

A photograph of David Roth, an older man with white hair, smiling and playing an acoustic guitar. He is wearing a blue denim jacket over a black shirt and a necklace with a circular pendant. The background is a lush green forest.

DAVID ROTH

Meet You
Where You Are



1. Meet You Where You Are

© 2014 David Roth and Melinda Wood Allen

*My life is filled with wonderful people, mindful optimism, blessings, hope,
and challenges.*

There are days that are simply not okay
You get outta bed, you're on your way
This is one of those

There are cheerleaders and those who'd pump you up
With platitudes and words that don't mean much
Not much at all

Oh my friend, I will meet you where you are
I won't throw flower petals on your wounded heart
If it's not okay, we won't pretend
But if it's not okay, it's not the end

Aren't you stronger than you ever used to be
At least that's the way it seems to me
If not to you

Aren't you the one who's made it all this way
No matter what those voices in your head might say
It's up to you

David Roth vocal, guitar
Jens Kommnick guitar, low whistle
Hans-Jörg Maucksch fretless bass

Looking through a broken glass
This too shall pass

There are times that are simply not okay
What you do with them, it's up to you to say
You get to say



2. They Do Not Speak for Me

© 2016 David Roth

When someone says "It goes without saying..." that means they're going to say something anyway. Same thing goes for "With all due respect..."

This playground fight is getting old
It's plain as day to see
The little ones in grown up clothes
They do not speak for me

They do not speak for me
They do not speak for me
The little ones in grown up clothes
They do not speak for me

Rejection of the status quo
Is part of being free
But when you talk of walls and polls
You do not speak for me

You do not speak for me
You do not speak for me
When you talk of walls and polls
You do not speak for me

Do you think you win support
By threatening your villains
Pointing fingers, making faces
Acting like small children

It's time to draw a harder line
For all the world to see
If you do not share a higher goal
You do not speak for me

You do not speak for me
You do not speak for me
If you do not share a higher goal
You do not speak for me

Do you serve the people's will
Oh do you hear our cries
Will you do the right thing
To unite, not polarize

This playground fight is getting old
It's plain as day to see
The little ones in grown up clothes
They do not speak for me

They do not speak for me
They do not speak for me
The little ones in grown up clothes
They do not speak for me



David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar**
Lea Morris **backing vocals**
Hans-Jörg Maucksch **upright bass**

3. Holland

© 1997 David Roth

The essay "Welcome to Holland" by Emily Perl Kingsley was the original seed for this song. Her son Jason was born differently-abled, and she created the metaphor of a journey with an unexpected destination.

We planned a trip to Italy, we got so darned excited
We bought a bunch of guidebooks and we learned a phrase or two
We packed our bags and off we went, directly for the airport
As prepared as we could be for something altogether new

We mapped out all the prime locations, Rome, Milan, and Florence
We connected with our agent about nine months in advance
We knew this trip would change our lives
We went to classes, husbands, wives
We didn't want to leave one thing to chance

But when we landed
We were in Holland
Italy is what we had in mind
This was not what we'd come all this way to find

We couldn't change it
We got our baggage
And we began a trip we never in a million years
Could have imagined

We got our footing quickly though, there wasn't time to take things slow
We got some brand new guidebooks and we learned a whole new language
We met people who we never knew, existing here in Holland
Reluctant as we were with all these unexpected changes

Nowadays we still see everybody all around us
Busy coming and going off to Italy as planned
They're all bragging what a great time, and they pass around their pictures
We smile and say "your trip sounds very grand"

And when we're honest
We're exhausted
As we walk the streets of now-familiar towns
A different dream is what we've landed here and found

But we have tulips
Windmills, and Rembrandts
And we remember not everyone will know
Such different kinds of beauty

David Roth

Jens Kommnick

Manfred Leuchter

Hans-Jörg Maucksch

vocal, guitar

guitar, low whistle

accordion

fretless bass



4. Long Way Home

© 2018 David Roth

My sister Deborah sent me an article about this story and it grabbed me then as it grabs me now. Here's to people in authority who use their humanity - not their ego - to make important, even life-changing decisions and follow them up with action.

