

New Ground Revival

**Playwright
Ron Short**

**Composer
Ron Short**

**Directed by
Dudley Cocke**

**Original Cast
Billie Gene Mullins, Myrtle Mullins, Scott Mullins, Anna Belle Mullins Puckett,
Kim Neal Cole, and Ron Short**

**Singers and Musicians
Billie Gene Mullins – Guitar, Vocals
Myrtle Mullins – Vocals
Scott Mullins – Vocals
Anna Belle Puckett – Vocals
Kim Neal Cole – Vocals
Ron Short – Guitar, Banjo, Fiddle, Accordion, Vocals**

TIME: Present and Past

SETTING: Stage left is set to abstractly represent a memorial ground preaching platform and stage right represents the outside forces of the city, industry, and railroad. The preaching platform is where voices of tradition and culture originate and where “Amazing Grace” is sung. As the house opens, cast may be on-stage, in the audience, or off-stage. When lights go up, cast comes on stage singly or together from all directions to the preaching platform singing “Amazing Grace” in a cappella Old Regular Baptist style. Cast slowly drifts away from the preaching platform as the play develops.

Characters: Performers play themselves.

(Performers enter singing)

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see.

KIM

You want to know how somebody thinks, ask 'em to tell you a story.

RON

You want to know how they feel, get 'em to sing you a song.

BILL

Now we know you've heard "Amazing Grace" sung, and you probably sing it a little differently.

(Cast sings "Amazing Grace" with audience in standard style)

ANNA BELLE

We want you to help us sing tonight. We will be singing "Amazing Grace," and when we do, please sing along.

MYRTLE

Seems like people don't get to talk and sing together anymore.

SCOTT

But if we don't tell our own stories, sing our own songs, how we gonna know who we are?

KIM

And, if we don't listen to other people's stories and songs, how we gonna know who they are?

(Ron, Bill, Scott, and Kim each sing a verse; a cappella)

THERE IS BUT ONE WORLD

Dear friends if you'll listen a story I'll tell. *(Ron)*
I'm not a great singer, but I can tell it quite well.
The words and their meaning I carry inside.
All that I ask for, is a measure of time.

I'll not sing of rich men, or rulers of lands, *(Bill)*
But of everyday people who work with their hands,
Who earn their own living with their own sweat and blood,
And we're tossed in this world like apples on the flood.

Each man is important, this I've come to know, *(Scott)*
But many men die never knowing it's so.
And many men live just waiting to die,
And while they are waiting life passes on by.

There is but one thing we must understand. *(Kim)*
We can't sing our own song unless we sing the land.
No matter where we live, each to his own,
There is but one world, when its gone, its gone.

KIM

Our ancestors sang their way all over this world.

SCOTT

They sang the rivers and the oceans

KIM

the jungles and the deserts

SCOTT

the prairies and

SCOTT & KIM

the mountains.

(Kim leads; all sing; a cappella)

THE GARDEN IS GROWING

Mountains rise
And valleys fall.
Sweet waters flow down
Over it all.
The hand of creation
Lies all around.
And the garden is growing
Even now.

Who will work
In this garden now?
Clear the weeds,
Lay hold of the plow?
Plant the seeds
And nourish the ground?
For the garden is growing
Even now.

Who will raise
Hope up high?
Build wings for the dreams,
And make them fly?
Cherish the truth,
Never lay it down?
For the garden is growing,
Even now.

Mountains rise
And valleys fall.
Sweet waters flow down
Over it all.
The hand of creation
Lies all around.
And the garden is growing
Even now.

RON *(Accompanies himself on the fiddle)*

We live in the mountains. The mountains we live in are nearly a billion years old. 850 million years ago out of that great bubbling cauldron of creation, the mountains we call Appalachia

began to rise up. They rose and fell and rose again until they touched the sky and spanned the continent.

The world has not always been as we know it today; it was ever changing...and it will change again. There was once a great continent called Pangaea floating in the sea Iapodus and it was our mountains that held this world together. They stretched in an unbroken chain all the way from Poland to Alabama – the backbone of the world.

But Pangaea began to break apart as the sea once again claimed its own. Some say that the sea will always reclaim its own. There was a great turmoil of push and pull, rise and fall, as the land was torn apart. Whole ocean floors were scooped up and new mountains were made, and old mountains were pushed deep under the oceans.

