Fire in the Garden

selected lyrics

Jake Berry

Argotist Ebooks
Fire in the Garden
Introduction

When Jeffery Side asked me to submit a selection of song lyrics for an eBook I didn't know where to start. How, from hundreds of songs, does one select a few that would read well on the page?

Although I have always thought of myself as a poet first, one of the forms I work in frequently is contemporary song. The function of song, however, is always musical. What works well as music, including informal colloquialisms, often sound awkward when read as a poem without melody or accompaniment.

Finally, out of frustration, I searched through all the lyrics I had on computer. This narrowed the search considerably since I always write by hand first. Many song lyrics never needed to be typed for publication. They remain in notebooks and are published as CDs and digital albums online.

From that remainder I chose lyrics that seemed to read well enough as poetry. I also included a few lyrics that might not meet that standard, but are among the favorites for those most familiar with my music.

I encourage readers to take the time to follow the links at the end of the book to videos and audio recordings of some of the songs. This will allow them to hear the songs as they were originally intended. The videos directed by Chris Mansel in particular seem to work best because Chris gives us something fascinating to watch that illuminates rather than illustrates the song.

I want to thank Jeffrey for publishing this eBook. It is as honor to have another title in the extensive library of contemporary poetry and other writing published by the Argotist over the last several years.
Garden House
(from the album Mystery Songs)

Nightingale
  solitude
  paper wings on the floor
A chifforobe
  in an empty room,
  skeleton key by the door

The only one
  who would refuse
  heaven's sweet repose
  for a life to spend
  in a garden house
  in the clothes creation wore

Diaphanous blue
  in late afternoon
  lipstick on the glass
Lilies woven into her dress,
  a season out of the past

Everything
  in your garden house
brought for the stars to view
  sing on night angel
nothing is concealed from you
The Long Decline
(from the album Mystery Songs)

Horses drag a wagon up a dry creek bed
The wheels are gone, the driver is dead
His hands are still clutching the whip,
  his eyes rolled back to see his soul’s ascent
Throw the gates open, let the stranger in

A black cloud looms over a spent iron ore mine
The rocks above the yellow sky behind
A coal fired train on a rusty bridge
  crumbling off the mountainside
After the dream comes the long decline

Slip out of heaven in the middle of the night
  with a sack full of treasures the pretty girls like
  & books that were written double-tongued in black fire
  burning in the nerves, singing in the wires

Making her face by kerosene light,
  crimson rose and ghostly white
Supper on the table, iced tea and a prayer,
  his old wool suit hanging on his chair
Down the long decline with dust in her hair
Roots in a Basket
(from the album *Naked as Rain and the Animal Beneath*)

Roots in a basket
thorns in her hair
I’m watching her walk across the fields
from my easy chair

Pale violets on a soft pink dress
even the birds and beasts
come around to watch her pass

What she weaves is revelation
When she breathes she intoxicates
She’s a habit grown from the wilderness
impossible to break

You can be long asleep
in the roots of the trees
twisting and turning
in the black earth beneath

She’s there to offer
while your sisters weep
liquor made from forbidden fruit
only the dead can drink

I’m robbed from my grave
laid in a broken room
staring at the cracks in the roof
watching the light pour through

Nine men dressed in black
Eighteen white-gloved hands
carry candles down the aisle
and circle around the man

A white fleece spread on a red pine box
Twelve cypress branches pointed east
A hole in the ground where the seed goes down
a table set for the feast

I study her face
through the window pane
She’s staring back from the other side
naked as rain
tapping her ring
against the cup in her hand
Her eyes holding nothing but
the shapes of her dreams
and where they ran

They suffered, wept, and climbed aboard the Sunday train
I can still smell the honeysuckle blooming to this day

Roots in a basket
thorns in her hair
I’m watching her walk across the fields
from my easy chair
Gathering
(from the album *Naked as Rain and the Animal Beneath*)

I fell out of the silence
broken by a scream
Riders in the west Sudan
drive their horses
through an open hole in a world
torn apart at the seams

Bad medicine and chemicals
flow down Olduavi gorge
through the bones of a strange new ape
that swung down from the trees
stood up and swept across the Serengeti plains

A 12 year old shoulders his gun
and peddles stolen first world junk
in the shanty towns of Nairobi and Rio
An accountant charts the profits
from a comfortable leather chair
with a pristine view of the empire city below

And the birds of prey
the hungry at the gates
the shadows at the door are gathering

Appalachia collapses 200 feet below
Who calculates the price
of black lung, slag, potash, oil and coal?

