than "There's," and that one word made all the difference to me. Tom has been my partner in music for the last three decades.

Tom Rozum: vocal, mandolin

Laurie: guitar

The Pika Song

(Laurie Lewis/Spruce and Maple Music, ASCAP)

I wrote this song in my head as a poem, while hiking the 220-mile John Muir Trail in 2014. I didn't expect it to become a song at the time, but one day, while sitting around playing my banjo, I just started singing it. Visit HighSierraRambles.net to read about my journey. When I mentioned the song to Tatiana, she brightened up. Turns out the pika is her spirit animal.

Tatiana Hargreaves: fiddle, harmony vocal

Laurie: banjo

O The Wind and Rain

(traditional))

Who doesn't love a song of jealousy, murder, and resourceful fiddlers? Wikipedia states:

"The Two Sisters" (aka "O The Wind and Rain") is a Northumbrian murder ballad that recounts the tale of a girl drowned by her sister. It is first known to have appeared on a broadside in 1656 as "The Miller and the King's Daughter."

It has been extensively recorded, under many different names, ever since recording was invented. This version clings most faithfully to Peggy Seeger's fabulous recording of the same name. I

met Mike when he moved to the Bay Area from Florida to join the David Grisman Quintet, in 1978. He used to teach mandolin at my violin shop, and co-produced my first Rounder album, True Stories.

Mike Marshall: guitar

Laurie: fiddle

Troubled Times

(Laurie Lewis/Spruce and Maple Music, ASCAP)

I wrote this song many years ago, and I guess it has just been waiting for the right voice to sing in harmony. I have known Leah since before she was born, and our voices fit like family.

Leah Wollenberg: vocal

This is Our Home

(Laurie Lewis/Spruce and Maple Music, ASCAP)

A lament for the planet. Out here in California, we are shaped by the ocean as well as the land. Nina and I have been sharing music since sometime in the 1970's. She always plays what I want to hear.

Nina Gerber: electric guitar

Laurie: 12-string guitar

Recorded at LewieToons Studio, Berkeley, CA. Laurie Lewis, engineer

Additional recording:

Compass Studio, Nashville, TN. Matt Coles, Engineer

The Rubber Room, Chapel Hill, NC. Jerry Brown, engineer

Next Door Studio, Nashville, TN. Todd Phillips, engineer

Opus Studios, Berkeley, CA. David Luke, engineer

Mixed at The Rec Room, Nashville, TN, by Ben Surratt and Laurie Lewis

Mastered by Ken Lee, Ken Lee Mastering, Albany, CA

Illustrations by Tom Rozum

Design by Lisa Berman

THANKS to my friends who gave so generously of their time and talent to play and sing these songs with me; to Kimber Ludiker; Ben Surratt; Missy Raines; and to Tom Rozum for great eyes, hand and ear; to Shubb Capos and D'Addario Strings; and to my family.

This album is dedicated to the memory of my musical brother, Tom Size.

Molly Tuttle appears courtesy of Compass Records

There is nothing more fun, or more deeply soul-satisfying, for me than to sit with a good friend and share a song. I am lucky to have dear friends who are excellent musicians, whose music has enriched my life for—in some cases—well over four decades. We have aged and mellowed together, along with the instruments we play. All are devotees of the tones and timbres of wood, horsehair, wire, and the all-too-human voice. These duets started out just being about the people, but I soon realized that each person's life is inextricably entwined with the instrument they have chosen to play, and which come to life under their hands. I am fascinated by those connections, and thought maybe some of our listeners might be, too.

Carl C. Holzappel early 20th century 12-string guitar, from the collection of Mike Seeger, played on "This is Our Home." Mike bought the guitar in 1958 in Baltimore for \$27.81. I dreamt about having a 12-string, but when I went hunting for one, I didn't like any of them. Then Alexia

Smith, Mike's widow, showed me this one. I knew immediately that this was the 12-string of my dreams.

