

BLUEGRASS 101

Song Book

100 Bluegrass songs

Songs compiled by Darcy Whiteside



Northern **BLUEGRASS** Circle Music Society of Edmonton

Nashville Numbering System

	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	VII
C	C	D _m	E _m	F	G ⁷	A _m	B _{bim}
A	A	B _m	C _m	D	E ⁷	F _m	G _{#dim}
G	G	A _m	B _m	C	D ⁷	E _m	F _{#dim}
E	E	F _m	G _m	A	B ⁷	C _m	D _{#dim}
D	D	E _m	F _m	G	A ⁷	B _m	C _{#dim}
of F	F	G _m	A _m	B _b	C ⁷	D _m	E _{dim}
	1	2-	3-	4	5 ⁷	6-	7

CORD FORM

	C	D	E	F	G	A
1	Db	Eb	F	Gb	Ab	Bb
2	D	E	Gb	G	A	B
3	Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C
4	E	Gb	Ab	A	B	Db
5	F	G	A	Bb	C	D
6	Gb	Ab	Bb	B	Db	Eb
7	G	A	B	C	D	E

2021 edition

Table of Contents:

Page 3 – History of Bluegrass
 Page 9 – Bluegrass Instrumentation
 Page 11 – Harmony

Songs

Blue Ridge Cabin Home – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 13
 I’ll Never Shed Another Tear – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 14
 Ocean of Diamonds – Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys – Page 15
 My Walking Shoes – Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys – Page 16
 Don’t This Road Look Rough and Rocky – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 17
 Nine Pound Hammer – Tony Rice – Page 18
 Big Spike Hammer – The Osborne Brothers – Page 19
 Old Home Place – JD Crowe and New South – Page 20
 Your Love is Like a Flower – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 21
 Molly and Tenbrooks – Bill Monroe – Page 22
 Crying Holy – JD Crowe and New South – Page 24
 Ashes of Love – Jim and Jesse – Page 25
 Hit Parade of Love – Jimmy Martin – Page 26
 Nellie Kane – Hot Rize – page 27
 Born With a Hammer in My Hand – Blue Highway – Page 28
 In Despair – Bill Monroe – Page 29
 Drinkin’ Dark Whiskey – Steeldrivers – Page 30
 Mary Ann – Jimmy Martin and Lonesome River Band – Page 31
 Wouldn’t Change You If I Could – Reno and Smiley – Page 32
 Old Salty Dog Blues – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 33
 Cry, Cry Darling – Bill Monroe – Page 34
 I Wonder Where You Are Tonight – Jim and Jesse – Page 35
 On and On – Bill Monroe – Page 36
 Who’s That Knocking At My Door – The Dreadful Snakes – Page 37
 Willow Garden – Osborne Brothers – Page 38
 East Virginia Blues – Stanley Brothers – Page 39
 Misery Loves Company – Johnson Mountain Boys – Page 41
 Sophronie – Jimmy Martin – Page 42
 Tennessee in 1949 – Larry Sparks – Page 43
 Cora is Gone – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 45
 I Wonder How the Old Folks Are at Home – Mac Wiseman – Page 46
 A Hundred Years From Now – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 47
 Blue Night – Hot Rize – Page 48
 I Know You’re Married but I Love You Still – Reno and Smiley – Page 49
 Little Cabin Home on the Hill – Bill Monroe – Page 50
 Please Search Your Heart – Bluegrass Album Band – Page 51
 Knee Deep in Loving You – Bluegrass Cardinals – Page 52
 Lost and I’ll Never Find a Way – Stanley Brothers – Page 53
 Driving Nails in My Coffin – Osborne Brothers – Page 54
 How Mountain Girls Can Love – Stanley Brothers – Page 55
 Bury Me Beneath the Weeping Willow – Skaggs & Rice – Page 56
 I’m Gone, Long Gone – Reno and Smiley – Page 57
 Shady Grove – Doc Watson – Page 58
 I’m Head Over Heels in Love – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 60
 Dark Hollow – The Kentucky Colonels – Page 61
 Roving Gambler – Stanley Brothers – Page 62
 Hard Pressed – Hot Rize – Page 64
 Long Journey Home – The Kentucky Colonels – Page 65
 Teardrops in My Eyes – Osborne Brothers – Page 66
 My Little Girl in Tennessee – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 67
 The White Dove – Stanley Brothers – Page 68
 Dim Lights, Thick Smoke – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 69
 In the Pines – Bill Monroe – Page 70
 In the Gravelyard – Blue Highway – Page 71
 How Long Have I Been Waiting For You – Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver – Page 72
 Hold What’cha Got – Jimmy Martin – Page 73
 Somehow Tonight – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 74
 Handsome Molly – Stanley Brothers – Page 75
 It Hurts To Know – Osborne Brothers – Page 77

Hello City Limits – Red Allen and the Kentuckians – Page 78
 Drink Up and Go Home – Jimmy Martin – Page 79
 Will the Roses Bloom – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 80
 I'm Sittin' on Top of the World – Bill Monroe – Page 81
 You're Running Wild – Louvin Brothers – Page 83
 Thirty Years of Farming – James King – Page 84
 Red Clay Halo – Nashville Bluegrass Band – Page 85
 My Cabin in Caroline – Bill Monroe – Page 87
 We'll Meet Again Sweetheart – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 88
 Whitehouse Blues – Bill Monroe – Page 89
 My Little Georgia Rose – Bill Monroe – Page 90
 Carolina in the Pines – Special Consensus – Page 91
 Somebody Loves You Darling – Jim and Jesse McReynolds – Page 92
 Have a Feast Here Tonight – Monroe Brothers – Page 93
 Yonder Stands Little Maggie – Stanley Brothers – Page 95
 Is It Too Late Now – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 96
 Mr. Engineer – Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys – Page 97
 Rank Stranger – Stanley Brothers – Page 98
 Don't Neglect the Rose – Larry Sparks – Page 99
 Harvest Time – Lost and Found – Page 100
 Blue Moon of Kentucky – Bill Monroe – Page 101
 I'm Using My Bible For a Roadmap – Reno and Smiley – Page 102
 I've Been All Around This World – Hot Rize – Page 103
 I'm Blue I'm Lonesome – Bill Monroe – Page 104
 Back to the Barrooms – J. D. Crowe and the New South – Page 105
 Ridin' That Midnight Train – Stanley Brothers – Page 106
 He Rode All the Way to Texas – Seldom Scene – Page 107
 Your Saddle is Empty Old Pal – Stanley Brothers – Page 108
 I'm Gonna Sleep With One Eye Open – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 109
 Where the Soul of Man Never Dies – Skaggs and Rice – Page 110
 Steam Powered Aereo Plane – John Hartford – Page 111
 Can't You Hear Me Callin' – Bill Monroe – Page 112
 1952 Vincent Black Lightening – Del McCoury Band – Page 113
 Still Feeling Blue – Country Gazette – Page 115
 Fox on the Run – Country Gentlemen – Page 116
 Stone Walls and Steel Bars – Stanley Brothers – Page 117
 With Body and Soul – Bill Monroe – Page 118
 Think of What You've Done – Stanley Brothers – Page 119
 Once More – Osborne Brothers – Page 120
 Roust-a-bout – Flatt and Scruggs – Page 121
 I've Endured – Del McCoury – Page 122
 Wrong Road Again – Joe Val and the New England Boys – Page 123
 Are You Missing Me? – Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys – Page 124
 Rocky Top – The Osborne Brothers – Page 125
 The Fields Have Turned Brown – The Stanley Brothers – Page 126
 The Man in the Middle – Hot Rize – Page 127
 Columbus Stockade Blues – Bill Monroe – Page 128
 My Old Kentucky Home – Vern Williams and Ray Park – Page 129
 Christmas Time's a Comin' – Bill Monroe – Page 130
 Beautiful Star of Bethlehem – Stanley Brothers – Page 131