Half a mile down looking for an easy fix
drive a needle through the ocean floor
to keep the grotesque engine of capital
headed for the ditch

And the high priest of New Amsterdam
makes a midnight call to the capital
to rearrange the bodies in Babylon
where the streets are ruled by cold blue steel
and bells clang to the grinding gears
that rewrite the tables on Mount Zion

And the birds of prey
the hungry at the gates
the shadows at the door are gathering
Late night shortwave white subversion
No access government under construction
Satellite secrets in the microscope distance
Vox populi static equals no resistance
Crucifix paradise in business cycles
defending the faith with tanks and rifles
Wash your face boy, clean your hands,
all fingers and teeth are full of Texas jam
It’s the monkey trial in a military court
trading the kingdom for a Trojan horse
There’s chaos on the western steppes
where the tribal wars began
and an old woman’s creation tales
became the story of a single god
behind the gilded face of a jealous man

Caves full of mortar rounds
rattled by the prayers
of the theater of politics
lit by faces in secret places
that uncoil tracers in the desert air

The wound turns like a wheel
where CEOs feed the Eucharist
to true believers rising from the rank and file
The drug may change, but the mark’s the same
from ziggurats to department stores
you’re guaranteed service with a smile

And the birds of prey
the hungry at the gates
the shadows at the door are gathering
Ash on the Roses
(from the album *Naked as Rain and the Animal Beneath*)

I went out before sunrise and the air burned my nose
I couldn’t breathe, I’m gonna put on my wings
and pack my traveling clothes
fly above the ether and never touch down
until I forget and get lonely again
for the weight of the ground

I saw you in a movie with your make-up on
When I saw you again you were naked as rain
you were almost gone
All these pictures that run around in your head
won’t be released for public review
until after your dead

Ash on the roses, blood at the roots
gray dust on the ruins, rain in your shoes
Ash on the roses, the faces unreal
till the roses bloom

Oh Cassandra, no one hears what you say
They drug you out beneath the cruel stars
and Mars had his day
but the victims of war and devastation
will slip easy again into their homemade skin
in the great recreation

A cross on your forehead, milk on the stone
You’re crammed so close all these dead stares
feel like your own
So you claw your way up the mountain
to hear the mountain speak
but it won’t mean a thing till you lay down with your love
and hear the sound of her dreams

Ash on the roses, blood at the roots,
a darkness so thick you can’t see the country you’re traveling through
Ash on the roses shaken away
when they tremble and bloom

The desert is empty and cluttered with stones
of the tower of heaven left by the confused who went babbling on
You don’t get there by struggle, by faith or by plan
you just keep moving till your bones find their rest
in the cold desert sand
She could have been anyone, but she looked like Saint Anne
that showed me the door and dropped a vial of blood in my hand
And the room inside was as big as they sky
I’m still there and I don’t care if I never come back

Ash on the roses, light at the roots
A conquering wind driving the moon
Ash on the roses blown away
as the roses bloom
An Animal Beneath Her Skin
(from the album Naked as Rain and the Animal Beneath)

She wants an animal beneath her skin
She wants room and board and a window on the eastern wind
a quiet place to rest until her wings and claws are healed again
to lean against her bedroom wall
until she recalls the song of how it all began
She wants an animal beneath her skin

She wants to break the city down
brick by brick and scatter it across the desert sand
feed the market to the crows and hounds
and bind the moneychangers hands
break the roots of the killing tree and cast
the table of the elements to the free radicals again
She wants an animal beneath her skin

He wants to leave the forest chemistry behind
slip the rain of shattered stars in the failing light
slip the ancient ancestry barking from their headless stones
He wants to dance among their bones
and all the years of mangled wire the dance of death alone unwinds
He wants to leave the forest chemistry behind