1927 Vega Tubaphone banjo, with Greg Joiner neck, played on "Mama Cry" and "The Pika Song." At Wintergrass (Bellevue, Washington's great music festival) one year, I met this banjo in Greg Boyd's instrument room. Even in the cacophony of that place, I could hear the sweet ring. I was smitten, and took it home.

1929 Martin 00045, from Charles Sawtelle, played on "Old Friend" and "You Are My Flower." Charles passed this most beautiful instrument on to me when he died in 1999. He got it, in not-great shape, from his friend Paul Sato in Hawaii, who had bought it from a Hawaiian who said it had belonged to his grandmother. Paul claims it was full of sand when he got it. She probably purchased it new from Martin, and played it on the beach.

1899 Joel B Swett violin, made in Rochester, NY, played on "Old Friend." I used to own a violin shop in Marin County, in the 1980's. This violin came in, and I immediately called then-band-mate Beth Weil, and convinced her to buy it, at a very reasonable price. She suffered a cerebral aneurism in 1991, and hasn't been able to play since then. I recently purchased it from her. The tuning is GDGD.

1889 Jerome Bonaparte Squier violin, made in Boston, MA, played on "Rooster Crow." This fiddle is my workhorse and soulmate. When I first played it, it felt like the sound reached inside me and squeezed my heart. I have long been enamored of American-made fiddles, and this one is a beauty.

1945 Wm Carlisle violin, made in Cincinnati, OH, played on "O The Wind and Rain." I first met Fletcher Bright when he came to the Cannon Beach bluegrass camp, on the Oregon coast. He was a life-long fan of all things fiddle, and we became close friends and colleagues. I recognized in his enthusiasm the seeds of a fiddle evangelist, and hired him to teach at the Augusta Heritage Center. He was an instant success as an instructor, and continued to spread the Fiddle Gospel until his death in 2017. At his memorial get-together, I kept gravitating toward his lovely Carlisle fiddle. I am deeply gratified that his family placed it in my care.

1935 Martin D18, played on "O The Wind and Rain," "Will The Circle Be Unbroken?" and "My Last Go-Round." Twenty-five years ago, I got a phone call about this guitar, which was unplayable at the time (the bridge was loose). I bought it sight-unseen at the insistence of Charles Sawtelle, and have been grateful ever since, to be the caretaker of this wonderful instrument.

2018 Pre-War Guitar Company D18 style, played on "The Lonely One" and "You Are My Flower." Made for Molly Tuttle.

2019 Pre-War Guitar Company D28 style, played on "The Lonely One." Made for Laurie Lewis.

"The Manzanita Bass" made by the Framus Company, ca. 1950's, from Bubenreuth, Germany. Played on "Baby, That Would Sure Go Good." Todd says:

"My bass was found for me by Tony Rice in 1978. We were about to record the Manzanita album and we knew my old Kay Bass wasn't great in the studio. He spotted a little 2 line want-ad in The Bay Guardian paper. So we went over to a student's apartment together, pooled our money and left with the bass. Tony talked me into re-graduating the top by scraping and sanding from the *outside* of the bass and then putting on a new finish, which I did! I shaved away wood until I could see the top move a little when pushed on with my thumb. I did a few other "childish" modifications on whims like that. I shortened the neck by cutting off the scroll and added a maple wedge under the fingerboard to jack up the bridge height. I was 20-something years old, didn't know any better. For a while it looked pretty new after the re-finish but a few hundred plane rides and a car wreck has broken it in nicely. The thing records really well and I've used it on 99% of all the records I've been on, and I still drag it around to all gigs."

"Tabitha," a 2006 John Sullivan 5-string fiddle which Tatiana Hargreaves purchased from Darol Anger in 2008. Tati says, "I think my sound as a player has been really influenced by that instrument and as it has opened up and grown as an instrument, I have also opened up and grown as a player."

1962 re-issue Fender Stratocaster, played by Nina Gerber on "This is our Home" and "My Last Go-Round." It was given to her by Nanci Griffith. Nina says, "One night I was sitting in with Nan-

ci and her band and she let me use her yellow Strat. I really really liked it and kept telling her what a sweet guitar it was. Months later I was visiting Nanci at her place in TN. A long hang, and yes, vodka was involved. As I was leaving, she said 'Don't you leave here without everything that belongs to you.' And she gave me the guitar."