History of Bluegrass

Bluegrass music is a melding of multiple forms of traditional music to form its own unique genre. The themes, verse/chorus structure and melody of English and Scottish ballads and instrumentals are important components that provide the foundation of the music. The harmony blends of Baptist gospel and the brother harmony groups of the 1930s are also important components of bluegrass music. Finally, the turn-taking between instrument soloist and singer, along with the vital back beat of the blues solidified bluegrass and differentiated this genre from country and old-time music. There are very few genres of music that can be traced back to a specific time frame and individual. Bill Monroe is considered the originator of bluegrass music. Bill Monroe and The Blue Grass Boys; and, to be more exact, the replacement of banjo player Stringbean (David Akeman) with Earl Scruggs in 1945 was the final piece that solidified this new form of music.

Location also played an important role. The Appalachia region of the United States; specifically, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee provided the right influences of music and musicians to allow for this genre to develop and flourish. Scottish settlers in the area brought fiddle tunes and European ballads. The strong religious ties brought the Baptist and Pentecostal gospel music. And the Appalachian region was an area with a significant African-American population (a complex history, African American integration was more prevalent in this region compared to the large plantations in the south). While Bill Monroe was greatly influenced by the fiddle players of the region (including his Uncle Pen), it was Arnold Schultz, a black blues/hillbilly guitar player who played a thumb-style that arguably influenced Bill Monroe the most. The North Carolina region also was home to a number of banjo players. Snuffy Jenkins had not only adapted a three-finger roll (compared to the two-finger roll used by many players in the regions), but also used two metal finger picks and a thumb pick to create a loud, syncopated roll that could be heard above fiddle, mandolins and guitars. His playing (along with other players like Smith Hammett and Rex Brooks) would influence a number of banjo players in North Carolina, including Earl Scruggs, Don Reno and Ralph Stanley.

The Blue Grass Boys consisted of Bill Monroe on mandolin, Chubby Wise on fiddle, Lester Flatt on guitar, Earl Scruggs on banjo and Howard Watts (also known as Cedric Rainwater) on upright bass. Between 1946 and 1947 this band would record 28 songs. In early 1948, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs left the band to form the Foggy Mountain Boys, but in those two years, they laid the foundation for the genre of music we still listen to and play today.

The First Generation

Bill Monroe was already a well-recognized performer before the formation of The Blue Grass Boys. In the 1930s, Bill Monroe was singing with his brother Charlie Monroe as the Monroe Brothers. Brother groups were an important fixture of the early country music of the 1930s – in addition to The Monroe Brothers, there were the Blue-Sky Boys, Callahan Brothers, Dixon Brothers and the Delmore Brothers.

With the formation of The Blue Grass Boys, Bill Monroe toured the southwest portion of the United States and played on The Grand Ole Opry – WSM radio. This music was revolutionary. Musicians

in the region were greatly influenced and started to form their own bands, styling their music closely to Bill Monroe and The Blue Grass Boys.

In 1947, Bill Monroe and The Blue Grass Boys recorded “Molly and Tenbrooks.” In 1948, the Stanley Brothers recorded the same song in this new style (and actually released it before Bill Monroe released his version – resulting in a feud between the two birds in the early days of bluegrass). The Stanley Brothers would be the first band to emulate Monroe’s style of music, but many would soon follow.

Some of the first generation of bluegrass musicians would spend time in Bill Monroe’s band, leaving for personal or financial reasons to form their own bands. Others would hear the music on records or the radio or at live shows and try to copy the sound. Soon there were many bands imitating Bill Monroe’s style – and people started to call this new form of music “bluegrass.”

Other bands from this first generation include:

- Flatt and Scruggs and The Foggy Mountain Boys
- Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys
- Jim and Jesse McReynolds
- Hylo Brown and the Timberliners
- The Osborne Brothers
- Red Smiley and Don Reno
- Buzz Busby
- Mac Wiseman
- The Lilly Brothers

In the late 1940s and the early 1950s, bluegrass music packed theatres, sold millions of records and made these musicians into superstars.

However, in the late 1950s, rock and roll and country music replaced bluegrass music, and some of the first generation bluegrass musicians would cross over into country music or retire.

Migration

An important development in bluegrass music was musicians from the Appalachia region moved to other places in the United States, performing, teaching and influencing musicians in other regions to play bluegrass music. This not only brought bluegrass music to other areas, it would allow for evolution of bluegrass – an expansion of the definition and the creation of sub-genres.

Buzz Busby, born in Louisiana, was a mandolin player greatly influenced by Bill Monroe. In 1951, he moved to Washington D.C. He played and taught this new style of music and influenced banjo players Eddie Adcock and Bill Emerson, guitar players Charlie Waller and Dudley Connell and mandolin player John Duffy. Charlie Waller, Eddie Adcock and John Duffy would form The Country Gentlemen. Dudley Connell would eventually form The Johnson Mountain Boys.

Vern Williams was born in Arkansas in 1930 and moved to California in 1952. There he met up with Ray Park, another transplant from Arkansas. They were able to find a banjo player, Luther Riley, and Vern & Ray and the Carroll County Boys brought bluegrass music to the California area. The Kentucky Colonels, Laurie Lewis, Chris Hillman, Herb Pedersen and many others were greatly

influenced by Vern and Ray.