Today we got mountains under our oceans and oceans on top of our mountains. Today, on top of our mountains you can find fossils of fish and other sea creatures. My daddy was a coal miner and he used to take me into the mines and he showed me how the earth was made one layer at a time. One time, he showed me a giant sea turtle that had been turned to stone.

It is a wondrous place that we call home.

250 years ago our people came to the mountains looking for a home, and they found 850 million years of God's grandest creation staring them straight in the face.

(Scott with Ron, Kim, and Bill)

AMERICA

My name it is Joseph or Martha or Mike,
And to stay in this place is pure suicide.
I'll take my own chances. I'll stake my own life,
And cross that wide ocean to America.

There's no food to eat here and no land to grow.
There's nothing left for me but for to go.
Me Ma and me Da, I'll bid them good-bye,
And start a new life in America.

The waters did rumble and the ship it did roll.
I cussed then I prayed, "Lord, please save my soul!"
The devil was listening; he heard my poor cry,
And he stood on the banks of America.

For three years I labored, my passage to pay.
I asked for my freedom then I ran away.
I ran 'til I came to these mountains so high.
At last I'd arrived in America.

My grandchildren laugh now, they don't understand
Why I cry each time they sell this land.
I remember a time when people did die
For want of one acre in America.

My name it is Joseph.

RON

There was a time my Great Granddaddy

SCOTT

tole my Granddaddy

KIM

tole my daddy

SCOTT & KIM

tole me!

SCOTT, RON, & KIM

There was a time

KIM

when the wilderness run on forever

SCOTT

when the only boundary

RON

was your own imagination.

SCOTT, RON, & KIM

There was a time

SCOTT

iffen you stuck your toe in the dirt

RON

you'd grow a foot!

(Musical celebration ensues and ends)

MYRTLE

Our first patch of land was nothin' but a laurel thicket. Worthless looking to most people, I guess. To see land like that you wouldn't think it would ever amount to nothin', wouldn't raise a garden, much less a family. But law, it was a Paradise. It was ours. Black walnut, oak, two hundred foot poplars, herbs, ginseng, yaller root – every field we named, like the children. The land was family, a part of us.

BILL

With each season that passed there was a lot of faith put into the land. I've watched Grandpa – he'd walk out over the fields, test the soil, take it up in his hands, bring it up to his face, smell it, taste it, see if the soil was sweet, ready to plant.

ANNA BELLE

Ever'body worked – women, children, old folks. Come plantin' or harvestin', we'd have these big workin's.

RON

People'd go out in the field and work all day, clearin' up new ground, and come the end of the day they didn't get paid one red cent fer doin' it. They was always plenty of good food, usually there was a gallon or two of spirits they'd pass around, and directly somebody'd drag out a fiddle.

Fiddle starts "Sourwood Mountain;" cast teaches audience to sing refrain, "Hey, ho, diddle um day." Dancing cast members find partners in audience and bring them on stage for a song and dance number. Dance and music conclude, and audience members return to their seats.

RON

Yes sir, our people are hard workers

SCOTT

our people are poets

KIM

Singers!

MYRTLE

Storytellers!

RON

We planted our words deep in that billion year old new ground, soil of Appalachia

SCOTT

and we harvest them still on lazy summer days to the ring of banjer and fiddle strings

ANNA BELLE

the joy of good fried chicken

RON

with jissssst enough corn to make us loosen up our tongues a bit that-a-ways.

I am that same Davy Crockett, fresh from the backwoods, half horse, half alligator, a little touched with the snappin' turtle. Can ride on a lightnin' bolt, wade the Mississippi, leap the Ohio, slide down a honey-locust back'ards without a scratch. I can whip my weight in wildcats, and if any gentleman pleases, for a 50 dollar bill he may throw in a live pant'er! Eat alive any man opposed to my politics!

(Accompanied by banjo)

DYIN' IF I'M LYIN'

My momma was a she wolf. *(Ron)*

My daddy was a bear.

I'm 200 lbs of tooth and claw

Covered over with hair.

Half fire, half smoke, *(Scott)*

The other half thunder.

I am what you might call

The eighth wonder.

