

## So Far, So Good

*So true. It's wonderful to have new music out there. The guitars and my vocals on these songs were recorded from 2013 through early 2015 in one of the upstairs bedrooms of our house in Orleans, MA on a Yamaha 4416 hard disk recorder with onboard preamps and a Neumann TLM 103 as the main microphone. The occasional bird chirping outside the window combined with other "non-studio" noises were part of the process. Thanks for your interest in these sonic snapshots of moments in time.*

Does Joni Mitchell Ever Mow the Lawn

So Far So Good

Necessary, True, and Kind

Is It True

Women Planting Trees

Mary Jo and Carol

Energy Medicine

Dream Come True

Pachamama Turns

Hold Steady

Goodness is More Than a Dream

Keep the Table Set

If I Could Write a Song Like Berlin

We Are the Stuff of Stars

**Does Joni Mitchell Ever Mow the Lawn** © 2010 David Roth

David ~ ukulele, vocals

*Inspired when cutting the grass one day in our yard on Cape Cod. Grass shouldn't grow on sand, let alone require cutting. And I did actually hit that C note at the very end, an all time low.*

I am a musician of incredible success  
I don't have a day job, that's successful I would guess  
I ply my trade most night times when most other folks are free  
I tour and I travel for a fee

When I pull into my driveway after many miles and treks  
I hug and kiss my lovely wife and then we have some ... dinner  
And then it's time to make up for the time that I was gone  
I've got a "honey-do" list that is very very long

The laundry has been piling up while I've been gallivanting  
Those lilies by the Buddha are in need of some transplanting  
My wife has been here working while I've been out there wandering  
Still, some questions linger on that I have been a-pondering

Does Randy Newman wash a dish?, does Dylan take out trash?  
Was Fluffy's little litter box kept clean by Johnny Cash?  
Did Lennon lift a finger round the house from dusk til dawn?  
Does Joni Mitchell ever mow the lawn?

Now I would not compare myself to those iconic folks  
Still I write my share of serious songs and tasteful jokes  
Yet as I take the rotting food out to the compost heap  
These thoughts into my subconscious do creep

Does Cat Stevens ever wash his car?, did Chapin trim a tree?  
Do Crosby, Stills and Nash divide the household chores by three?  
Does Clapton ever clean up clutter, did Joplin clean a john?  
Does Joni Mitchell ever mow the lawn?

Those kits for making furniture, did Springsteen ever build one?  
Or water buckets for the plants, did Elvis ever fill one?  
Not to mention schlepping, shopping, sorting out the bills  
Does Gordon Lightfoot go and get his own prescription pills?

So now you know my story, I do all that stuff and more  
But I gladly pull my weight at home and sweetly sweep the floor  
Yet every now and then as I unpack I often find  
A curious thought meandering through an overactive mind...

Does Paul McCartney walk the dog, Paul Simon drive to town?  
Were Poochie's little poopies ever scooped by Jackson Browne?  
Does JT move the boxes in the basement with his brawn?  
Does Joni Mitchell ever mow the lawn?

Does John Prine ever wash and peel a prawn?  
Does Carole King cut out a food coupon?  
Does Joni Mitchell ever mow the lawn?



*\* collage courtesy of Joe Crookston's class at the Swannanoa Gathering, Asheville, NC*

## **So Far, So Good**

© 2011 David Roth & Richard Mekdeci

David ~ ukulele, guitar, vocals

Brian Morris ~ piano

Mark Dann ~ bass

*Richie (old pal and co-founder of Empower Music and Arts) and I wrote this on a long car ride from Seattle to Spokane, prompted by a note in my "idea file" that started with the line "I want to live forever..."*

A little slap on my behind, so far so good  
Started out this life a cryin', so far so good  
All the food I need to eat, baby steps on baby feet  
Someone takin' care of me, so far so good

Getting up off of the ground, so far so good  
Soaking up the sights and sounds, so far, so good  
Learning how to find my way, how to work and how to play  
Count my blessings every day, so far so good