Sergeant Joe Serna, Special Forces
Three Purple Hearts, collector of demons
North Carolina to Kandahar
It's a long way home

Joe got the letters, PTSD
The ones that it might take a lifetime to shake
If you can shake 'em at all, some people can't
It's a long way home

It's a long way home
It's a long way home

Joe found an ally inside of a bottle
No one could blame him for what he had seen
Flashing blue lights, Joe's off to jail
It's a long way home

The judge was no stranger to Sergeant Joe Serna
He'd seen this soldier in his courtroom before
But Judge Olivera had been to the Gulf War
It's a long way home

David Roth
Jens Kommick
Beo Brockhausen
Lea Morris
vocal, guitar
bouzouki, aria contra-bass,
guitar, low whistle
accordion
backing vocals

Joe's latest sentence, more time in jail
But the judge knew that Joe had to fight for his life
He said "Joe, I'll stand by you,
I know where you've been"
It's a long way home

When they got to the jail in Robeson County
Judge Olivera joined Joe in his cell
And that's where they spent the whole night man to man
Talkin' Joe's way out of hell

It's a long way home



5. Nothing like a Day on the River

© 2017 David Roth

My first 5-day rafting trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho inspired this song. There were no cell phones. There was no wi-fi. They call it "digital detox", and 20 of us saw some of the most beautiful nature anywhere over a 75-mile stretch, gratefully ate beautiful food prepared by our guides, and sang every night by a campfire under the biggest stars this side of the Milky Way. The phrase "Mni Wiconi" is from the Lakota tradition.

Eight lane highway, cell phone is ringing
Living under the gun
Lists and errands, calls and appointments
So many things to get done

The TV is blaring, the grown-ups are crazy
I don't know what's true any more
Deep inside I can feel a yearning
It's time to renew and restore

A sense of place, of incredible beauty
The rapids are singing their song
Moving, mighty, spiritual, powerful
Wondrous, tender, and strong

Always familiar and full of surprises
The lifeblood of canyons and hills
Wilderness, freedom, oh this is where I come
To slow down and be still

Nothing like a day on the river
Nothing like it at all
Nothing like a day on the river
Can you hear the river call

Mni Wiconi, water is life
Mni Wiconi, water is life

One lane highway, no phones are ringing
Only one thing to get done
Put one paddle in front of the other
Measure the day by the sun

David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar**
Beo Brockhausen **mbira**
Lea Morris **backing vocals**
Hans-Jörg Maucksch **fretless bass**





David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar**
Beo Brockhausen **orchestra chimes**
Lea Morris **backing vocals**
Lucile Chaubard **cello**

6. Rise We Will

© 2001 David Roth

It's hard to believe the Twin Tower attacks on my former home of New York City happened many years ago and I remember exactly where I was when I heard the news. All this time later, I wish the lyrics would be a footnote of the past instead of an ongoing affirmation.

I walked our dog down to the pond
The day they crashed the flying bombs
Destroying buildings great and tall
And rise we will, above it all

As I filled the feeders for the birds
My neighbor brought the shocking words
The air was clear with autumn sun
Unlike the smoking Pentagon

Where plans are hatched and blueprints made
Of consequences - unafraid
Until today, in urban pall
And rise we will, above it all

Rise we will, rise we will
From these ashes steadfast still
Revive, restore, renew, rebuild
Rise we will, oh rise we will

Now we know how others feel
Assaulted with such mindless zeal
With senseless loss of life and spirit
Staggered, stunned, and brought to fear it

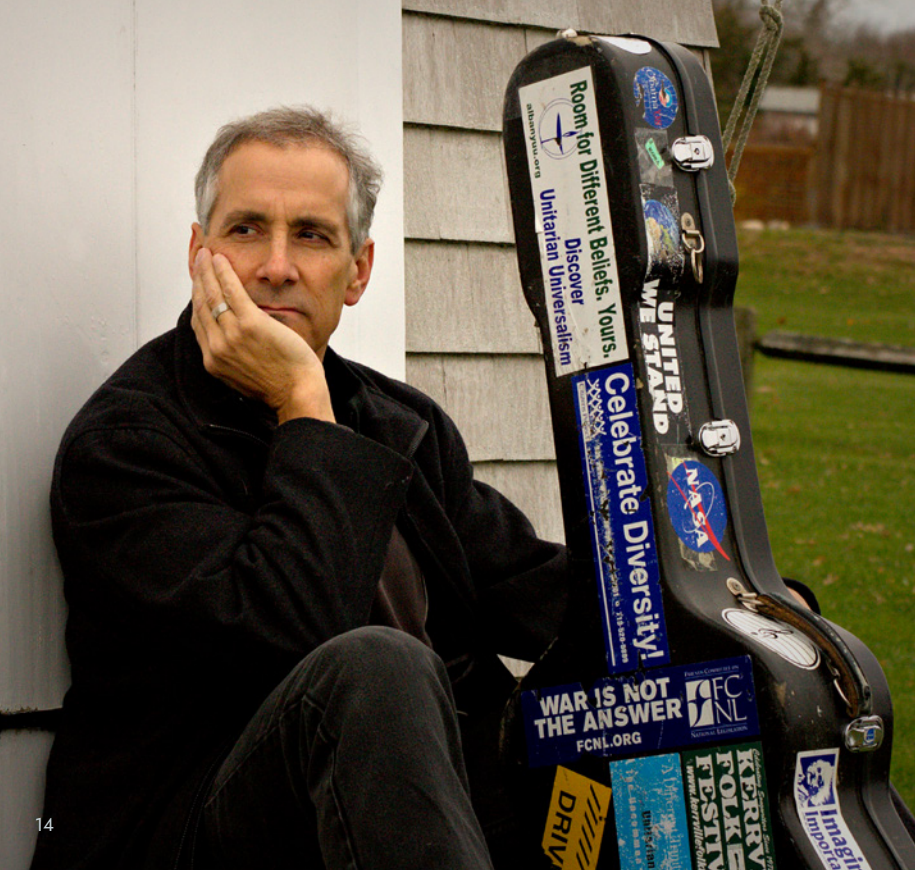
But what no bomb can e'er destroy
Nor any of those who deploy
Resilience, faith, and reconnection
Hope, resolve, and resurrection