(Chorus)

Look out boys git out the way. *(Ron and Scott)*

Ladies get in line.

I ain't perfect but I'm close.

I'm dyin' if I'm lyin'!

I can whip my weight in wildcats, *(Ron)*

Eat a ton of taters,

Put enough liquor in my mouth

To float an alligator.

(Chorus)

I sit upon a hornets nest, *(Scott)*

Dance upon my head,

Tie a rattlesnake round my neck,

And then I go to bed.

(Chorus)

(Kim leads, all sing; a cappella)

CROCKETT AND WOLF

My family told stories

Of Crockett and Wolf.

And Jack the Giant killer who

Raised the roof.

And of my own Grandpa

Who walked all the way

From Caroline to Kaintuck

One fine spring day.

KIM

All I know is from the stories I heard. There's a picture of great-great Grandpa and two big oxen, got great big horns, standin' there with him – lookin' like a farmer, I guess – skinny as a rail between them big oxen. One day we was drivin' down the road and Mom said, "You know your great-great Grandma and Grandpa are buried up there on that hill. I should go see about 'em." I never knew. Had no idea my family was buried up there. But somehow it was no surprise for me. It's like my mind may not know but my body remembers.

(Ron & Kim sing accompanied by accordion)

I MIGHT HAVE WROTE IT DOWN

There was a time the waters touched the sky.
We held our breaths, closed our eyes, and sailed into the light.
The universe began anew each day.
The old world that we knew slowly fell away.

(Chorus)

I might've wrote it down had I known,
The people I have loved, the places I've called home.
I had it here just now, but it's gone.
I might've wrote it down had I known.

Land stretched out endlessly.
Buffalo were ships that sailed upon this sea.
We lived our lives out under perfect skies
Believing that the land and buffalo would never die.

(Chorus)

This world cannot hold us in its grip.
We spread our wings and sail away in our magic ships.
Time and space are only childish games.
We gained the universe, but forgot our own names.

(Chorus)

Repeat last line – "I might've wrote it down, but it's gone."

(Memorial ground service begins with Kim singing a cappella; audience joins on chorus)

AMAZING GRACE

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come.
Twas grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

(Chorus)

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found,
Was blind but now I see.

(As preacher)

BILL

We want to welcome you all here, and to thank the Lord for his many blessings on this our annual memorial meeting. We are thankful for this land, our homes, and families. I am reminded of Deuteronomy, Chapter 11, verses 11-16.

11. But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.

12. A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

13. And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

14. That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain, and the latter rain, that you may gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

15. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou may eat and be full.

16. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived and ye turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.

SCOTT *(Calls out excitedly)*

Hey everybody, have you heard? The railroad has made it to Pineville – it's headin' our way. won't be long now!

(Church breaks up, music begins)

(Scott sings; accompanied by guitar)

COMING OF THE TRAIN

I was just a little boy
When I heard that whistle blow,
Echoing cross the mountain tops
To the valleys down below.
And I remember Grandma saying
It was gonna rain,
And I could hardly wait
To see this thing they called a train.

(Chorus)

Haulin' America upon its back,
Rolling cross this country
On blood and tear stained track.
It ain't likely we'll ever be the same
Ever since we saw the coming of the train.

(Instrumental music continues softly)

RON

We heard the train a long time 'fore we ever saw one. 'Fore I ever seed one I couldn't imagine what sort of creature would make that sound, and what kind of misery could bring it on. That ole lonesome whistle would come floatin' over the mountains on the wind and send shivers over your body. Granny would raise her ear up from the snappin' of beans, the shuckin' of corn, the poppin' of peas

ANNA BELLE

“Gonna rain I reckon.”

RON

And it always did!

(Song continues)

Black smoke a'rollin'
From that old smokestack.
Truck wheels headed down the track
Never looking back.
A'roaring and a rumbling
That steam whistle wail.
Lord, how I loved the sound,
How I loved the smell.

(Chorus)

Haulin' America upon its back.
Rolling cross this country
On blood and tear stained track.
It ain't likely we'll ever be the same
Ever since we saw the coming of the train.

(Railroad scene, movement and song; Ron leads, all sing; a cappella)

Take this hammer
Give it to the Captain.
Take this hammer
Give it to the Captain.
Take this hammer
Give it to the Captain.
Tell him I'm gone, lawd, lawd,
Tell him I'm gone.