So far so good, so far, so good  
So far, so good, so far...  
One more moment, one more minute  
Find the good and get right in it  
Twist and shout and turn and spin it, so far so good

Had a little dance with cancer, so far, so good  
Many questions, many answers  
They gave me little pills to pop  
When to start and what to stop  
But I know it's an inside job, so far so good

So far so good, so far, so good  
So far, so good, so far...  
One more moment, one more minute  
Take the good and get right in it  
Twist and shout and turn and spin it, so far so good

I'm walkin' down that road less traveled  
Playin' triple words on Facebook Scrabble



Night falls and it's time for bed, so far so good  
I've got a place to lay my head, so far so good  
To everyone whose not so blessed  
I say a prayer and send my best  
Now I lay me down to rest, so far, so good

So far so good, so far, so good  
So far, so good, so far...  
One more moment, one more minute  
Take the good and get right in it  
Twist and shout and turn and spin it, so far so good



*David & Richard*

**Necessary, True, and Kind**

© 2008 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocals

Mark Dann ~ bass

*Concepts sometimes attributed to Buddhism and Quakers hit home for me,  
as do great bumper stickers.*

Have I put my big old foot in my mouth again  
Have I crossed a line I never should have crossed  
Your reaction to my words has got me thinkin'  
Can I retract that thoughtless statement that I tossed

You know I didn't really mean for it to sound that way  
Sometimes my mouth just springs a leak  
So I took a little look inside that mirror  
And now I ask my self three things before I speak

Is it necessary, true, and kind?  
Is there something more authentic I can find to say?  
Is it from my heart or from my mind?  
Is it necessary, true, and kind?

If I could hit rewind and take it back, I'd do it  
Can you kindly put a muzzle on my beak  
That old tape I have's an 8-track, I'm so through with it  
Will the silence be improved on when I speak?

Is it necessary, true, and kind?  
Is there something more authentic I can find to say?  
Is it from my heart or from my mind?  
Is it necessary, true, and kind?

When my monkey mind has found that open faucet  
And the chatter makes a steamy pool of stress  
If there's any trace of toxic in my talking  
I will grab a mop and clean up all my mess

And I will do my best to button up and hear you  
Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens  
I saw that written on a Jimi Hendrix bumper sticker  
He was awfully smart for a musician

Is it necessary, true, and kind?  
Is there something more authentic I can find to say?  
Is it from my heart or from my mind?  
Is it necessary, true, and kind?



**Is It True** © 2013 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocals

David Lange ~ piano, accordion

Patrice O'Neill ~ background vocals

Mark Dann ~ bass

*Byron Katie asks four questions that take me from blaming my discomforts on others to realizing that I'm actually voicing something I'm doing to myself...but only 100% of the time.*

There is tightness in the jaw, there is aching in the chest  
There's constriction taking place instead of flow  
There's a grip that feels familiar, there is tension, there is stress  
Is this outgrowth of my automatic "no"

Is it true? Can I be sure it's true  
Who would I be without this thought  
Turn it around, look underneath  
I am walking through this doorway to see

I turn the nob and push ahead  
I take a step and be who I will be  
All I perceive is what I think and I believe  
Can I allow the truth to live in me

Is it true? Can I be sure it's true  
Who would I be without this thought  
Turn it around, look underneath  
I am walking through this doorway to see

There is no key, it is not locked  
I hear the hinges creaking as I move  
Against the rust, against resistance  
Against the notion that there's anything to prove

Now I proceed, no turning back  
No sprinting sideways, I'm going through this door  
Is there a flower that finds the light  
Reaching up through all this concrete that I pour?



Is it true? Can I be sure it's true  
Who would I be without this thought  
Turn it around, look underneath  
I am walking through this doorway to see  
  
I am walking through this doorway to see  
  
I am walking through this doorway...