There are later examples of transplants as well influencing regions. Tim O'Brien was born in West Virginia, but moved to Colorado in the 1970s. In 1978, Tim would join Pete Wernick on banjo, Charles Sawtelle on guitar and Nick Forster on electric bass. Their band, Hot Rize, would inspire Colorado musicians, and today a hot bed of great bluegrass bands coming from that region.

The Folk Revival

In the late 1950s, one of the ways bluegrass bands survived was playing the smaller college circuits. In the early 1960s, there was a folk revival, where young people started to rediscover and explore early Americana music, such as The Carter Family, the Skillet Lickers, blues musicians such as Robert Johnson and Huddie Ledbetter and, of course, bluegrass musicians.

Some of these young people were interested in more than just listening and discovering the music. They wanted to learn to play. The Kentucky Colonels, with Clarence White on guitar, Roland White on mandolin, Billy Ray Latham on banjo, Scotty Stoneman on fiddle and Roger Bush on bass were a band greatly influenced by the folk revival, and specifically, bluegrass. The Dillards were another band. Even Jerry Garcia played banjo and bluegrass music before forming his band The Grateful Dead (and would continue to play bluegrass music - for example, on the album "Old and In the Way" with Peter Rowan, David Grisman, John Kahn and Vassar Clements).

Another important band from this time frame was The Country Gentlemen. While they formed as early as 1957, they solidified their sound in the early 1960s. Instead of playing a high-lonesome sound of Bill Monroe, they played a more mellow form of bluegrass, incorporating modern folk songs with bluegrass instrumentation. They would greatly influence a new generation of bluegrass musicians and broaden the scope of how bluegrass music was defined and played.

The Bluegrass Festival

In 1953, Bill Monroe hired Carlton Haney as a booking agent for his band. In 1955, Carlton also managed Reno and Smiley. In the early 1960s, Carlton started to lump together bluegrass and country acts on the same slate.

In 1965, with the help of Ralph Rinzler, Carlton Haney produced the first weekend-long bluegrass music festival. The Fincastle Bluegrass Festival was held at Cantrell's Horse Farm in Fincastle, Virginia. It would lay down the format for bluegrass festivals.

In the 1970s, bluegrass festivals started to pop up across North America. These festivals provided an opportunity for audience members to see multiple bluegrass bands in one day. Additionally, they brought together budding musicians who would find corners to play with other musicians, wanting to emulate the sound they heard on stage.

Sometimes the bluegrass stars would join the parking lot pickers. And the sharing of songs and licks would be passed from one player to the next. These festivals would be the birthplace of many new

bluegrass bands.

Another important factor is headliners would have the opportunity to hear bands from other areas. Sometimes, these headliners would “poach” players from other bands (or hear a picker in a parking lot). This created what could be considered an “apprenticeship,” where musicians would learn from an older bandleader before moving up to a more successful bluegrass band, or for that musician to leave and start their own band.

Newgrass

In bluegrass, there is a push and pull between those who hold on to the tradition of the music with those who try to push the boundaries of the music.

In the late 60s and early 70s, there were musicians who were abandoning the strict confines that traditionalists used to define bluegrass music. These musicians were incorporating jazz, calypso, reggae and other genres to redefine bluegrass music.

John Hartford’s album *Aereo-Plain* could be considered the first Newgrass album (released in 1971). The band consisted of John Hartford on banjo, Norman Blake and Randy Scruggs on guitar, Vassar Clements on fiddle and Tut Taylor on dobro. Commercially, it was a failure. However, the album expanded the definition of bluegrass and would have a huge impact on other musicians.

One of those musicians greatly influenced by John Hartford was Sam Bush. As a teen, Sam won multiple oldtime fiddle contests. In 1969, he joined Wayne Stewart and Alan Munde (later of *Country Gazette*) and recorded a more traditional-style instrumental album titled *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. However, it was his band *Bluegrass Alliance*, which later reformed as *New Grass Revival*, that really stretched the genre of bluegrass music.

The band would undergo a number of different personnel changes. Through all the changes, the band defined a new sub-genre of bluegrass music called Newgrass. The songs would sometimes result in extended free-style jams that would go on for five minutes or longer. Some of the songs were heavily arranged with complicated key changes and time signature changes. *New Grass Revival* would greatly influence yet another generation of bluegrass musicians. It also expanded the types of music that people would play with the bluegrass band instrumentation. It also divided some people into two camps – traditional and progressive. This division and debate of what defines bluegrass still exists today.

Television and movies

Television was a huge industry in the California region and offered great opportunities for musicians when shows wanted to feature bluegrass music. Sometimes the music was comic relief, and sometimes the music was presented in a more serious fashion. Three television shows would have an impact on a generation of future bluegrass musicians who spent a lot of time in front of the television set.

The Andy Griffith Show was a show about a small-town sheriff. Very wholesome, the lovable Andy Griffith was a singing sheriff and would occasionally pull out a guitar to sing. Two bands would be featured on the Andy Griffith Show – The Kentucky Colonels (called The Country Boys) and The Dillards (called The Darlings).

Two other television shows also featured the banjo. Petticoat Junction and the spin off, Green Acres, featured bluegrass music as theme songs.

The television show with the biggest impact was The Beverly Hillbillies. Set in Beverly Hills, this show featured a backwoods family who struck it rich in oil, and the culture clash between hillbillies and “city folk.” This show ran from 1962 to 1971 and was the number one show in 1962 to 1964. Not only did it feature bluegrass music as the theme song, but dispersed throughout the series you could hear banjo music. And Flatt and Scruggs made guest appearances. Many people heard bluegrass music for the first time watching the television series “The Beverly Hillbillies.” Bela Fleck is an example. He became interested in banjo as a result of hearing the music on “The Beverly Hillbillies,” and his grandfather bought him a banjo at the age of 15.

Another movie with a huge impact on bluegrass was the 1972 movie Deliverance. A dark drama set in the northern Georgia wilderness, an early scene showed a city man (Ronnie Cox) playing with a banjo-playing country boy. The song Duelling Banjos would go to number two on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1973 and cause many people to seek out the banjo.

Other movies that featured bluegrass music were Bonnie and Clyde (Foggy Mountain Breakdown) and, more recently, O’ Brother Where Art Thou (which will be discussed later). Films and television bring bluegrass music to a broader audience, resulting in increased sales of bluegrass music and new people seeking to learn to play.