If he asks you
was I running.
If he asks you
was I running.
If he asks you
was I running.
Tell 'im I 'uz flyin', lawd, lawd,
Tell 'im I 'uz flyin'.

(Railroad scene becomes memorial grounds)

(Kim leads)

AMAZING GRACE

Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

(Chorus)

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found,
Was blind but now I see.

BILL *(As preacher)*

We are blessed once again to be able to come together with our family and friends in remembrance of those who have outstripped us and gone on – them that made a place for us in this land. Our lives have changed, and it seems sometimes that we are strangers in our own land.

In Exodus, Chapter 1, verse 7 we read, “And the children of Israel were fruitful and multiplied and waxed exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them.”

It goes on to say,

13. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor,

14. And they made their lives hard with bondage in mortar and brick and all manner of service in the field. All their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor.

(Ron sings)

30 INCH COAL

Put on your knee pads

And your safety toes.

We're going to the coalmine

Where the coal is low.

(Chorus)

Riding on a lizard in the 30 inch coal.

See the cables sparking

Hear the little wheels roll.

Lord have mercy on a miner's soul

Down on his poor knees in the 30 inch coal.

RON

When I was a little boy, I remember my daddy was always singing while he worked.

BILL *(Sings)*

“I am a poor wayfaring stranger, traveling through this world of woe.”

RON

My daddy was the last born on the farm and the first to leave to get a job for wages. He was a coal miner. When I was a little boy, he used to take me to work with him sometimes on the weekend. The most money he ever made was \$25 a day, and he made extra shoeing the mining ponies. Before machinery, they had ponies and little mules they used to haul the coal out of the mines to the tipple. Them ponies and mules was ill-treated and hard worked and they only got one day of rest on Sunday, and that was the day their sores was doctored and they got new shoes. Lord, they was an ill-tempered bunch. They would bite, kick, run over anybody who come around 'em...except my daddy. I never will forget watching, terrified, as he walked into their stalls singing:

(Ron sings)

My sweetheart's the mule of the mines.
I drive her without any lines.
On the bumper I sit and I cuss and I spit
All over my sweetheart's behind.

They'd just stand there...I thought my daddy was the bravest man that ever was. I thought he could make magic. There was nothin' else I wanted to be but a coal miner like my daddy.

'Till one day...I heard his boss talking to him...in a voice I had never heard anybody use with him before. Even doctors and storekeepers called my daddy "Mister."

But I heard this man say,

SCOTT

"Now I don't reckon I got to drill this into your thick head, do I? You do it my way! Any questions?"

RON

I waited for the explosion, then I heard my daddy say,

BILL

"No sir, no sir."

(Sung a cappella)

THE ECHO

When I was just a lad of ten *(Scott)*
My father said to me
Don't follow me into the mines
Go on set yourself free.

But the roar of the tippie
And the laughter of the men
They called to me like a siren's song
And I would not listen to him.

With sweat and blood *(Bill)*
In pain and mud
I labored like a beast.

I wallered in the toil and stain
And reveled with a young man's ease.

I took what they would give me
And spit it in their face.
No man would ever hold me down
Or show me to my place.

In 44 with union strong *(Ron)*
We brought the Axis to their knees.
In 51 they threw us out
Replaced us with machines.

Then it was, 'Mister please can you spare a job,'
And finally worse and more.
With bills to pay and mouths to feed
They knocked us to the floor.

With bills to pay and mouths to feed *(Scott)*
They bought our bondage light.
They took away our will to live,
Took away our lust for life.

For fingers broke and muscles torn
For knees that have seen their days
For lungs that barely work at all
There's no compensation now they say.

My youth was spent, my blood was poured *(Bill)*
Into the building of the mines.
But its greed they say that makes me stand
And walk this picket line.

Its greed alright that makes me stand
Its their own time after time.
They use us up and cast us off
And another man waits in line.

For now my own boy says to me *(Ron)*
A miner he will be.
I hear the echo of my father's words
'Go on set yourself free!' *(all)*

(Kim leads, all sing)

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON

Come all you good people
A story I will tell
Of how the good ol' union
Come in here to dwell.