*David Lange, Patrice O'Neill, and Benjamin*

**Women Planting Trees** © 2009 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocal, piano

Bruce Abbott ~ flute

Mark Dann ~ bass

*One person, through a simple act, changed everything for her, for her country, and  
for the world.*

Thirty years ago in the country of Kenya  
They were cutting down trees til very few remained  
The topsoil disappeared, the land became a desert  
Life was hard to sustain

The women of the villages would go in search of firewood  
Branches were scarce in this ocean of sand  
One woman, Wangari, saw this taking place, she said  
“We must take care of our land...”

So she planted a tree and planted another  
In hopes she would see a little change begin  
She also saw before her a giant undertaking  
So she organized her friends

**Chorus** They were part of the movement recovering their land  
Bringing back the roots of Kenya from the sand  
They were moving to make their homeland green  
Women planting trees

With a bag of seeds she showed her neighbors  
About planting more trees, an act for which she paid them  
A small sum, a giant leap, and soon Wangari organized  
The women of the Kenyan nation

**Chorus**

And Something else was happening, empowerment and strength  
And this was threatening to the men who made the rules

Wangari and her women friends were making real changes  
So the policemen came and broke their tools

But they never broke her spirit, even though they tried  
Accused her of subversion, they arrested her for crimes  
She carried on in spite of them and kept on planting trees  
Saplings of pride and possibility

### **Chorus**

Thirty years later in the country of Kenya  
Thirty million new trees under African skies  
Wangari is the first African woman  
To win the Nobel Peace Price

She began the movement recovering her land  
Bringing back the roots of Kenya from the sand  
She was moving to make her homeland green  
Women planting trees

They are part of the movement recovering their land  
Bringing back the roots of Kenya from the sand  
They are moving to make their homeland green  
Women planting trees



*thanks to the Green Belt Movement ~ [www.greenbeltmovement.org](http://www.greenbeltmovement.org)*



## Mary Jo and Carol

© 2013 David Roth, MaryJo Pirone, & Carol Rudinsky

David ~ guitar, vocal

Penny Nichols, Larry Bridges ~ harmony vocals

*These two gals and our friend Robby Greenberg invited me to lunch one January Sunday in Davie, FL, and the first thing they said was "we want you to write us a song". "About what?" Two lifetimes of teasing and ridicule, they told me. Two hours later I had a song. MaryJo and Carol are both active in the Florida non-profit Abilities Venti which raises awareness and advocates for people with different abilities. We sell a t-shirt that says "**Label Jars, Not People**".*

Mary Jo got a job down at the fast food joint  
She was happy for the work, Mary Jo was put on fries  
She's been making them for years, this is her specialty  
Mary's special, very special

When you're makin' fries you see a lot of people  
You get to be up front right by the counter  
You get to talk to customers, you get to look outside  
And Mary Jo delighted in her job

The new manager they got was someone younger  
It didn't seem this person understood  
That Mary Jo was just a little different  
But as good as any worker that this place had ever had

One day the boss told Mary Jo to make the happy meals  
Sent her to the back part of the store  
This person also used the word "retarded"  
The meals weren't so happy any more

Mary Jo says "All I really want  
To be treated just like everybody else  
Consider my abilities  
I am competent, I work hard and I help"

Carol is another special person  
Compassionate and friendly, creative, fun and kind  
But she never like a single day of school  
Kids made fun of her, they made fun of her

When she grew up, she felt it was important  
To make things better for people just like her  
So Carol told their story to a singer  
So he could sing their story to the world

Carol says "All I really want  
Is to be treated just like everybody else  
Consider my abilities  
I am competent, I work hard and I help"

Mary Jo and Carol are good friends  
They do things together just like you and me  
So if you ever see someone who's making fun of people like 'em  
Think who has the dis-ability



