

REAWAKENINGS

Kevin Roth

INSIGHTS & LYRICS

I come from the land of radio. From a time and technology where drama took place in the theater of the mind. Even to this day, I hear the subtle background of crickets and I am in a field. Any dialogue then spoken in that context becomes shaded by the rural experience. Is that a river in the background? Are there cars passing in the distance? Are we in a forest...in a field? Have we been here before? These are questions which are answered from our memories and in most personal terms. Similarly, music has the capacity to alter our private reality; placing us in an abstract existence bound only by the immediate and invisible realities of tone, scale and moving line.

Case in point: I was in a car late at night on a twisty two lane road in southern maine, listening to a collection of songs: simple single instrument / single voice demo's that i'd received from a variety of musicians over the span of several years and frankly, un-listened to since their initial arrival when Kevin Roth's early version of METAMORPHOSIS began to play. GONE, AURORA BOREALIS and SHE BELIEVES followed. Simple, subtle, timeless, the songs became a soundtrack for my headlights searching through the drifting mist, the subtle drone of the tires...and I was transported (while being transported if you know what I mean).

As the last tune completed, I pulled over to the side of the road and called Kevin immediately. It was approaching midnight but I was counting on my enthusiasm to outweigh my inconsideration of the hour. He was gracious, surprised to hear from me and naturally curious about where my new advocacy for his music might lead. The four demo's had 'grown up' so to speak and were featured tracks on an album he had recorded called AWAKENING which he promised to send me the next day.

Over the span of the next few months, I had the opportunity to meet with Kevin and share with him my vision of how his musical message might best be presented. I suggested that, in the spirit of simplicity, he should keep the dulcimer and voice 'front and center' but at the same time to give each song a unique musical setting that would not only support the melodic and lyrical content but would suggest a particular space and ambience in which the concept could be more fully experienced.

REAWAKENING then, is that space. Nine new songs plus a new aural life for four of the AWAKENED tracks

Noel Paul Stookey
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1. Clarity

This song was originally written as a slow finger picking ballad, but at the last minute I sent Noel a strummed upbeat version which he loved, and which transformed the spirit of the song.

Rivers flow to the ocean, there they lose their name
Waves touch the shoreline, then return again
Storms on the ocean, angry raging seas
Deep below the surface it's calm as can be

Chorus:

The past is gone, the future isn't here
Right inside this moment, it all disappears
The past is gone...

The weightlessness of thought weighs heavy on my mind
Caught up in the world, the illusion of time
The balance in believing in something I can't see
All changed in a moment of deep clarity.

There's nothing left to ask, there's nowhere left to go
Who I am at last, love already knows.

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2. One

Thinking one night about the vastness of the universes, this idea came to me. Based on the idea of non-duality, this happens to be one of my favorite songs on the album.

There is something I must tell you
I've waited far too long
I hope you listen closely
And you won't take it wrong
You've been asking everybody what to do and where to go
When the answer to your questions, you already know
You can blame your life on everyone
Or the zodiac and stars
Doesn't matter what you do, or who you think you are
Somewhere in your heart you know you're more than what you see
And you can step beyond the limits of reality

Chorus:

And It's all just One, and it's everything
And no one knows where it ends or begins
And we're made of stars and when we die
We will leave this world and be sanctified

You can laugh away your sorrows
You can think that money buys
Everything you've ever wanted
Until it opens up your eyes
That longing in your heart cries out
But the calling never dies
Everything is waiting for you
When you realize

I'm here to tell you
It's not all what it seems
Got to row your boat ashore,
Because life is but a dream
Time to wake up to the calling
If you listen you will hear
Somedays it seems to fade away
But it never disappears

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3. Aurora

I saw a beautiful photograph of a man sitting by a lake in Alaska at night gazing up at the Aurora Borealis. The photo inspired this song. This was one of the early songs I wrote for my album 'Awakenings'. My dream is to live one day in a cabin on a lake side, and watch time passing slowly.

Winter cabin on a lakeside, fireplace and sunshine
Luminous light on the water, season's scent of pine

Chorus:

Shooting stars are falling on the horizon line
And I feel like the aurora borealis paralleling time

The question is the answer, silence is the clue
Be still and know that I am. I am coming, coming, coming home to you

Flannel shirt and blue jeans, crockpot cooking stew
Cabin thawing in the springtime, and everything that's old is somehow new

Cabin on a lakeside, summer into fall
All the dreams that I've gathered, have awakened after all

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4. The Potter's Wheel

My roots in music were folks like Peter, Paul & Mary, Joni Mitchell and others. I took the influences and created my own worlds on the dulcimer. When songs and music inspire, it becomes part of the creative wheel which is universal. and if fortunate passed on to others.