1922 Gibson Master Model mandolin is from the very first batch of F5's ever made, signed by Lloyd Loar on November 28, 1922. Before purchasing it from Mike Seeger, Tom played it previously on two occasions at Mike's house. He was fortunate to have his friend Steve Gilchrist drive cross-country from Mike's home in southern Virginia to Tom's home in northern California to hand-deliver it.

Steingraeber und Sohne piano, played by Barbara Higbie on "Ain't Nobody Got the blues Like Me." This beautiful handmade piano, from Bayreuth, Germany, lives at Opus Studios on Berkeley. I don't know much about it, except that it looks and sounds great. The company has been building pianos since 1852, so I guess they've figured out a thing or two.

Mid-1930's PB11 Gibson banjo, with a Granada-style 5-string neck made by Frank Neat, played by Craig Smith on "Rooster Crow." The "blue banjo" (because of the blue paint design on the resonators), as these PB11's are known, has no tone ring. But it's got great tone, without the weight. Craig has played this banjo, which he got from one of his students, for decades.

Back cover:

Intimate conversations with:

Nina Gerber
Tatiana Hargreaves
Barbara Higbie
Kathy Kallick
Mike Marshall
Todd Phillips
Tom Rozum
Craig Smith
Molly Tuttle
Leah Wollenberg

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LYRICS

You Are My Flower (traditional, from the Carter Family)

The grass is just as green, the sky is just as blue
The day is just as bright, the birds are singing, too
The hour is just as pure, the sunlight just as free
And Nature seems to say it's all for you and me

You are my flower that's blooming in the mountains so high
You are my flower that's blooming there for me

So wear a happy smile and life will be worthwhile
Forget your tears and don't forget to smile

When summer-time has passed and snow begins to fall
You can sing this song and say to one and all

Baby, That Would Sure Go Good (Cindy Walker)

A little walk with you sure would go good, a little talk with you sure would go good
A little table where the candles glow, down at the little place we used to go
To hold your hand in mine, just like the old times, baby, that sure would go good

A little music and lots of time, a little dancing with your cheek close to mine
A little daughter and some little sighs, the love light shining in your pretty eyes
The way they used to shine, just like the old times, baby, that sure would go good

Baby baby, baby baby, why don't you come back where you belong?
I miss you in the morning, I miss you when the day is done, and all night long

A little walk with you sure would go good, a little talk with you sure would go good
To hold you in my arms so lovingly, with everything the way it used to be
To feel your lips on mine, just like the old times, baby, that sure would go good

Rooster Crow (Laurie Lewis)

I heard the rooster crow last night as I lay in my bed
I pulled the covers up over my eyes, my heart was filled with dread
I could not slow my racing mind a-running 'round the room
Chasing its tail and doubling back like some old crooked fiddle tune

I thought of you so far away and yet within my reach

But I could not stretch my hand to you or break the quiet with speech
I know not if you feigned your sleep or in dreams you did abide
And if so, where your dreams might go and if I might be by your side

Where are the dreams we used to share? Have they been left behind,
Or turned to mist when waking cares drive them from our minds?
Oh turn to me my baby, turn and pull me tight
Chase the fear of the coming day back into the arms of night

I heard the rooster crow last night, I heard him in my dreams
He said, "The day is coming soon" and I wonder what he means
Are you still here, or are you gone, or are you going soon
To leave me crying lonesome here—like some old crooked fiddle tune?