(Chorus)

Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?
Which side are you on?

They say in Harlan County
There are no neutrals there.
You'll either be a union man
Or a thug for J.H. Blair.

(Chorus)

Their children dress in luxury
They always go in style.
Our children dress in rags and tears
And run around half wild.

(Chorus)

How can you stand it?
Tell me if you can.
Will you be a yaller dog
Or will you be a man?

(Chorus)

MYRTLE

Somewhere along the way, seems like our faith and values changed – I don't know when. I remember when them Bellamy boys come home from the war, said they wudn 't gonna work in the mines no more. Said they was gonna git rich strip-minin' their Grandpa's old home place. Said it wouldn't worth nothin' 'cept fer the coal – apples is too much trouble.

They'd learnt to run them catypillars in the army, that's what it was, and you know they was lookin' to tear somethin' up. That's what them machines are for. They build 'em to tear stuff up.

That's how that strip-minin' got started. Bleed the earth dry and dump the corpse in the hollers. Getting paid to tear down our own house, that's what it was. But now it speaks of it right there in the Bible (Leviticus 25:23), The land shall not be destroyed. The land is mine for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." That's what it says.

(Kim leads)

AMAZING GRACE

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

(Chorus)

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see.

(As Aunt Jane and Robert James)

SCOTT

Oh, isn't it wonderful to be here, Aunt Jane? I just love the old style preaching and singing. Now that's something you can't get in the city. And speaking of loving something, I don't think anybody makes potato salad that can match yours anywhere.

ANNA BELLE

You can love my tater salad all you want, Robert James, but I ain't signin' no papers fer no strip-minin'.

SCOTT

There was no real will, you know that. My lawyer...

ANNA BELLE

I don't care what no lawyer says. You can talk 'til you're blue in the face, and I ain't lettin' you strip the homeplace.

SCOTT

Homeplace! Ain't none of the family lived there in 20 years. It ain't worth nothin' to nobody, except for the coal.

ANNA BELLE

I didn't say it was worth anything, did I? I said I ain't lettin' you strip it. There's gotta be a stop somewhere.

SCOTT

Look at this bunch...we could all make enough money...YOU could make enough money...

ANNA BELLE

Enough money? See now, there's the whole thing. You ever knowed anybody, John D. Rockefeller, anybody...who ever got enough money? You got enough money, Robert James? I don't think so. If I was to let you dig up the homeplace, that wouldn't stop you. If you found coal up here in this graveyard, you'd dig up your Grandpa, Great Grandma, turn 'em all out. I ain't gonna let that happen. I ain't doin' this for me, I'm doin' this for you, Robert James. There's gotta be a stop somewhere.

(Ron with Scott and Kim)

SUN'S GOING DOWN

What's that sound?
It's the winds of change
Coming to blow your house down.
The waters are rising
Coming thru the door.
Look at the people, they're running for cover now.

(Chorus)

Sun's going down
Sun's going down
Sun's going down
'Cross the promised land.

There's preaching on the mountain
Fire in the valleys
Smoke so thick, you can't see your own eyes.
They'll tell you one thing
They'll tell you another
'Til you believe your own lies.

(Chorus)

(Refrain)

And the silence of the ages
Is shattered by the noise
As the wheels of change keep rolling on.
One billion years
This mountain's been here.
Then you turn your head, and it's gone.

(Chorus)

MYRTLE

Don't rightly know when it all started to change. People started drifting off, one by one...whole families. One day you'd look around and they'd be gone. You know things is different when you realize you're marking time by funerals 'stead of children being born.

Graveyards round here is gettin' fuller and fuller, and fewer and fewer comin' to see about 'em. Don't hardly even know my own people any more when they do come home for memorial meetin'.

BILL (*As preacher*)

Aaron looked out over the children of Israel as they were leaving out of Egypt. I guess they must have looked purty ragged. Lord knows they was scared to death, setting off into the unknown, barely enough time to gather up their children, much less their belongings. Not even enough time to bake bread. Lord, can you imagine the noise, the dust, the smell... goats, camels, cattle, and a whole nation of people, setting off?

And Aaron seeing all of this cried out, "Behold, our people! Is this a nation chosen by God? It looks like a swarm of ants when you lift a rock!"