I went to the potter's house, he was working on his wheel
And I wondered how he learned to turn clay into what he feels
Round and round the wheel turned, and in his hands he formed
Works of art that stood apart in each vessel that was born

Chorus:

And the wheel turns around, and the clay grows higher
And it's all passed down in the love that inspires

I asked him will you show me how to be a potter too
I want to learn how to work the wheel and be just like you
He said 'it's not that simple, there's a lot to understand
For works of art come from the heart before they reached the hands"

I studied with the potter for many years and learned
How to mold the clay from inside out, as the wheel gets turned
He taught me to become the clay, and I came to understand
His spirit lives inside of me and in every potter's hands

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5. She Believes

I had a discussion one night with a friend who I had no idea was an atheist. We had known each other for a while when the topic of spirituality arose. I couldn't believe my friend had no faith in a "God". Puzzled, I went home and vented lyrically. At the time I was going through a lot in my life and being a spiritual guy I didn't understand why my friend was forever so happy go lucky. When this song was finished, with the church organ I kiddingly played it and said "Now, we're even".

She believes in nothing, only in what she sees
"There is no hell or heaven, it's all just make believe"
I said "how can you live like that, what's this whole life for?"
And she shrugged her shoulders with a smile and said
'To me, there's nothing more".

Why do wise men suffer, who is wrong or right
I need my emerald city, she needs her black and white
Oh I'm curious and envious how she works things out
On the dark night of her soul is there ever any doubt

Do you believe in love, the connections of the heart?
Or is love just an illusion that sometimes falls apart
She said 'love is just a state of mind, for those who need romance
And I wondered if she ever really gave love a chance

I've seen what I call miracles, she calls them circumstance
I said we've known each other in lives before, she said we met by chance
Strange to me how two can be so close yet far apart
In their views and in what changes you from the very start

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6. Come With Me

When you come to the realization of something on the deepest gut level, you can't go back to what you 'thought' you knew about it. For me, this world is not the big picture. Since I was a young boy I always had a sense of something totally mysterious. The search and understanding continues.

I'm caught between two worlds, in the matrix of my mind
I want to leave it all behind- come with me
You cannot comprehend when the mind wants to pretend
There's no beginning or no end- come with me

Chorus:

When you know too much, you can't go back there
When you feel the rush, there's nothing to compare
So you just let go and slowly you become aware
That all you really care about is love.

I closed my eyes and dreamed, of an astral plane it seems
Where everything was brighter than the sun
In joy I laughed and cried, a part of me had died
And I saw love in everyone

I was caught between two worlds in the matrix of my mind
I had to leave it all behind- come with me
And ever since that day when I felt that brilliant blaze
I've been awakened and now I'm free

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7. Gone

My father and I were very close. Best friends really. I hadn't written a song for a few years, kind of semi-retired from the music business. A few weeks after he died at the age of ninety I was woken up around three thirty in the morning with the feeling that a song was about to be born. I've known for my entire life and more prominently when my father passed, that though we all technically 'die', the spirit lives on in mysterious and miraculous ways.

It's four in the morning, I can't seem to sleep
Coffee and six strings, memories run deep
I'm thinking about my old man, and all the loved ones that have gone
Memories turn to melodies as I play this song.- sweet song

A tear is now falling, I don't feel blue
Memories recalling, God how I miss you
I need our conversation, I want to know you're there
And though you're gone forever I feel you everywhere, everywhere

You know what I miss most, of all the times that we shared?
Are the words never spoken, just knowing we cared
And I love you more than ever, though reality has changed
I still find myself, now and then calling your name.

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8. The Other Side

I've been fascinated by NDE for years (Near Death Experiences) This story line came to me along with an old folksy feel, sort of like the old country hit "Ode to Billy Joe". I rarely ever play the dulcimer in this traditional style, but I felt the storyline called for it. The sound effects Noel added to this song really brings it to life (No pun intended).

Lightening bugs in the jar tonight.
He smiles at them with a child's delight

It's a miracle he survived, the doctor said that he had died
Flashing lights and help arrived, he came to life when they covered his eyes

He said; "I saw my body from way up high,
And you wouldn't believe what's on the other side"

Friends and the next of kin, said a new peace came over him
He tried to explain to the kids and wife, how he died that night but found a new life

He said; "I saw my body from way up high,
And you wouldn't believe what's on the other side"

Now Billy Joe is his oldest friend, been like brothers since way back when
Billy said 'we still go to baseball games, but ever since that night it aint been the same"

He said "I saw my body from way up high, and you won't believe what's on the other side.
Tell ya Billy words can't describe, but I can't wait to get back to the other side."