My Last Go-Round (Rosalie Sorrels)

What sweet love have I come by, on my last go-round?
Soft caresses, tender sighs, have my heart unbound
I have wandered, lost and wild, onto sacred ground
I have loved just like a child on my last go-round

Riding down those rusty rails of my memories
Those honky-tonks and whiskey rivers all flow back to me
We drank the rivers, we rode the twistlers, we tumbled down to the ground
but we'll rake and ride, we'll spur to glory, on our last go-round

And when my wandering should shall rest, and my last song is sung
I'll find the brightest and the best on my way back home
All my long-lost friends and lovers, once again they will be found
And I'll kiss all their shining faces on my last go-round

Old Friend (Laurie Lewis)

Old friend, you just grow dearer
The lines grow deeper, the paths grow clearer
I recall your every look—
Each of them an open book

And though long miles may separate us
My love for you endures
With warm regard and in fond affection
I am truly yours

Old friend, we've seen so much together—
Stormy days and windy weather—

And like a cloak against the cold
I wrap myself in friendship's folds

Old friends like warp and woof entwine,
Each crossing defining the design
And though in places frayed and worn
The fabric remains untorn

Mama Cry (Laurie Lewis)

Why, tell me why, did you make your mama cry?
Why, tell me why, did you make your mama cry?

You carry a hurt from long ago
And you can't let it go
It rules all that you do
Makes a slave out of you

You're fighting ghosts again
And that's a fight that you can't win
They are long-gone from this Earth
Yet you cling to them for worth

And so you hurt the one whose heart
You've owned right from the start
You tongue, it is a sword
Drawing blood with every word

Child, lay down your blade
For there's no wound that you have made
That hasn't cut both ways
You're both the hunter and the prey

Why, tell me why, did you make your mama cry?
Why, tell me why, did you make your mama cry?

The Lonely One (Emily Mann)

There's purple in the sky today—
The kind that says your heart may break
The kind that says your pride may bruise
But if you're lucky you won't lose

Every step across the floor
Is a leaden weight that wants for more
Your rusty knees that ache to bend

You heart convinced it cannot mend

I am not the loneliest I've been
I am not the lonely one

You won't see me in crowds tonight
And I won't be home with the doors shut tight
I may go find the lightning bugs
To tell them what I think of love

Every day I wake to find
My heart strung out on the old clothesline
Someday rain will wash away
Every stain and mark you've made

I am not the loneliest I've been
I am not the lonely one

Ain't Nobody Got the Blues Like Me (Dick Oxtot)

Ain't got a nickel, ain't got a dime
I'm broke and hungry all the time
Ain't nobody got the blues like me
And if you can't make me better, why don't you let me be?

I had someone, said they loved me too
but since they quit me, I don't know what to do
Ain't nobody got the blues like me
And if you can't make me better, why don't you let me be?

Ain't got a thing to call my own
I always get the short wishbone
Ain't nobody got the blues like me
And if you can't make me better, why don't you let me be?

Gonna quit this house, I'm gonna leave town
Going to that high bridge, gonna jump and drown
Ain't nobody got the blues like me
And if you can't make me better, why don't you let me be?

Will The Circle Be Unbroken? (Public Domain)

There are loved ones in the glory
whose dear forms you often miss
when you close your earthly story,
will you join them in their bliss?

Will the circle be unbroken, bye and bye, bye and bye
Is a better home a-waiting in the sky, in the sky?

You can picture happy gatherings
'round the fireside long ago
and you think of tearful partings
when they left you here below

Will the circle be unbroken, bye and bye, bye and bye
Is a better home a-waiting in the sky, in the sky?

One by one their seats were emptied
one by one they went away
Now your circle has been broken
will it be complete one day?

Will the circle be unbroken, bye and bye, bye and bye
Is a better home a-waiting in the sky, in the sky?

The Pika Song (Laurie Lewis)

Way up on a Sierra peak
I thought I heard a pika squeak.
Way up yonder on John Muir Pass
I saw a pika harvest grass.

I said, "Hey pika, set a spell
I'd like to hear the tales you'd tell"
She squeaked and said, "I've got no time
I gotta make hay while the ol' sun shines.
For it's true the sun shines on us all
But soon the snow may start to fall"

Just like a farmer with his crops
the pika's labor never stops
She's got to get the harvest in
before the rain and snows begin.