Rise we will, rise we will
From these ashes steadfast still
Revive, restore, renew, rebuild
Rise we will, oh rise we will

Consumed with hate, they hit and run
Some think we are the evil one
The poison stains so many hands
America... Afghanistan...

I walk our dog down to the pond
The birds still eat the seeds we've hung
I pray that we may break this fall
And rise somehow above this all

Rise we will, rise we will
From these ashes steadfast still
Revive, restore, renew, rebuild
Rise we will, oh rise we will



7. There but for Fortune

© 1963 Phil Ochs

The mighty songs Phil wrote back in the 1960's are eerily prophetic and relevant today, and for me no lines are more chilling than those in the last verse of this song, penned in 1963, thirty-eight years before 9/11 became a date etched in history.

Show me a prison, show me a jail
Show me a prisoner whose face is growing pale
And I'll show you a young man with so many reasons why
There but for fortune, may go you or I

Show me an alley, show me a train
Show me a hobo who sleeps out in the rain
And I'll show you a young man with so many reasons why
There but for fortune, may go you or go I
You or I

Show me the whiskey stains on the floor
Show me the drunkard who stumbles out the door
And I'll show you a young man with so many reasons why
There but for fortune, may go you or go I
You or I

Show me the country where bombs had to fall
Show me the ruins of buildings once so tall
And I'll show you a young land with so many reasons why
There but for fortune, go you or go I

You or I

David Roth vocal, guitar
Jens Kommick guitar
Manfred Leuchter accordion
Lucile Chaubard cello

8. It's My Job

© 2013 David Roth and Harold Payne

Our gratitude to have work that we love and recognition that we stand on the shoulders of others inspires us.

There's a road that I have traveled
And it's filled with quiet miracles
Ordinary people do extraordinary things
And it truly is an honor to shed a little light
On those out in the trenches and the changes that they bring

They've got no time for glory when there's so much to be done
They won't be taking bows when there are battles to be won
When the curtain calls are coming they are gone and out of sight
And I know that I am basking in their light

It's my job to sing an unsung hero
It's my job to tell a worthy tale
It's my job, I am a spoke in the wheel
In gratitude for those who blaze my trail

You can read it in the papers, all the CEO's and players
Making more in just one deal than you make your whole life long
Well then how about a teacher, or a soldier or a factory worker
Putting in a lifetime for a song

Most will live in anonymity by fortune or by choice
And that's where I can play a modest part
For if I can shine a beacon with a lyric and a voice
Then their actions may live longer in one heart

David Roth vocal, guitar
Jens Kommnick guitar, bouzouki, low whistle
Lea Morris backing vocals
Hans-Jörg Maucksch fretless bass

So many many dreams will fall without a sound
I will try and catch a few before they hit the ground

There's a road that I have traveled and it's filled with quiet miracles
Ordinary people do extraordinary things
And it truly is my honor to know what they have done
May they live a little longer when I sing





9. The Roaring of Noiseless Calm

© 2010 David Roth and Jan Garrett

Jan and I got together at a songwriting retreat in Arizona where several of us were paired off for 2 hours at a time to brainstorm new ideas. What came up for both of us was the noisiness of the world (who knew years later that this would be truer than ever). A phrase from one of my older songs comes to mind. "Don't just do something, sit there."