Lightening bugs in the evening dew, he opened the jar and away they flew

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9. Seven Questions

This song came to me after reading the astounding book called "Who Am I" by Ramana Maharshi. It was played on a cosmic dulcimer built for me especially for this album. The instrument has a slight 'warble' sound due its shape which makes the effect super interesting. Michael's synth part further takes it more to an out of body experience.

Who is seeing through my eyes?
In silence who is speaking?
Who is the "I" within myself?
What is within me seeking?
If this mystery is truly me, then why do I keep dreaming?
When will I wake to all there is?
What lies within me sleeping?

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10. Metamorphosis

One day I had an epiphany. The realization came to me that what I needed to do for a while was to just 'be'- and let life unfold by itself. There is a tiny coffee shop in Durango Colorado called "Eno", which I frequented while on tour. I use to sit at a table drinking their Desert Sun Coffee under a big colorful abstract painting I loved, thinking about what it would feel like to just let go and live. This song began there.

I've got nothing much to say these days, nothing much to loose
Nowhere that I need to be, and I do just what I choose
And it took me nearly half my life to let go and just be
Now it's 'Que Sera,Sera " what will be will be

Chorus:

And the caterpillar silk is spun into a dark cocoon
And out of the darkness comes the butterfly in bloom

Seeking simplicity, for me it's nothing new
I say I don't need a thing but I know it isn't true
I yearn for love, I yearn to see that look upon your face
I need to feel that rush of love, that intoxicating chase

I'm sitting in a café, a moth is buzzing on the wall
Perhaps it's waiting for a flame, or nothing much at all
Well never really know it seems, till death comes to our door
If any of this mattered, or what we came here for
Yes the hopeful and the faithful, the darkness and the light
Is what keeps me in surrender as I close my eyes at night

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11. I Am (What Helen Keller Knew)

I saw a few videos of Helen Keller which astounded me as I never thought any existed. In one of the videos she was speaking to a group of Chinese children who were blind. She told them they had inner vision. Her spiritual depth moved me and the idea of "I Am", both physically and spiritually seemed to sum up at least in part what this extraordinary woman taught the world.

What's the point in sight when you have no vision?
To see through darkness is the greatest light
To hear the subtle singing of the senses,
To live beyond the time of day or night.
The smell of pine needles in the forest
The feel of grass in the morning dew
The breath of wind that tells me what is coming
So many things I only wish you knew

Chorus:

I am not mute towards loving
I am not blind to truth I see
I am not deaf to hearts that call out
I am everything that I long to be, I Am. I Am.

How strange when eyes do meet they remain strangers
How sad when the world cries out so few can hear
How amazing is the silence in the sunlight
How blessed am I to live without such fears

What I seek in life is not 'out there'
Everything I want is inside me
With your face to the sun they'll be no shadows
Blessed with contentment I am free

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12. Love is

I was thinking about love one day- the joys, fears, doubts about the search for love for so many, both with others and alone. It seemed complicated and yet so straightforward. Apparently what they say is true, before we can give love others, we must first find it within ourselves.

We search for love in everything we do
Imprisoned by the walls we build and the pain we hold onto
In this moment, it's all what you believe
A shadow of your past regrets or the grace of what could be

Chorus:

Love is a certain state of mind
Love is the balance that we find
Love is gentle and kind
Most of all love is

Can you love yourself, allow yourself to feel?
Or are you holding onto old wounds, you won't allow to heal
When there's love, there is no fear
Illusion disappear, you are free now

They say that love is a treasure,
It's very hard to find
And yet it's free to everyone who searches,
Right before their eyes, how can we be so blind?

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13. DOROTHY

Before I moved to Kansas to hang with my sister for a while, certain vision came to me while living in Florida. I actually live in Kansas City, Mo, but all my friends always ask "who moves TO Kansas, people LEAVE Kansas?". I got tired of explaining my thought and vision process, so I wrote this song as an explanation- not as a defense.. Noel wrote the bridge and decided to put it on the album as a bonus track.

I told a friend I was moving to Kansas
He said' "What kind of person decides to move there"?
I said" I had a feeling it will be a respite
So I'm packing up my Toto and all my affairs

I had this vision all kinds of things
Would come around and turn around and be what I need
Just like Dorothy landing in Oz
Riding the tornado into make believe"

Chorus:

Dorothy are you there, I could use some company
Don't forget to leave those ruby slippers for me
I need a fast track for making my way back
From the Lion and the tin man and the scarecrow

It all turned into quite a cosmic Kansas
Who could have guessed, who would have known
And no one can believe this crazy life I'm living
Between the yellow brick road and the twilight zone

Pay no mind to the man behind the curtain
Smoke and mirrors is his game
Take the time to find the answers
Isn't that the reason that you came?

By Kevin Roth and Noel Paul Stookey Kevin Roth Music/BMI