Beneath the weight of mountain snow
the pika knows just where to go
to find the sweet dry summer hay
she cut and stacked and laid away.
And when the summer months descend
she starts a-haying once again.

Up past the marmots and the squirrels
I climbed into the pika's world
Just to visit for awhile
for just to see her made me smile

But the pika looked a bit sad-eyed
“what’s wrong?” I asked, and she replied,
“You see there are so many of you,
but as for us, we’re a dwindling few.
The snows don’t fall like they used to do
so I’m off to a higher altitude.”

The pika’s mighty for her size
with two big ears and jet-black eyes,
a nose to match and a powerful squeak
and no tail at all of which to speak.

The pika is a specialist—
She fills one tiny little niche
and should that niche cease to be there
She’ll vanish into the thin air
with few to notice or to weep
except, perhaps, the mountain sheep.

Up past the marmots and the squirrels
I climbed into the pika’s world

O The Wind and Rain (traditional)

Early one morning in the month of May, O the wind and rain
Two sisters went a-fishing on a hot summer’s day, crying the dreadful wind and rain

Two sweet sisters side-by-side, O the wind and rain
Both of them want to be Johnny’s bride, O the dreadful wind and rain

Johnny gave the young one a golden ring, O the wind and rain
He didn’t give the other one anything, O the dreadful wind and rain

The sisters went a-walking by the water’s brim, O the wind and rain
The older one pushed the younger one in, crying the dreadful wind and rain

She pushed her in the water to drown, O the wind and rain
And watched her as she floated down, crying the dreadful wind and rain

She floated till she came to the miller’s pond, O the wind and rain
Father, Father, there swims a swan, O the dreadful wind and rain

The miller ran for his drifting hook, O the wind and rain
He pulled that poor girl from the brook, crying the dreadful wind and rain

He laid her on the bank to dry, O the wind and rain
A fiddler then came a-walking by, O the dreadful wind and rain

He saw that poor girl lying there, O the wind and rain
He took thirty strands of her long yellow hair, crying O the dreadful wind and rain

He made a fiddle bow of her long yellow hair, O the wind and rain
And he made fiddle pegs of her little finger bones, O the dreadful wind and rain

He made a little fiddle out of her breast bone, O the wind and rain
With a sound that could melt a heart of stone, O the dreadful wind and rain
And the only tune that fiddle would play, O the wind and rain
The only tune that fiddle would play was O the dreadful wind and rain

Troubled Times

(Laurie Lewis)

Sometimes I feel I can't go on
and I don't know why I do
Sometimes I feel like some old song
in need of something to make me new
A voice to sing in harmony, or lead a brand new tune
 Sing away these troubled times and make it through
 Sing away these troubled times and make it through

Despair is my worst enemy
and I am Fear's own daughter
The path of least resistance
draws my will to it like water
So neighbor, lend a cup of strength and I'll pay back twice to you
 and we'll face these troubled times and see them through
 We'll face these troubled times and see them through

Some it seems have strength to run
and some no strength to stand
so when I find I've strength to spare
I'll offer you my hand
as others gave their hands to me, with hearts more bold and true
 and we'll fight these troubled times and make it through
 We'll fight these troubled times and make it through
 We'll face these troubled times and see them through
 Sing away these troubled times and make it through

This is Our Home

(Laurie Lewis)

Gray-green, silver-blue
Always moving, changing hue
Shaped by moon, wave and wind
Rain and snow, wing and fin

Underneath the dappled waves
Little fishes school and play
Seaweed dances in the surge
Below the wheeling, crying birds

This is our home, where we come from
And where we will return again

Salt spray upon my tongue
A taste of tears, a song unsung
Wind and water, shore and sky
Know not that I live or die

But this is my home, where I come from
And where I will return again

Orca calls her children home
Rocks her baby on the foam
Sings to him a lullaby
Of peace and plenty in days gone by

This is their home, where they come from
And where they will return again

Men scrape your floors with nets
Sonars pierce your quiet depths
Corals lose their vibrant blaze
Hunger stalks the empty waves

This is our home, where we come from
And where we will return again