*Carol, me, and Mary Jo*

**Energy Medicine** © 2009 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocals

Mark Dann ~ bass

*My friend Dr. Bob Schwarz presents an annual conference for the Association of Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP), and this song is based on an anecdote I heard one year from Dr. David Simon, Medical Director of the Deepak Chopra Institute in California.*

A doctor was talking to a bunch of doctors  
He was talking about a different kind of medical model  
He said a human body is not a machine  
He said a human body is made up of energy

He said a positive attitude and kind supportive statements  
Would benefit the progress of any given patient  
And how a few words can affect the way that somebody feels  
With a direct correlation to the rate at which somebody heals

Energy medicine

He was talkin' 'bout energy medicine for forty five minites  
When a big brash surgeon in the back of the room said "bull \_\_\_\_"  
He said "I've heard all I want to hear, and now I am done  
I can tell you that the only thing that will affect the outcome

Of my patient's situation is what my hands do in the O. R.  
And nothing that I say or don't  
Will affect the results  
You're wasting our time, we're not children, we're adults

The first doctor took a deep long breath and carefully  
Said "I've been at this a long long time, and rarely  
Have I come across someone as ignorant and uninformed as you  
Whereupon the second doctor said "do you know who you're talking to??"

And he turned bright blue, his blood pressure rose  
He was clearly agitated, he was ranting and reeling  
Whereupon the first doctor said  
"You see how a few words can affect the way you're feeling..."

Energy medicine

## **Dream Come True**

© 2014 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocal

Brian Morris ~ piano

Mark Dann ~ bass

*I went for a long time convinced I'd be a confirmed bachelor. In 1988 a cupcake, a cocktail stirrer, a fire hydrant of goodness burst through my protective barriers, adopted me into her huge Irish-Italian family, and in 1994 gave me the honored title of husband. This is for Patricia.*

You walked into my life that day  
I didn't see you coming my way  
I was running around, going places, with things to do

But the more that we were spending time  
I was starting to go out of my mind  
Out of my mind, into my heart  
For this I thank you

### **Chorus**

For me this is a dream come true  
To have this time I have with you  
To have this time I have with you  
Is a dream come true

This is something that I never planned  
Something that I just didn't see  
I was distracted, looking everywhere but here

So I didn't put up my walls  
I was able to let you in  
And in you came  
I'm a better person for it

### **Chorus**

I didn't do a lot of dreaming when I was a kid  
Because that bubble would always burst, that's what it always did

Then you walked into my life that day  
Just look at all that's come my way  
The bubbles aren't bursting like they always used to do

And I know that I've a ways to go  
In all the things that I don't show  
But I'm out of my mind, into my heart  
For this I love you

### **Chorus**



## **Pachamama Turns**

© 2012 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocals

Bruce Abbott ~ Indian flute

Mark Dann ~ bass

*My second trip to Peru coincided with the Baptism of the first grandchild of our friends Paulino and Vilma in the village of Chinchero. I wrote a song for Pedro Allonzo that I was honored to sing for the whole family right after the ceremony, and when we found ourselves continuing to sing it, I rewrote it to make it more universal. It uses two terms from the ancient Peruvian language of Quechua - Pachamama, meaning Mother Earth and Intitum, meaning Father Sun.*

The sun will come up every day  
While Pachamama turns  
You and I, we do our part  
And this is how we learn

The ones we love, they come and go  
We dance and spin and swirl  
Welcoming each blessed soul  
To the family of the world

### **Chorus**

Pachamama, Intitum, We all are one  
Pachamama, Intitum, Welcome Earth and Sun

There is no other, just the one  
And nothing else to do  
But share our joy and show our love  
I see myself in you

I see myself in you, and we  
Are all to disappear  
So let us hold each other up  
As long as we are here

### **Chorus**



Let the bands come marching  
Making joyful sounds  
Let us dance and join our hands  
On streets of common ground

The sun will come up every day  
In the sky above  
We gather here in gratitude  
To celebrate our love

### **Chorus**



*\* fortifying the walls of a mud hut in the Sacred Valley near the village of Chinchero,  
Peru*



**Hold Steady** © 2012 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocal  
Sally Sparks ~ keyboards

*For our friend Chrissy Carboni, who left us entirely too soon.*

What can I possibly do for you now?  
Can I lift you on wings of song?  
You are standing on the threshold of the rainbow bridge  
How can I help you along?