But Moses could see the truth, "Pity them. They hate their past and dread their future."

KIM

When I was a little girl, my mommy and daddy went off to Detroit, looking for something better.

SCOTT

Seems like people are always looking for something better.

KIM

There was this family that lived next door to us in Detroit called the Ambroses. Larry and Gwen had like seven kids. They was my best friends. I didn't notice it then, but we tended to be better friends whenever I had enough money to buy a candy bar. When the candy bar was gone, most of them were too. But, I'd go over to their house and play, I was about 8 or 9 at the time, but I began to realize the difference in our households. Mom kept things up, worked very hard, dressed us up and took us to church ever' Sunday, and they didn't do that.

I'd go over to their house and eat occasionally and Gwen would manage to make us a grilled cheese sandwich or something like that. Even as a child, I noticed she didn't seem to even be there. Sometimes Larry would stagger in drunk. I guess he was an alcoholic. And they had this real bad roach problem. Somehow Mom kept our roaches down.

Then, suddenly, Gwen died at 33 -34. I found out later she was a heroin addict. I never knew that.

I remember at her funeral, it was like the end of our childhood. Larry took the kids and left, and there was no one to play with.

Their house set empty for a long time. It still had furniture in it, appliances and stuff. Kids would go in there and play, carry stuff off, but nobody ever burned it down like they did some others.

Then one day this bulldozer showed up and they bulldozed it down, furniture and all. There was an old car still in the garage, and they just crushed it. Plowed the whole thing under, put it in the basement, stomped it down, put a little dirt over top of it all and patted it down, and suddenly there was this vacant lot next to our house.

One day there was a knock at our door. It was the city, trying to sell us this vacant lot saying we could put a garden in there, a park for the neighborhood kids. All I could think about was Larry and Gwen and all this junk from their lives just laying there barely covered over.

I was just a kid and I remember thinking, "This is crazy! You can't grow nothin' there."

(Kim sings)

CAN'T SEE THE FOREST

There was a boy who lived on my street.
He always was in love with me,
But I turned my head didn't have a word to say.
Then I looked one day and he took my breath away!

So I started hanging round his door.
Too late, he didn't love me anymore.

When I finally understood I walked away.
But I'll never forget the lesson I learned that day.

(Chorus)

Oh, we can't see the forest for the trees.
Can't see the water for the seas.
And you've never been alone
'Till you try to go back home,
But we can't see the forest for the trees.

I always dreamed of roaming around.
Couldn't wait to leave my little home town.
I thought living in the city would set me free.
But ever'time I looked in the mirror, Lord, it still was me.

(Chorus)

So we dream of bigger houses bigger cars.
People starve in the streets while we look to the stars.
We want our lives to be perfect every day,
But we keep the trash, and throw ourselves away.

Chorus)

RON

Sometimes I feel raggedier around my own people than I do among strangers. When people know you're poor, they treat you different. Like it's some kind of disease and they know you're dying, so they don't really talk to you, they talk to the condition.

When we first moved to Dayton, I had to go down to the welfare office to get some help. Woman there asked me, "How did all 'you people' get in this condition?"

See now, first of all, I hadn't never much thought of this as "you people" before. I had purty much thought of it as takin' care of my family.

"You people!" Good Lord, I didn't want to take that on. I started to tell her, maybe it was our job to give people a chance to ask dumb questions, but I never.

So I said, 'Well, I reckon it started a long time ago.'

That's always safe, saying it started a long time ago, like it's a long story. Nobody wants to listen to a long story, so you're usually safe sayin' that. And I was right. She didn't want to listen to no long story, just wanted to ask dumb questions.

Then later I got to thinkin', it is a long story. I remember I'd heard about one of our greats settin' off all alone from Ireland, seekin' their fortune. Seekin' their fortune! See, nobody sets out to be poor. That ain't something you set out to do.

I've heard of people gettin' rich overnight. But now, I reckon it takes a few generations to get real good 'n poor.

(Scott sings)

A PIECE OF THE DREAM

Sometimes, I swear to my soul
I've about had enough
of the heat and the dust
and the boss man kickin' my butt.
Life in this tired ol' town
is gettin' real tough.
Looks like we're in for bad weather.
It's gonna get rough.