Back to Tradition

In the 1980s, there was a strong push to bring bluegrass back to its roots. Some of the musicians responsible for pushing the genre (Doyle Lawson and Tony Rice) formed a “super” band to perform some of the music from the first generation of bluegrass stars and released it as an album. J.D. Crowe on banjo, Doyle Lawson on mandolin, Bobby Hick on fiddle and Todd Phillips on bass in 1981 recorded “The Bluegrass Album.” The album consisted of bluegrass standards played in a style resembling the late 1940s and early 1950s style of bluegrass.

The Johnson Mountain Boys were another band that not only played like the first generation of bluegrass musicians, but dressed and had stage banter that emulated the early bluegrass musicians. Formed in 1978 in the Washington D.C. area, it was comprised of Dudley Connell on guitar and lead vocals, Richard Underwood on banjo (later replaced by Tom Adams), Eddie Stubbs on fiddle, Eddie D’Zmura on mandolin and Larry Robbins on bass (later replaced by Marshall Willborn).

Nashgrass

In the late 1980s, early 1990s there was resurgence in country music – which resulted in a renewed interest in bluegrass music. Nashville spawned a number of bluegrass musicians that resulted in a more polished, sophisticated sound that honed their skills in a studio rather than onstage touring and playing colleges and music festivals. Voices became softer with a tighter blend, and instrumentation became cleaner and more precise. Click tracks were used in studios, resulting in a more uniform sound.

Some late 1980s, early 1990s bluegrass bands include:

- Nashville Bluegrass Band
- Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver
- IIIrd Tyme Out
- Lonesome River Band
- Blue Highway
- Alison Krauss and Union Station

Many of these bands had not played with the First Generation of bluegrass musicians. Many of them were studio musicians, and some had post-secondary education in music. This resulted in them having very different ideas about music compared to musicians growing up in the Appalachia region.

O' Brother Where Art Thou

In 2000, The Coen Brothers released a movie called “O’ Brother Where Art Thou.” The soundtrack, produced by T-Bone Burnett, featured songs from the movie, styled more in an old-time and early country style than bluegrass. However, many of the musicians were bluegrass stars (Alison Krauss, Dan Tyminski, John Hartford, The Cox Family, The Whites, Norman Blake and Ralph Stanley). The soundtrack sold millions of copies and won Grammy Album of the Year in 2002.

The International Bluegrass Music Association recognized the potential of this album and started to push bluegrass concerts, albums and featured artists (and friends) at events across the world. Older bluegrass musicians (such as Ralph Stanley and Del McCoury) were revered. And, once again, an entire generation were exposed to bluegrass music.

Progressive Acoustic

A new breed of bluegrass bands started to form. Some could be labelled as “Progressive Acoustic,” pushing the boundaries once again of what bluegrass music is, such as “The Punch Brothers.” Others take influences from other genres, such as jam bands like The Grateful Dead, such as Yonder Mountain Stringband and The Greencards. Still others are drawn to roots music prior to bluegrass, and incorporate oldtime music into their playing, sometimes combined with newer influences, such as the bands “Crooked Still” and “Old Crow Medicine Show.”

There is another group as well that combines bluegrass with punk – bands such as The Devil Makes Three.

Bluegrass Instrumentation

There are two important things to remember regarding bluegrass instrumentation, from a rhythm perspective.

One is the “back beat.” Most bluegrass songs are in 4/4 time, meaning four beats to a measure. The emphasis is on beats 2 and 4 (similar to rock and roll music). This differentiates bluegrass from country and old time music, where typically the beats are on 1 and 3.

Two is that when bluegrass was first being played, the ultimate goal was to play on the stage of the Grand Old Opry. And drums were not allowed on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry in the late 40s. Therefore, the instruments had to play both a melodic and a percussive role.

At the root is the rhythm “boom CHICK.”

Instrumentally, it’s important to understand the melody is NOT done in unison. Vocally or instrumentally, there is only one source of melody. The other instruments (including voice) are either playing harmony (counter melodies) or providing rhythm.

Guitar

The guitar, along with the bass, provides the foundation for the rhythm of bluegrass.

Much of the guitar rhythm is based on Mother Maybelle Carter’s guitar playing. Both Lester Flatt and Mother Maybelle played guitar in a “boom CHICK” pattern. The “boom” was a single-string pluck of the root note of the chord, alternating with the fifth, with a strum in between (the “CHICK”). The strum was the louder of the two sounds. So root-strum; fifth-strum.

On the “CHICK” you can also do an up-strum as you go back to playing the “boom,” which creates a “boom-CHICK-a” beat.

You want a hard pick, and you want to play closer to the bridge than the neck of the guitar (typically between the sound hole and the bridge). The guitar of choice is typically a dreadnought. The combination of this provides a sharper attack from the initial strum, and a bright, loud sound.

Banjo

The banjo may provide a “vamp” on beats two and four – a pluck of strings that is quickly dampened by lightly lifting up the fingers of the left hand (but keeping them on the strings). Mostly, the bluegrass banjo is providing the “drive” by using a roll-pattern of sixteenth notes.

The banjo can play a staccato-type rhythm, with each note getting the same amount of time – like a metronome (da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da). Or, it can provide a swing or a “bounce” by lengthening the first note (doo-da-doo-da-doo-da-doo-da-doo-da).

Mandolin

Rhythmically, the mandolin plays the role of the snare drum. Similar to banjo, a snap on the off-chord with fingers muting the strings provide a snare-like sound on beats two and four.

The mandolin can also play counter-melodies to the lead vocals, or a “tremolo,” a fast-strum pattern, during breaks in singing.

Fiddle

The fiddle is the instrument that has sustain (all other instruments have a loud “attack” with a quick “decay” in regards to a sound wave).

The fiddle can be bowed, typically on the third or the fifth in the root of the chord – holding this note allows for a sustained note through chords. The fiddle can also play counter melodies (harmony) to the lead.

Alternately, by striking a string close to the frog of the bow, you can get a vamp, similar to the mandolin or banjo vamp (particularly effective when the mandolin is not playing a vamp).

Resophonic guitar

The resophonic guitar, sometimes called the dobro, can do rolls similar to a banjo, and a vamp similar to mandolin. It also has more sustain than a guitar or banjo, so it can hold notes, or slide and provide sustain when a fiddle isn’t present, or when a fiddle is not playing “long and low.” It can emulate a pedal steel guitar, similar to early country music, for slower songs.