I could hold your hand, we could walk across  
But this is not my walk just yet  
I'll be there with you soon enough  
Hold steady, hold steady

Hold steady and know how you are loved  
Hold steady and lead our way  
Get ready to walk the golden path  
Where suffering has no place

Hold steady and know how you are loved  
Hold steady and lead our way  
Get ready to walk the golden path  
Where suffering has no place

What can we possibly do for you now?  
Can we lift you on wings of song?  
You're standing on the threshold of the rainbow bridge  
How can we help you along?

We would hold your hand, we could walk across  
But this is not our walk just yet  
We'll be there with you soon enough  
Hold steady, hold steady



## **Goodness is More Than a Dream**

© 2014 David Roth

David ~ guitars, vocal

Mark Dann ~ bass

*How about more true stories like this on the evening news?*

Jessica Robles, a single young mother  
Was struggling to feed her three kids  
She went to the Publix without any money  
Her family had fallen on hardship

She put what she needed right into a shopping cart  
She didn't take one extra thing  
Some milk and some meatballs, some Hamburger Helper  
Canned corn, peaches and chicken wings

Her kids were so hungry, she had to do something  
She never had planned to be poor  
She didn't know who else to turn to  
And rolled that cart right out the door

Officer Thomas saw Jessica Robles  
And caught her red-handed in this  
"I can't go to jail" Jessica sobbed and she pleaded,  
"Who'll take care of my kids?"

Officer Thomas saw a much bigger picture  
Much larger than milk and than bread  
Arresting this mother would solve nobody's problems  
She had a notion instead

She pulled out her wallet and took out five twenties  
And paid for the items in full  
When others got wind of this story, more money  
Came pouring in for Jessica Robles

A woman named Mayra gave two hundred dollars  
She said "I've been right where she is"  
And one of the local businesses kicked in  
With five hundred more for her kids

When the story appeared on the late evening news  
Someone watching offered Jessica a job  
To say she was thankful would not scratch the surface  
When down to her very last straw

The world may seem random and bad things may happen  
Without rhyme or reason it seems  
But now and again something stunning reminds me  
That goodness is more than a dream

Goodness is more than a dream

## **Keep the Table Set**

© 2011 David Roth & Tom Ryan

David ~ guitar, vocal

Vito Petrocitto, Jr. ~ second guitar

David Lange ~ piano, accordion

Penny Nichols, Larry Bridges ~ harmony vocals

SummerSongs Singers ~ chorus

*Tom Ryan and I became friends at SummerSongs songwriting camp in 2001 in upstate New York. Our mutual love of songwriting, sports, humor (he was a clown by day!) and the human condition brought us together on many occasions, but it wasn't until Tom showed up at camp in 2011 with a very aggressive form of cancer that we finally sat down to write a song together. Tom left us the following summer and I was privileged to sing at his memorial service near Philadelphia soon thereafter. He had chosen all the songs, of course. "Sparkles" lives on (a perfect name for Tom). Other campers who knew this grace-filled man are singing on the chorus.*

Get the tablecloth , get the lemonade  
Got a whole lotta food, we've really got it made  
Friends are comin' around, are we ready, you bet  
Love having you over, we keep the table set

### **Chorus**

We keep the table set, you never know what's next  
Maybe something great, finest China or paper plate  
When you shine all your dishes  
With your dreams and your wishes  
You never know what you'll get  
So keep the table set

Somebody bring hope, somebody bring wine  
Somebody bring peace, that would be so mighty fine  
We could use a cake, I can taste it right now  
All I gotta say is Holy Cow!