He wants to leave the forest chemistry behind
So he strips the day's machine and rebuilds it for a long dark ride
where the interstate dissolves in dreams
he can fold and slip up his sleeve
and drop into an inside straight,
collect the muses fate and get out clean
He wants to leave the forest chemistry behind

She wants an animal beneath her skin
She's worked graveyard until the sunlight hurt
and every curtain seemed too thin
Somewhere beneath the basement door
without form and void and a trail of blood along the forest floor
She's waiting for the beat-up world to start again
She wants an animal beneath her skin
Dead Swimmers
(from the album Liminal Blue)

The skies are so empty
  they drink dead swimmers
Forgive your redeemer for imposing his slaves
40 hard hours for criminal wages
who’s to blame them
if they return from the grave

A game of chess
  the red stones whisper
You slip past the guards at Absalom’s gate
Don’t follow me down the philosopher’s well
You’ll find me mumbling, tumbling,
  turning through pages
or weeping for mercy on the horse’s neck

I stare all night into a city of rivers
their waters are crowded with invisible shapes
Forgive your redeemer if he drinks dead swimmers
who’s to blame
  if they return from the graves
Another Man’s Blues  
(from the album Liminal Blue)

Something went wrong in the course of the stars  
An enemy wind tore the sky apart  
I feel the serpent move around beneath my feet  
Time fell out of joint into that secret life  
we hide in our heads so hypnotized  
by the struggle to weave the lies that make ends meet

There’s someone on the other side of that door  
I can see his shadow pacing the floor  
Maybe that’s me waiting to make my move  
and slip into another man’s blues

Teddy stood astride the Great Divide  
while a gospel choir sang the glory road rag  
and God’s city on a hill turned dollars neon red  
A mushroom cloud in Los Alamos  
The Brits crashed and burned, the books were closed  
call the accountants in to clean up the mess

In an ammo box left back at the farm  
photos of soldiers standing arm in arm  
Maybe one of them was me for all I knew  
lost in another man’s blues

The killing fields don’t matter now  
Black cars in a line through the center of town  
shake the dust and ash off your feet  
All us AMA junkies standing in line  
at the golden calf of pharmaceutical science  
The advertisement is complete

I used to talk a little too fast  
a little too wired, now the world’s gone flat  
and I can’t find a face in the mirror I can use  
This must be another man’s blues
Fire In The Garden
(from the album Liminal Blue)

There’s fire in the garden of the Palatine
The oracle cannot speak
Her eyes are painted with Egyptian coal
and deliver nothing but tears
There’s fire in the garden and the river is dry
with drought for a thousand years
Turn the stones and measure the days
lost in the Palatine hills

There’s fire in the garden of Jefferson
His hands shake on the rail
The senate chamber is filled with smoke
broadcast around the world
There’s fire in the garden and Hamilton
dies beneath the Brooklyn bridge
The rebel son is sacrificed
by the men that made him rich

There’s fire in the garden of Abraham
Open the charnel house door
Ishmael is thrown to the wolves
on the market of perpetual war
There’s fire in the garden and the red clay boils
in the burning Georgia sun
No woman or man ever grew from the grave
as free as the day is long
So Many Birds
(from the album Liminal Blue)

Blind priest stumbling on the railroad tracks
with a wet knife in his hand
Sirens singing in the grain,
young woman in an ambulance
crying in a fit of rage, waving a cross
at a mother she’ll never see

So many birds they erase the sky
Too many soldiers on the road tonight
don’t let the weight of their fate chase you down

I was praying for Delilah,
praying for Salome
I was praying for Judith
when she took Holoferne’s head
swinging it through the streets of town
where the prophets drop and gather at her feet

Who put the poison in the old man’s rye?
Who set the mansion on the hill on fire
and let it burn all night long?