Upright bass

The bass is the only instrument that is emphasizing beats one and three. Beat one is the root of the chord. Beat three is the fifth. So if the chord is G – beat one the bass is playing a G-note; and on beat three the bass player plays a D-note.

The bass may also do a “walking” bass, doing a pentatonic scale on each quarter note. The bass player plays a similar role to the bass drum in rock and roll.

Harmony

To provide very basic theory - there are 12 equally-spaced notes in one octave – each separated by a semi-tone (one semi-tone equals one fret distance on a fretted instrument).

So in a G chromatic scale:

G, G#, A, A#, B, C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#

In a standard scale, there are 7 notes (Do-Re-Me-Fa-So-La-Te).

The semi-tone separations between these notes are as follows:

2-2-1-2-2-2-1.

So a G scale is:

G, A, B, C, D, E, F# and G (one octave above the first note).

Major chord

A major chord is made up of the root, the third note in the standard scale and the fifth note in the standard scale.

For example, the G-chord is made up of the “root” – the first note (G), the third note (B) and the fifth note (D).

Harmony singing

Understanding the chord is vital in having an understanding of harmony. In three-part harmony, you want to be singing the intervals that make “blend” or a pleasing sound, which is directly related to the major chord.

NOTE: In classically trained music, tenor and baritone relate to a vocal range. In bluegrass, “tenor” refers to a note that is a third (sometimes a fourth) interval from the lead note. The baritone is a fifth (sometimes a sixth) interval from the lead note.

In the key of G:

If the lead singer is singing a “B-note.” The “tenor” would be singing the “D-note” and the baritone would be singing the “G-note.”

If the lead singer is singing a “G-note.” The tenor would be singing the “B-note” and the baritone would be singing the “D note”

If the lead singer is singing a “D-note.” The tenor would be singing the “G-note” and the baritone would be singing the “B-note.”

Notice that all three of these examples create the sound of a major chord.

When you go up a note, each singer progresses to the next note in the standard scale. So, in the above example, if the person singing a “G-note” goes up one note (two semi-tones to an “A-note,” the person singing the “D-note” goes up two semi-tones to an “E-note,” but the person singing the “B-note” only goes up ONE semi-tone to a “C-note.”

Changing a chord:

When you change a chord, your scale changes. Therefore, the intervals between harmony notes may change.

A standard C-scale:

C, D, E, F, G, A, B

Notice it is slightly different from the G-scale (The F is sharp in the G-scale).

The major chord for C is comprised of the “C-note,” “E-note” and “G-note.”

So, if the lead is singing a “G-note” with a C-chord, the tenor is singing a “C-note” and the baritone is singing the “E-note.” Compare that to a G-chord where the lead is singing a G-note – the tenor would be singing a “B-note” and the baritone the “D-note.”

Harmony stacking

Blue Ridge Cabin Home

Key of Bb, 126 BPM

Louise Certain and Gladys Stacey (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1955)

I	IV
There's a well beaten path on this old mountainside	
V	I
Where I wandered when I was a lad	
	IV
And I wandered alone to the place I call home	
V	I
In those Blue Ridge hills far away	

Oh I love those hills of old Virginia
 From those Blue Ridge hills I did roam
 When I die won't you bury me on the mountain
 Far away near my Blue Ridge mountain home

Now my thoughts wander back to the ramshackle shack
 In those Blue Ridge hills far away
 My mother and dad they're laid there to rest
 They are sleeping in peace together there

Chorus

I return to that old cabin home with a sigh
 I've been longing for days gone by
 When I die won't you bury me on that old mountainside
 Make my resting place upon the hills so high

Chorus

Chorus

Credited to "Certain and Stacey," the maiden names of the wives of Earls Scruggs and Lester Flatt, this song was likely written by Lester Flatt.

This song was recorded by Flatt and Scruggs on September 2, 1955 and is found on the album "Foggy Mountain Jamboree." Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so their instruments were tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So while this song is in the key of Bb, they would have been playing in A positions. Other notable recordings include The Osborne Brothers album "Bluegrass Collection" and JD Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips – The Bluegrass Album.

This is a classic "jam" song. Originally, the chorus was a duet (lead and high tenor). However, many times, it is sung as a trio on the chorus.

I'll Never Shed Another Tear

Key of G#, 124 BPM

Lester Flatt (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1949)

I IV I
I used to sit alone at night and worry little darling
V
For I thought you meant the world to me
I IV I
But now things have changed and those days are gone forever
V I
So I'll never shed another tear

I'll never shed another tear now I don't care what happens
You have proved your love untrue to me
There's nothing you can do that will ever change my feelings
So I'll never shed another tear

With a broken heart I'll never forget the vows we made together
The many times you told me not to fear
But now you've forgotten and you've left me here forever
So I'll never shed another tear

Chorus

Now you should have told me dear that you was only fooling
Then I'd never learn to love you so
Then I wouldn't have all these heartaches my darling
Dreading the day I see you go

Chorus

This song was recorded by Flatt and Scruggs December 11, 1949. It can be found on the album “Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs and The Foggy Mountain Boys” (1959), or “The Complete Mercury Sessions.” Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so their instruments were tuned to G# (to better match Lester’s voice). To play this song with the original recording, you may wish to retune. Another notable recording is from The Bluegrass Album Volume II (JD Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips).

Originally recorded as a duet with tenor harmony throughout the chorus. In “jam” situations it may be sung as a trio.

Ocean of Diamonds

Key of F, 170 BPM

Clifford Carnahan (ver. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, 1958)

I IV
Some people drink champagne out under the stars
V I
While others drink wine leaning over a bar
IV
But all that I need dear to make me feel fine
V I
Is to know that your love will forever be mine

IV I
I give a ocean of diamonds a world filled with flowers
V I
To hold you closely for just a few hours
IV
Hear you whisper softly that you love me too
V I
Would change all the dark clouds to the bluest of blue

I don't drink their champagne and I don't drink their wine
So if you refuse me, my poor heart will pine
I'll be so lonely till the day that I die
And as long as I live dear, you'll still hear me cry

Chorus

Clifford Carnahan was a fiddler and songwriter, writing more than 200 songs. However, he never wrote any of them down, but was able to recite them from memory.

Originally recorded in April of 1958 as the B-side to "Sophronie." A live recording can be found on the album "Don't Cry to Me – Songs from the Film 'King of Bluegrass.'" Another notable recording is JD Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips – The Bluegrass Album.

The original recording used a snare drum to further accent the mandolin chop on the off-beats.