(Chorus)

I'm willing to work,
and God knows I'm willing to try.
Some people 'round here got it good.
I'm just gettin' by.
They say life's never easy.
It gets harder it seems,
When you're hoping, praying, reaching
For a piece of the dream.

I've got a family to feed.
I've got bills to pay.
But I swear I cannot do both
on a minimum wage.
I've got a good mind to leave here,
But my heart says stay.
This life's got me counting my pennies,
Counting my days.

(Chorus)

I had a Grandpa who come here alone
From Ireland to Kaintuck.
No matter how hard times got
My people never give up.

They built this country
The American dream.
Now it's welfare and food stamps, we forgot
what it all means.

(Chorus)

(Memorial ground)

RON

Other night I had this dream. They shut down the road back home. "Slid off into space," they said. Too much traffic. Guess you're gonna have to get by on what you know to get you to where you wanna go.

BILL *(As preacher)*

Psalm 121 – "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my strength. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth."

(Bill sings; all sing on chorus)

YOU CAN'T RUN

Many years ago I headed for the city.
Bid my little mountain home goodbye.
Every year I go back to see my family.
I can't believe I ever lived that way of life.

My Grandpa was an ol' time gospel preacher.
One day he asked me was I saved?
I just laughed and made a joke,
"I don't think the Lord can find me
Up there in that city so far away."

He lay his hand on my shoulder.
Teardrops filled his eyes.
Then he smiled at me so tenderly.
I won't forget his words 'til I die.

(Chorus)

You can't run when the Lord calls you.
In the city or country, it's all the same.
No place to hide in this whole world.
It's no long distance call, when God speaks your name.

On Monday morning I was back at the factory.
The assembly line is Lord here they say.
That's where God found me; I fell down upon my knees
And above all that noise I know they heard me pray.

(Chorus)

BILL

There was a day a while back, children, oh...I was so troubled seemed like I couldn't get no peace. That night I had a dream. In this dream there was a field but, oh Lord, how it was growed up. Vines a twistin' and turnin', all knotted up together, limbs and sprouts all tangled, weeds over your head...A field lost to the world.

Then I heard this voice say, "Who will work in this field?" What a feeling come over me, "Who will work in this field?" And I said, "I will."

And as soon as I said that, seem like people started coming from all sides to work in the field. It was you and me, children, all of us. I didn't exactly see faces but I knowed it was all of us. Some started cutting down vines, others grubbing up sprouts, cutting weeds, clearing new ground.

Soon as that was finished, some put their hand to the plow, breaking ground, others come behind, laying it off for planting, others sewing seeds and planting. Seemed like no sooner than the seeds was planted, they begin to sprout and grow and bear fruit and we begin to harvest and rejoice in the work we had done together.

Children, when you hear that voice that speaks only to you, "Who will work in this field?"

Don't be afraid.

Answer, "I will, I will."

'Fore long, you won't be alone.

(All sing a cappella)

WINGS TO FLY

One day, the Lord will come
And give me wings to fly.
Then my heart will soar
And carry me over the mountains.

Like a hawk I'll rise above

Life's toils and treacherous snares.
I'll shake this earthly form
And touch the face of God.

The wind shall bear me homeward.
The rain shall cleanse my soul.
The sun shall dry my tears
And I shall weep no more.

(All sing; audience joins on chorus)

ONE DAY WE SHALL BE FREE

When I heard the music ringing
When I heard the voices singing
Made me raise my eyes looking for a song
Found my voice and I sang along.

(Chorus)

One day we shall be free.
One day we shall be free.
Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?
One day we shall be free.

We better listen to the voices
Telling us what we need to know.
Where there is a song, there is hope.
Make a difference before you go.

(Chorus)

There's a way to live your life
Find something to believe.
Then sing the truth everyday
The truth shall make us free.

(Chorus)

KIM

Thank you for listening to our stories and songs. Thank you for singing. If you'd like to share a story or song, please stay around and visit a while. We started out singing together. Maybe we could sing together one more time before we part.

There's a way to live your life

Find something to believe.
Then sing the truth everyday
The truth shall make us free.

(Chorus)

One day we shall be free.
One day we shall be free.
Ain't you got a right, to the tree of life?
One day we shall be free.

(Repeat chorus, a cappella)

THE END