The madam took her fiddle out
from its dusty cabinet
and played a song in a key so low
only the dead could hear
The wilderness can drive you mad
There’s no shelter from the evil your nature breeds

Too long smothering in metal air,
cry out against the night into the nightmare’s mane
ride on, ride on until you disappear
ride on until you disappear even form yourself
Some Other Time
(from the album Strange Parlors)

South California, late World War II,
Duke on the jukebox, that indigo mood
I remember your gown, sea green, embroidered with lace
You could have been Aphrodite in that nowhere place
I’d almost disappeared into your eyes...
We could have danced till broad daylight

I step out my front door in the middle of the night
The details come through strange in the rain and flashlights
There’s a wreck on the road, glass and blood on the ground
There’s a radio on, static sputtering out
Ambulance, cops, and bags in a line
but you slipped my grasp into some other time

I head back into town for a night with a girl
that’ll do nothing but talk and fondle her dollar store pearls
and say something like, as I slip her my money,
“Of all them country boys, you’re the best one honey.”
Another face in the crowd, another body downstream
I lost my head at the scene of the crime
I lost the thread into some other time

She switched me with branches on my soldier’s sad face
where the names of her desires are written to this day
Now she’s long underground and I watch as her memory fades
The bodies retreat and return in an old man’s haze
they’re like porcelain dolls in the stories I tell
I lost my head at the scene of the crime
I lost the thread into some other time

“My soul has grown deep like the rivers,” he said.
And Langston Hughes, in my way, I think I understand
how the works of your days settle deep in your mind
and you just let them slip into some other time...
I seem to recall I had a fish on the line,
but like I said, that was some other time

South California, late World War II
Duke on the jukebox, that indigo mood... that was some other time
Swans Migrating *
(from the album Strange Parlors)

It’s my soul running loose in the landscape makes me dark this way
I leave a distant trace
I keep changing shape
Can’t find a bed, a rock or a seed to rest in
Maybe this road where the tall grass grows
through the asphalt breaks

I know every devil has his day
I’ve seen him pass along this way
Maybe this tall, twisted oak, branches hanging
Maybe these swans migrating

There were roots, I remember them well,
down in the deep black earth
beneath the red clay
You can read their shapes
But there’s always a wind and my eyes won’t stop
seizing at the world
I keep changing shape
I leave a distant trace

Give the devil his day
I’ve seen him pass along this way
Maybe this old car abandoned on the highway
Maybe these swans migrating

Maybe the garter snake at my feet half awake
Oh, it’s only my soul loose in the landscape
Spring’s coming on deep enough green
to call out the men and their noisy machines

Let the devil have his day
I’ve seen him pass by my way
Maybe a storm rushing through the fresh leaves
Maybe these swans migrating

There is no place to lock sorrow away
It just runs underground to its natural decay
It leaves a distant trace
The houses that sit on the hills facing west
catch the pale yellow sun fading away in dark rooms and shade

I know the devil has his day
He’s free to pass by this way
deep as a heart beneath cold ribs breaking
but maybe these swans migrating

* the title comes from a movement in the composition *Cantus Arcticus*
by Einojuhani Rautavaara
Vanities
(from the album Strange Parlors)

They kept her carefully preserved from youth
with the finest clothes and most precious jewels
a rose on her pillow every morning
with the thorns removed
Kept in a jar hidden against the day
she’d shed her clothes and stand naked in the truth
It all comes down to a single motion that takes your breath away

Vanity of vanities the preacher said
and she believed every word
Vanity of vanities
she swallowed each day her daily thorns
until the day before her birth

I throw the sheets back off my bed each day
and take my morning pill
to keep the family ghosts securely at bay
beyond my window sill
I’d offer them protection,
but it’s more than they deserve
for shrouding me in a nest of lies
against the secrets of my blood

Vanity of vanities,
I heard the preacher say
Vanity of vanities
It all comes down to a single motion
that takes your breath away

I waited for you in the churchyard for days
writing my confessions on your prayer book pages
Every raging storm, every night in stranger's bed,
every relic desecrated
And the rain falls and the churchyard disappears
and broken in this empty world
I can’t hold back the tears
for shrouding me in a nest of lies
against the secrets of my blood