Originally sung in three-part harmony on the chorus.

My Walking Shoes

Key of B, 130 BPM

Jimmy Martin and Paul Williams (ver. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, 1960)

I
My walking shoes don't fit me anymore
V
My walking shoes don't fit me anymore
I IV I
Stay on your side of town, honey I won't be around
V I
My walking shoes don't fit me anymore

I
It's a long way from here to over yonder
V
My feet they're getting mighty sore
I IV
I ain't coming back you've made your mind to wander
I V I
My walking shoes don't fit me anymore

Chorus

I'll be a long time gone from you baby
You'll never hear me knock upon your door
I thought you were worth it once but I was crazy
My walking shoes don't fit me anymore

Chorus

Chorus

Paul Williams was the guitarist and lead singer for the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers before joining Jimmy Martin in 1957. Paul on mandolin co-wrote a number of songs with Jimmy Martin, including "Hold Watcha Got" and this song, "My Walking Shoes."

Recorded by Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys in August of 1960 and released on the album "Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys sing Widow Maker," but is more famously known from the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's album "Will the Circle Be Unbroken." Another notable recording is the album "Here Today," by David Grisman, Emery Gord Jr., Herb Pedersen, Jim Buchanan and Vince Gill.

Originally sung with the chorus in three-part harmony.

Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky

Key of G#, 144 PBM

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1954)

I IV I
Darling, I have come to tell you

V
Though it almost breaks my heart

I IV I
But before the morning darling

V I
We'll be many miles apart

IV I
Don't this road look rough and rocky

V
Don't that sea look wide and deep

I IV I
Don't my baby look the sweetest

V I
When she's in my arms asleep

Don't you hear the night birds crying
Far across the deep blue sea
While of others you are thinking
Won't you sometimes think of me

Chorus

One more kiss before I leave you
One more kiss before we part
You have caused me lots of trouble
Darling you have broke my heart

Chorus

Credited to Flatt and Scruggs, they likely learned the song from a 1936 recording by the Blue Sky Boys, "Cant You Hear the Night Bird Crying." Portions of the lyrics come from multiple sources, such as "Little Bunch of Roses," "Little Darling" and "Last Gold Dollar" from the early 1900s.

Originally recorded May 19, 1954 and released in November as a B-side (the A-side was "Till the End of the World Rolls Round." Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so their instruments were tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). To play this song with the original recording, you may wish to retune.

Originally sung through the entire song in three-part harmony.

Nine Pound Hammer

Merle Travis (ver. Tony Rice, 1979)

Key of A, 120 BPM

I IV
Well the nine pound hammer, is a little too heavy

I V I
It's for my size, honey for my size

Well roll on buddy, don't you roll so slow
How can I roll, when the wheels won't go

It's a long way to Harlan, and a long way to Hazard
Just to get a little brew, just to get a little brew

Chorus

Well it ain't one hammer, that's in this tunnel
That'll ring like mine, that'll ring like mine

Chorus

I'm goin' on a mountain, yeah to see my baby
And I ain't comin' back, no I ain't comin' back

Now roll on buddy, pull a load of coal
How can I pull, when the wheels won't roll?

Well the nine pound hammer, is a little too heavy
It's for my size, honey for my size

Chorus

Traced back, this song is a prison, logging and railroad song that shares verses with "Take This Hammer," "Swannanoa Tunnel" and "Asheville Junction." Versions have been recorded by Mississippi John Hurt, Lead Belly, and a number of prisoner recordings by John and Alan Lomax as part of the folk recordings for the Library of Congress.

In 1946, Merle Travis recorded a fingerpicked version that would better solidify some of the lyrics. Versions have been recorded by Osborne Brothers, Jim and Jesse McReynolds and, of course, Bill Monroe ("Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys – Bluegrass Ramble," released in 1962).

This version is Tony Rice's version from the album "Manzanita" released in 1979. On this version, there is three-part harmony on the chorus. Sometimes the harmony is done as a "round" on verses.

Big Spike Hammer

Bobby Osborne and Pete Goble (ver. Osborne Brothers, 1965)

Key of B, 122 BPM

I VIm
 Can't you hear the rattle of my big spike hammer
 IV VIm
 Lord it's busting my side
 I VIm IV
 I've done all I can do to keep that woman
 VIm V
 Still she's not satisfied

Hey hey Della Mae
 Why do you treat me this 'a way
 Hey hey Della Mae
 I'll get even some day

I'm the best hammer swinger in this big section gang
 Big Bill Johnson is my name
 Lord this hammer that I swing for a dollar and a half a day
 It's all for my Della Mae

Chorus

Now I've been lots of places, not much I ain't done
 There's still a lot of things I'd like to see
 Big spike hammer that I swing or the woman that I love
 Yeah one's gonna be the death of me

Chorus

Big spike hammer, big spike hammer

Pete Goble is one of bluegrass' most prolific songwriters, penning Colleen Malone, Tennessee 1949 and Blue Virginia Blues, just to name a few.

This song was recorded by the Osborne Brothers in October 7, 1965 in Nashville and released on the album "Up This Hill and Down" in 1966. It was also recorded by Doc and Merle Watson in 1967 on the album "Home Sweet Home." Additionally, it is on the third release by the Bluegrass Album Band, California Connection (Volume 3).

Typically it is sung with three-part harmony on the chorus.

Old Home Place

Key of Bb, 121 BPM

Mitch Jayne and Dean Webb (ver. J.D. Crowe and The New South, 1975)

I III IV I
It's been ten long years since I left my home

V
In the hollow where I was born

I III IV I
Where the cool fall nights make the wood smoke rise

V I
And the foxhunter blows his horn

I fell in love with a girl from the town
I thought that she would be true
I ran away to Charlottesville
And worked in a sawmill too

V I
What have they done to the old home place

II V
Why did they tear it down

I III IV I
And why did I leave the plow in the field

V I
And look for a job in the town

Well the girl ran off with somebody else
The tariffs took all my pay
And hereb I stand where the old home stood
Before they took it away

Now the geese fly south and the cold wind moans
As I stand here and hang my head
I've lost my love I've lost my home
And now I wish that I was dead

Chorus

Chorus

Originally recorded by The Dillard's on their first Elektra album in 1963, "Back Porch Bluegrass." It was written by the bass player, Mitch Jayne, and the mandolin player, Dean Webb. Arguably, the more notable recording is by J.D. Crowe & The New South in 1975 on the self-titled album "J.D. Crowe & The New South," also called "The Brown Album" or Rounder 0044 (after the label's catalog number).