There's a thundering sound inside my heart
I feel with an open palm
It's a yearning that pierces every part
The roaring of noiseless calm

There is something inside that I can trust
Above all commotion and din
It is when I am willing to slow down
And quietly go within

It is cool, it is constant and steady
Life without all the distractions
It's a pond without ripples, a sky without clouds
It is conscious and silent action

There's a thundering sound inside my heart
I feel with an open hand
It's a yearning that pierces every part
Right down to a grain of sand

Even where doubt has found me
I am stronger than suffering and fear
I am more than the imprint that bound me
That I used to survive all these years

David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar**
Justin Ciuche **violin**
Hans-Jörg Maucksch **fretless bass**

10. Just a Wall

© 1990 David Roth

*I had no idea that a song I composed in 1990 would still be relevant today.
Walls may be useful for hanging pictures and holding mirrors, but little else.*

There's a picture of a wall across the TV screen
There are people milling 'round on either side
They've been waiting for the border to come tumbling down
Some for years and others all their lives

The guards receive their orders and the keys are turned
Rusty gates swing slowly open wide
And long forgotten dreams and aspirations are awoken
And take to foot to reach the other side

It's just a wall, but it's kept them in for all this time
Just a wall, but either side is prison
Keep them in or lock them out, it's very much the same
But now the times have changed and changing has begun
It's just a wall and now the wall must come undone

There's a fence between my next door neighbor's house and mine
There are two big dogs on leashes and in chains
There are curtains pulled and doorways closed and secrets kept
And iron bars on many window panes

And these neighbors barely manage "how you doing"?
And the boundaries of the houses are clearly drawn
But there's a thicker line that's carried in the air and no one sees it
And there's little can be done until it's gone

David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar**
Lea Morris **backing vocals**
Hans-Jörg Maucksch **fretless bass**

It's just a wall, but it's kept us in for all this time
Just a wall, a wall of isolation
Now you see it, now you don't, it's very much the same
But now the times have changed and changing has begun
It's just a wall and now the wall must come undone

There's a picture of a wall inside the mirror
A reflection of the hostages inside
There's a child, there's a victim, there's a fool and there's a friend
And the bars are reinforced with fear and pride

But the wall I built around this heart protected me
It was constructed out of innocence and pain
And now it's taking every ounce of strength I have to pull it down
But I'm determined that it won't be built again

It's just a wall, but it's kept me in for all this time
Just a wall, but its usefulness is ended
Change the world or change the mind, it's very much the same
Nothing changes till we're changing one by one
And when we do is when the walls will come undone
Every battle will be won

Every wall will come undone



11. Fill in All the Blanks

© 2017 David Roth

The inspiration for this came from my friend Sloan Wainwright. If you're in any way familiar with my work, it might not surprise where her simple and open-ended writing prompt - "fill in the blank" - took me.

I'm not sure how it happened
Or what I've done to find
Myself right here among you
Here among my kind

Where do I send the greeting card
Expressing all my thanks
Not everybody gets the chance
To fill in all the blanks

I get to make some choices
I get to write the script
Not everybody's privileged
To have this kind of gift

So let me use my platform
In all my earthly days
To take this strength you've given me
To love and lift and raise

To fill in all the blanks, to fill in all the blanks
I have this opportunity to offer up my thanks
And everlasting gratitude to be among your ranks
Thanks for giving me this time to fill in all the blanks

The world's greatest pencil
The world's finest pen
Won't do this world a bit of good
If I don't take a stand

So I'm gonna move that mountain
I'm gonna make my mark
I'm gonna throw a spotlight
On that shadow in the dark

David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar**
Manfred Leuchter **accordion**
Hans-Jörg Maucksch **upright bass**

12. Until We Meet Again

© 2014 David Roth

On the last day of recording this project with Jens, we sat down to play this song just for fun, and something clicked immediately. The piece was inspired by my annual musical tours to Ireland, was written in a pub in County Clare, and felt perfect for wrapping up this collection of music.

The big hand of the mighty clock goes turning fast and faster
Where has the time gone, I don't know, the hourglass no one can master
Gone away is all the past right to this very moment
For now I'll simply raise a glass to all we have in common

And now we go our separate ways
We came as strangers, leave as friends
I wish you well in all your days
Until we meet again

The greatest distance in this world is not from pole to pole
But rather from the head to heart, from soul to soul to soul
And here we are together now, and standing side by side
I offer you my hand and hope I'll see you by and by

For now we go our separate ways
We came as strangers, leave as friends
I wish you well in all your days
Until we meet again

The sun may shine at different times for some and not for others
So bring the light where e'er you go, my sisters and my brothers
May every blade of grass you tread point in your right direction
And every movement that you make rekindle our connection



David Roth **vocal, guitar**
Jens Kommnick **guitar, low whistle**
Lea Morris **backing vocals**
Hans-Jörg Maucksch **fretless bass**



David Roth vocal, guitar
Jens Kommnick guitar, bouzouki, low whistle, aria contra-bass guitar
Lea Morris backing vocals
Manfred Leuchter accordion
Lucile Chaubard cello
Justin Ciuche violin
Hans-Jörg Maucksch fretless bass, upright bass
Beo Brockhausen accordion, mbira, orchestra chimes

Songs 2,3,4,5,6,10,11,12 by David Roth

1 by David Roth & Melinda Wood Allen

7 by Phil Ochs

8 by David Roth & Harold Payne

9 by David Roth & Jan Garrett

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