Vanity of vanities,
I still hear the preacher say
Vanity of vanities,
It all comes down to a single motion
that takes your breath away
Starlings
(from the album Wilderness and Grace)

Smoke out the starlings
woven in the grain
pouring from the graves
out across the plains
Pack up your mirrors, darling
in a box of leaves
There's language written on your face
you don't want to read

Strangers in a world of asphalt, wire and steel
Where do you go when you have no natural home?
They tear at the eaves with beaks and claws until
they claim a place in the roof for their own

The banker's men in cashmere coats
track children in the streets
Clean your gun my brother
They may be asking you to bleed
She trembles on the edge
of the precipice and waits
for the heavy brush of wings
and a vision of the gate

The starlings wear strange constellations
on a dark feathered sky
Their song for mercy is laced with pain
leaking from a mother's lullaby

Does a slaughtered lamb in spring
somehow release the wheel
and wash away a year of days
that nailed the nightmares in?
It's no different from the leaves
that release the summer sun
in the color of their leaves
until they fall one by one

The starlings rise and make a cloud
that twists and drives and turns
no different from God's black fire
on the pages in the letters where it burns
November
(from the album *Wilderness and Grace*)

There's a ram in the thicket
and a boy on the altar
and voices in the storm argue
which one should be slaughtered
There's traffic out on the freeway
locked up in the freezing cold
and rifles up in the hills
aimed at the village below

There's a cardinal in the maple tree
singing for the thaw
and a man with a knife standing at the door
whose threshold is the law

November, November
trembles like a woman
dying in her bed
while Orion rages across the sky
with a bullet in his chest
November, November

Gray doves are gathering
in the light where evening fell
and a cat on the window sill
is falling back into herself
Roots go clawing underground
burning for the heart
where the skulls of some forgotten race
are barking out their poison art

Rain pours down the gutter
The straw man crumbles in the great dissolve
shakes off his coat and falls asleep,
dreams his dust in muslin cloth

November, November
November goes out weeping
down into the day
I'll see you across the river
was all she had to say
and walked away into the dark
November, November
Dead Man Sleeping
(from the album Wilderness and Grace)

Dead Man hanging on a picket fence
staring at the cars going by
Sun going down on the house where he lived
A hoot owl calls through the holes in his eyes

The door left open on a old black Ford,
white dress on the front seat
stained with blood like the band of gold
tied with a sash to the wheel for the wind to beat

The sleeper rises when he hears the voice
of his sister weeping in the dark
The film slips away like a hidden skin
Open your eyes and release the cold dead stars

Weather beaten shutters slap against the cracked boards
The sheriff in the front porch swing
turning pages in a book written in a hand
no one left alive knows how to read

He asked among the neighbors and kin
and everyone that knew him well
No one could explain the hard events
It was as if the day had cracked and left its shell

Some old murder returns to the holy ground
stained with bitter rage
sets fire in a heart like a devil in the dark
can make a man choose the worst part of his fate

Two bullet casings and a trail of boot prints
at the edge of long rows of corn
Standing brown and dry they testify
with a rustling sigh where secrets hide to take their form

Thirteen teeth cut our of his head
were delivered in the mail
No post mark, just a note that read
“Greetings sheriff, from your friends in the south of hell.”

The driver cursed and climbed aboard
and threw the engine in gear
A cache of bones in the baggage car
older than the moons that mark the years
In the evening when night pours down
and dew settles in the grass
a horse and rider cross a stream
running back to where they settle into the past

Banshees on the railroad tracks
Sirens in the grain
A girl stumbling round in the sycamore trees
out of her mind, screaming at the thunder and rain

The sleeper came up out of the pit
when his maker called his name
The film slips away like a hidden skin
again and again until nothing but faith remains
Sweet Misery
(from the Bare Knuckles album Trouble In Your House)

I fell asleep in Eden
beaten and left for dead
Woke up in the valley of sorrows
with a price on my head

It’s a sad, sad world we’re living in
like lover’s torn apart
seduced away by the criminal kiss
out into the dark

I went searching for the sacred rose
Only came back with he thorns
got caught with blood stains on my hands
when Gabriel blew his horn