Your Love is Like a Flower

Key of Bb, 120 BPM

Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs and Everett Lilly (Ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1953)

I IV
It was long, long ago in the moonlight
I V
We were sitting on the banks of the stream
I IV
When you whispered so sweetly, I love you
I V I
As the waters murmured a tune

Oh they tell me your love is like a flower
In the springtime blossoms so fair
In the fall when it withers away dear
And they tell me that's the way of your love

I remember the night, little darling
We were talking of days gone by
When you told me you always would love me
That your love for me would never die

Chorus

It was spring when you whispered these words dear
The flowers were all blooming so fair
But today as the snow falls around us
I can see that your love is not there

Chorus

Mandolin player Everett Lilly was involved in writing this song (with Lester and Earl). Everett played mandolin with Flatt and Scruggs, and would later join his brother Bea, Tex Logan and Don Stover as The Lilly Brothers.

The song was first recorded on August 30, 1953 and is available on the album "Foggy Mountain Jamboree," released in 1957. Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so Earls' banjo was tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So while this song is in the key of Bb, they would have been playing in A positions. Tony Rice, J.D. Crowe, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips also recorded this song on "Bluegrass Album, Vol. 2."

Originally, Flatt and Scruggs sang the chorus as a duo. The Bluegrass Album Band (and many other bands to follow) sang the chorus as a trio.

Molly and Tenbrooks

Key of B, 134 BPM

Traditional (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys)

I IV
Run ol' Molly run, run ol' Molly run
I V I
Tenbrooks gonna beat you to the bright shinin' sun
V I
To the bright shinin' sun O Lord to the bright shinin' sun

Tenbrooks was a big bay horse he wore that shaggy mane
He run all around Memphis he beat the Memphis train
Beat the Memphis train O Lord beat the Memphis train

Tenbrooks said to Molly what made your head so red?
Runnin' in the hot sun puts a fever in my head
Fever in my head O Lord fever in my head

Molly said to Tenbrooks you're lookin' mighty squirrel
Tenbrooks said to Molly I'm a-leavin' this old world
Leavin' this old world O Lord leavin' this old world

Out in California where Molly done as she pleased
Come back to old Kentucky got beat with all ease
Beat with all ease O Lord beat with all ease

The women all a-laughin' the children all a cryin'
Men's all a-hollerin' old Tenbrooks is flyin'
Old Tenbrooks a-flyin' O Lord old Tenbrooks is flyin'

Kyper Kyper you're not a-ridin' right
Molly's a beatin' old Tenbrooks clear out sight
Clear out of sight O Lord clear out of sight

Kyper Kyper Kyper my son
Give old Tenbrooks the bridle and let old Tenbrooks run
Let old Tenbrooks run O Lord let old Tenbrooks run

Go and catch old Tenbrooks and hitch him in the shade
We're gonna bury old Molly in a coffin ready made
Coffin ready made O Lord coffin ready made

A fictional account of July 4, 1878 match race between Ten Broeck (a Kentucky horse) versus Mollie McCarthy (a California horse) at what is now known as Churchill Downs. It was written in the late 1800s. The Carver Boys recorded a version "Tim Brook" in 1929. It is also known as "The Racehorse Song."

Bill Monroe recorded the song on October 28, 1947, but didn't release it until 1949 (as a B-side – the A-side was "I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky"). In 1948, the Stanley Brothers recorded a version in the same style, making this the first bluegrass song released by someone other than Bill Monroe (which lead to a lengthy feud between Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers). Bill Monroe would record it again with Don Stover on the banjo. Country Gazette did a version on the album "Hello Operator, This is..." and J.D. Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips recorded a version on "The Bluegrass Album."

This song typically has no harmony, and the singer sings two verses, followed by an instrumental break.

Cryin' Holy

Key of B, 136 BPM

Traditional (ver. J.D. Crowe and The New South, 1975)

I
Cryin' holy unto the Lord

IV I
Cryin' holy unto the Lord

Lord if I could I surely would
V I
Stand on that rock where Moses stood

Lord I ain't no stranger now
Lord I ain't no stranger now
I've been introduced to the Father and the Son
Lord I ain't no stranger now

Chorus

Sinners run and hide your face
Sinners run and hide your face
Sinners run to the rock and hide your face
Rock cried out no hiding place

Chorus

Chorus

The Carter Family recorded a version of this song in 1930 with the title "On the Rock Where Moses Stood." However, it dates back further, with various black jubilee and quartet singers performing this song (it was recorded in 1924 by the Norfolk Jubilee Quartet). It likely came to A.P. Carter from Lesley Riddle, a black musician who worked with A.P. Carter, travelling around North Carolina and acting as "human tape recorder," memorizing the melody while A.P. Carter recorded the lyrics.

Irene Amburgey is sometimes credited with lyrics (later would change her name to Martha Carson)

Bill Monroe would sing this as a quartet with minimal instrumentation (typically guitar and bass). Flatt and Scruggs would also perform this as a duet. J.D. Crowe and The New South recorded this song (with drums and piano) on the self-titled "J.D. Crowe & The New South" album, sometimes known as the "Brown Album" or "Rounder 0044."

Sung as a quartet or a trio on the choruses, sometimes with an echo of "Holy Unto the Lord" during the first part of the chorus while the lead holds "holy" and "Lord."

Ashes of Love

Key of A, 124 BPM

Jack Anglin, Jim Anglin and Johnnie Wright (ver. Jim and Jesse And The Virginia Boys, 1974)

I IV I V
Ashes of love, cold as ice

I

You made the debt and I'll pay the price

IV I V

Our love is gone, there's no doubt

V

Ashes of love, the flame burned out

The love light that gleamed in your eyes
Has gone out to my surprise
We said goodbye my heart bled
I can't revive our love is dead

Chorus

I trusted you, our love would stand
Your every wish was my command
My heart tells me I must forget
I loved you then I love you yet

Chorus

Written by Johnnie and Jack, a popular country music act in 1940s and 50s (Johnnie Wright and Jack Anglin). Johnnie and Jack first released this song in 1951. This song has been covered by many country artists, including Kitty Wells, New Riders of the Purple Sage and The Desert Rose Band.

Jim and Jesse released it on their album “Superior Sounds of Bluegrass” in 1974. Jim and Jesse would straddle the gap between bluegrass and country music. Jesse McReynolds, on mandolin, developed two unique methods of mandolin picking – “crosspicking” and “split string.” His crosspicking method was “up-up-down” which created a very unique, syncopated roll and is counter to typical guitar crosspicking, which is typically played “down-down-up.”