### **Chorus**



Never too many people at our table  
We can always set an extra place  
Don't be shy, just show up as you're able  
Doesn't matter how you say your grace

If you need to do laundry, there's soap's on the shelf  
Welcome mat's on the doorstep, fridge is open, so help yourself  
Something wonderful's comin', some wonderful treats  
Grab a towel off the clothesline, and get ready to eat

### **Chorus**



*Singing our brand new tune at SummerSongs 2011*

## **If I Could Write a Song Like Berlin**

© 2014 David Roth

David ~ guitar, vocals, piano

Mark Dann ~ bass

*This one was inspired by an invitation to participate in a December Irving Berlin tribute concert. I was looking through his catalogue for a second piece to learn and instead had a brainstorm of sorts...with a nod to Harold Payne, whose song "Christmas at the Isthmus" coaxed an adapted stanza out of yours truly.*

If I could write a song like Berlin  
I'd be in a different bracket than the one I'm in  
My car wouldn't have two hundred and thirty three thousand miles  
And countin'

If I could write a song like Berlin

If I could write a song like Berlin  
I certainly would have pleased my next of kin  
My father's name was Irving too, a Russian immigrant Jew  
Who hoped his only son would be a doctor  
Or a dentist or accountant or a lawyer  
Instead I'm standing in the foyer, looking in  
To see if I could write one like Berlin

Alexander had his rag time band  
A tune that's quite unique  
If I'd composed "How Dry I Am"  
We'd be dancing Cheek to Cheek

But if I could write a song like Berlin  
I'd be writing the soundtrack for the time  
When they were making bathtub gin  
Every single night we would be puttin on the ritz  
It's what we'd be doin'

If I could write a song like Berlin

My songs don't sound like Berlin songs  
They're just a little bit off  
Just like my Dad in synagogue  
I sound like Irving Roth



If I could write a song like Berlin  
I would only play in F# like he did  
He had a set of 88's and a lever he could flip  
Oh man oh  
Irving had a capo for his piano

I bet he couldn't drive a car  
I bet that he was stuffy  
I bet he didn't play guitar  
Or marry Tricia Duffy

But the man, he had a way with a tune  
He had the sun in the morning and the moon at night  
God Bless America came out all right  
Part magician, kinda like a musical Merlin  
No one wrote a song like Irving Berlin

For Hanukkah my father went  
To Panama at the Isthmus  
The other Irving stayed at home  
And wrote one called White Christmas

That's a song that made some money for the man  
And Irving had an awful lot of fans  
There's no business like show business he came upon  
The song is ended but the melody lingers on

That fella, he could really really write a song

He was unswerving

No one could compose one quite like Irving

If I could write a song like Berlin



Irving Roth

## **We Are the Stuff of Stars**

© 2013 David Roth, Lisa Aschmann, & JD Martin

David ~ vocal

JD Martin ~ piano

*Interrupting JD's lunch at a coffee shop in Orlando, the three of us gathered around a piano in the lobby of the conference hotel at the annual Positive Music Festival (sponsored by Empower Music and Arts). Two years later and just as this project was being mastered, I came across a recording of that writing session on my cell phone and reached out to JD to see what we could put together.*

We're the stuff that stars are made of  
Dust and light  
What appears to be a vacuum  
Is not an endless night  
All the darkness in between  
Doesn't mean a blessed thing  
We're the stuff that stars are made of  
We are the stuff of stars

We're the stuff that stars are made of  
Hopes and dreams  
What appears as challenging  
May not be all it seems

All the doubt and all the fear  
No longer has a home in here  
We're the stuff that stars are made of  
We are the stuff of stars

Gravity may pull you down  
With all it's might  
Never underestimate  
'The power and speed of light

We're the stuff that stars are made of  
Sparks and spheres  
What appears as endless void  
Is cleansed away by tears

Every wound and every scar  
Can't extinguish who we are  
We're the stuff that stars are made of  
We are the stuff of stars