We all do time this side of the line
No sinner rides for free
The flames of love are a consuming fire
But oh, what a sweet misery

I’m crawling from the ashes
of a young man’s wasted dreams
I wept to see the sunrise
I cursed the earth beneath my feet

To find the gates of paradise
you must be nailed upon a tree
The flames of lover are a consuming fire
but oh, what a sweet misery
Death Is a Woman
(from the album Roses on the Threshold)

She passed out in a laundry mat
reading a letter from a Birmingham jail
Woke up in a photograph
hanging on the wall of the St. James Hotel
I was looking out across the river
from the backseat of her cadillac
wondering if I ever really knew her
while Hank Williams sang “I Saw The Light”

Death is a woman
down here in the well
where pain is a virtue
no tongue can tell

Penelope removes her scarlet robes
sheds her slip and sheds her skin
vanishes into her radio
where angels dance on needles and pins
She said “Money talks, but talk is cheap.
So put away your wallet and shut your mouth.
I’ve been down in the bin
with those dirty railroad men,
seen murder walking through the brakeman’s house.”

Death is a woman
the queen of paradise
when everything else has
been thrown to the fire

Our lady of Guadalupe
can you help me please?
I got 13 nickels and a pawn shop pistol
for to write my tragedy
I cut a deal with a faithless man
with scars on his wrists and eyes like iron
He took the throne in old Byzantium,
traded a crown for Cain’s barbed wire

Death is a woman
waking into the mist
with the taste of surrender
left on your lips
I carried your body back into the trees
wrapped in a blanket of Chinese silk
I buried your relics beneath my tracks in the leaves
and watched your shadow disappear in the hills
I don’t care if the sun don’t shine
I don’t care if the moon don’t rise
as long as I can sit right here
and drink the sorrow of your dying tears

Death is a woman
on the bed you made
where every promise is broken
in a state of grace

Death is a woman
at the end of the day
Death is a woman
walking away
From a String of Pearls
(from the album Shadow Resolve)

There’s a howling wind in Babylon
rising from the bones of fallen kings
and it turns the screws on Jersey Avenue
till you can hear the lawyers scream
Star crossed lovers by second nature
set the four horsemen to run
through prophecies of failure
that reside in a loaded gun

And it turns the plow
thorough hollowed ground
where bodies fall like leaves
without a sound

Mary undoes her perfumed hair
and dries the master’s wounded feet
to hide the swans of Avalon
from the Pentateuch’s retreat
In caves of the antlered dancer
where Broadway meets divine
I clipped your robes to save your soul
when you hated your own life

And it turns to tears
in an offered sun
and the murdered sow
of abomination

Oh, can you feel the wind
tear the scars form your face?
Oh, can you taste the sin
dragging you back to that empty place?

I keep my books of formation
in a bucket of Nazarite blood
through hours of prostration
and a voice that falls in floods
And I know I’ll never be redeemed
but I keep faith with the signs
that rise form these towers walls
beneath a dark and threatening sky

And it turns the gears
that drive the world,
tears a savior’s heart
from a string of pearls
Lightning Scars
(from the album Shadow Resolve)

Open your Bible and take your pill
Wipe the crimes from your window sill
Sweep away the storms
that blow across your face
Another day with the same old lies
A confident grin and roving eyes
They say there’s one born every minute
and that suits you fine

Forget your faithless evidence
the season has changed
tooth and claw and avarice are the code
The past is gone, the spell is cast,
nothing remains
Set your satellite for overload

Mary Magdalene with your perfect smile,
blonde Mercedes on a Jericho mile
strung out with your crucifix, catholic style
You’re Blanche Dubois on broken glass,
Madame Butterfly when your fantasies crash,
Carmen with a backbeat
in a backseat cage

Beneath the skin you’re crawling in
beneath the fear in your veins
a generation’s tears have turned to rust
Illusion barks from a righteous box
no religion can tame
The siren’s song comes on like a hurricane

Dewey eyed, I collapse in bliss
murdered by a stolen kiss,
lightening scars on my fingertips
Genevieve where have you been?
“I’ve been to the inferno and come back again
strung out on a tree
fed to the crows and wind.”

That black sun rises like a heart attack
exploding all night
a better light to read the scars on your back
You must speak a translucent tongue
when he world comes undone
Or they’ll find you in the morning
stretched across the tracks

I got lightning scars
from standing in the flames
I saw faces and everything changed
Innocence lost is wisdom’s pain

I got lightning scars
for the sins of my youth
I went down to demand the truth
from devils who stood stone silent
’til I waked away

I climb the tower
I watch and wait
for lightning to strike
Salvation in the dark does not come cheap
I’ve seen your children crushed at the gate
with the void in their eyes
curled up in the storm fast asleep

Another day
another turn of the gears
another beggar for a dirty deal
I got lightning scars on my fingertips
It takes a season in hell
It takes a season of rain
There comes a day of reckoning
I got lighting scars on my fingertips
**Alabama Dust**  
(from the Bare Knuckles album *Alabama Dust*)

“The moon is just a blue eyed witch  
with the devil in her soul,”  
so the old man said  
and he walked on down the road.  
I never saw him again,  
but the story went around  
that he fell for a blue-eyed girl  
and caught the last bus out of town

It was a dark day in the valley  
the day I met you  
You were a long tall Sally,  
lord, you played me for a fool  
If I could find the way out  
where I came in  
I’d hit the ground running  
I’d be gone with the the wind

I’m gonna pack my bags  
and get on the bus,  
bound for Birmingham  
in the Alabama dust

I bought a bouquet of flowers  
and set them on your window sill  
When you sent your boy around for money  
I gave him all that I could steal  
Now the heartbroken sky  
turns the stars to tears  
and I’d bet my soul to a dollar  
you’ll be wanting them

I’m gonna pack my bags  
and get on the bus  
bound for Birmingham  
in the Alabama dust

Early last week  
in her Sunday go-to-meeting dress  
they laid sister Mary in the ground  
for a long, long rest  
You see it ain’t what’s real.  
It ain’t about which God you trust.  
It’s how disappear
in the Alabama dust

I’m gonna pack my bags
and get on the bus
bound for Birmingham
in the Alabama dust
Videos for some of the songs can be seen and heard at the following links:

Garden House: https://youtu.be/3NiJt1VIf6I

The Long Decline: https://youtu.be/R-xGPEH6GKQw


Ash on the Roses (directed by Chris Mansel): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12RFQjJ6PBs

Another Man’s Blues (directed by Chris Mansel): https://youtu.be/UKO147pdU8G

So Many Birds (directed by Chris Mansel): https://youtu.be/oRjBbEcVfEw

Swans Migrating (directed by Chris Mansel): https://youtu.be/cAgKfbkDd_U

Starlings: https://youtu.be/sPvz1cPDRCA

November: https://youtu.be/LA5LgnW5gTA


From a String of Pearls (directed by Chris Mansel): https://youtu.be/g78K02tbhHg

Songs selected from the following albums can be heard via these links:

Mystery Songs: https://jakeberry.bandcamp.com/album/mystery-songs

Wilderness and Grace: https://jakeberry.bandcamp.com/album/wilderness-and-grace

Liminal Blue: https://jakeberry.bandcamp.com/album/liminal-blue
About the Author

Jake Berry is a poet, musician and visual artist. The author of Brambu Drezi, Species of Abandoned Light, Drafts of the Sorcery, Genesis Suicide and numerous other books. He has been an active member of the global arts and literary community for more than 30 years. His poems, fiction, essays, reviews and other writings have been published widely in both print and electronic mediums. In 2010, Lavender Ink released a collaborative book, Cyclones in High Northern Latitudes, with poet Jeffrey Side and drawings by Rich Curtis; and Outside Voices: An Email Correspondence (with Jeffrey Side) was released by Otoliths also in that year. He regularly records and performs his compositions solo and with the groups Bare Knuckles, The Ascension Brothers and The Strindbergs. Mystery Songs, his tenth solo album, was released in 2016. Ongoing projects include books four and five of Brambu Drezi, a collection of short poems, and a wide range of musical projects.