They also released this album on Jim and Jesse Show (Live in Japan), released in 1976.

The chorus is typically sung as a duo.

Hit Parade of Love

Key of B, 137 BPM

Jimmy Martin and Wade Birchfield (ver. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, 1956)

I IV
From what I've been a hearing dear you really got it made
V I
You've got a lot of fellers on your lovers hit parade
IV
And if I could be your number one, well I don't know what I'll do
V I
I wanna be plum up to the top I'm so in love with you

V I
On your hit parade of love I know I'll never stop
IV V
I've got a long long way to climb before I reach the top
I IV
But if I do get there soon I'll really have it made
V I
Then I'll know I'm number one on your lover's hit parade

Now it's your heart I'm after dear 'cause it's so nice and kind
Another one to take your place would be so hard to find
So put your arms around me and be my turtle dove
Then I'll feel like I'm number one on your hit parade of love

Chorus

Now if we work together like all good lovers should
We can make a go of it everything will turn out good
We can have so much fun we'll really have it made
Then I'll know I'm number one on your lover's hit parade

Chorus

While Jimmy Martin shares credit, Detroit native likely penned the majority of this song. Wade Birchfield had come to Detroit from the mountains of North Carolina (him and his twin Brother Wiley were active in music since the late 40s). There he met Jimmy Martin. In the summer of 1954, Jimmy had teamed up with Sonny and Bobby Osbrone and was playing the Detroit area, recording for RCA Victor. The Osbornes and Jimmy Martin broke up in August 1955.

This song was first recorded in May of 1956 by Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys. This was one of the first four songs recorded when Jimmy first signed with Decca (the other three were "Before the Sun Goes Down," "Skip, Hop and Wobble" and "You'll Be A Lost Ball." This was before Paul Williams and J.D. Crowe joined the band (Porky Hutchins played banjo and Tommy Vaden played fiddle on these four songs). Other recordings include a live version by Seldom Scene off their "Live at the Cellar Door" album, recorded in 1975. Rhonda Vincent also release a version on her 2008 album "Good Thing Going."

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

Born With a Hammer in My Hand

Key of B, 131 BPM

Shawn Lane and Tim Stafford (ver. Blue Highway, 1999)

I V I
I was born with a hammer in my hand

IV
It's the kind of life I doubt you'd understand

I
I'd give anything just to hear the cold steel ring

V
I was born with a hammer in my hand

Swingin' steel's the only life I've known
I've never been afraid to be alone
Hope my Mama understands I'll always be a working man
Cause I was born with a hammer in my hand

John Henry was a steel-drivin' man
You could hear his hammer ring across the land
But before the steam drill came, John Henry knew my name
Cause I was born with a hammer in my hand

The bossman tries to break a good man's back
It takes thirty men to lay a mile of track
If the shaker holds the line they'll be thirty miles behind me
I was born with a hammer in my hand

John Henry was a steel drivin' man
You could hear his hammer ring across the land
But if you put us side by side, he'd have to run and hide
Cause I was born with a hammer in my hand

Yes I'll die with a hammer in my hand

Written by the Shawn Lane and Tim Stafford, mandolin and guitar players for Blue Highway. This song was nominated for the 2000 IBMA Song of the Year.

Recorded in 1999 by Blue Highway, shortly after banjo player, Jason Burleson, had left the band. Tom Adams was the banjo player on this recording (Jason would go back to the band in September of 2000). It is on the self-titled album "Blue Highway."

There is no vocal harmony in this song.

In Despair

Key of D, 116 BPM

Joe Ehr (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1957)

I
 You made me love you, you made me want you
 IV I
 And now I need you all the time

 My heart is sad and I'm so lonely
 V I
 Each night and day you're on my mind

 IV I
 You broke me heart my little darling
 V
 When I called for you, you had another there
 IV I
 But a broken heart will keep on crying
 V I
 I know you know, I'm in despair

You made me forget of all the others
 You made me forget of all the past
 And I thought sweetheart you really loved me
 My friends told me it would never last

Chorus

Chorus

"Joe Ehr" was one of the pseudonyms Bill Monroe penned under (other pseudonyms included Rupert Jones, Wilbur Jones, Albert Price, James B. Smith & James W. Smith. Bill Monroe wrote this song after paying a surprise visit to a girlfriend in Burlington, North Carolina. When he arrived, there was a car in the driveway that Bill recognized as belonging to another man who had been courting the lady. Bill drove off, never to return.

This song was recorded in 1957 and released in 1958 on the album "Knee Deep in Blue Grass," the first 33 1/3 album cut by Bill Monroe. Other notable recordings include Dreadful Snakes on the 1983 album "Snakes Alive," Del McCoury Band "Old Memories – The Songs of Bill Monroe" and Country Gazette off the 1977 album "What a Way to Make a Living."

The chorus is sung as a trio. The original recording has a trio fiddle, and Bill Monroe did "cross tuning" on his mandolin, retuning the "G-strings" to an A.

Drinkin' Dark Whiskey

Key of A, 95 BPM

Chris Stapleton, Mike Henderson (ver. Steeldrivers, 2007)

I
 Drinking dark whiskey, telling white lies
 V
 One leads to another on a Saturday night
 IV I
 Don't you cross your heart unless you hope to die
 V I
 Drinking dark whiskey telling white lies

I
 First shot burns but the second one goes down smooth
 IV I
 Then that old black label gets a hold of you
 V I
 It'll loosen your tongue but it don't ever tell the truth

Chorus

When the bottles talking be careful what he might say
 It talks in the dark like it never would in the day
 Then he gets in trouble just as soon as he gets his way

Chorus

Little white lie don't mean anyone no good
 When it's making the rounds all over the neighborhood
 Next thing ya know we're all misunderstood

Chorus

Chris Stapleton comes from a family of coal miners. He moved to Nashville in 2001 to become a songwriter . He has multiple number-one songs with artists such as George Strait, Adele, Tim McGraw and has co-written with Peter Frampton, Sheryl Crow and many others. He has been called the savior of new country both as a songwriter and singer. He co-wrote this song with the mandolin player from Steeldrivers, Mike Henderson and it was originally sung by country artist Gary Allan.

Recorded in 2007, it was released on the debut album from the self-titled Steeldrivers album. The Steeldrivers were a group of Nashville studio musicians that decided to form a band, with Tammy Rogers on fiddle and Richard Bailey on banjo joining Chris and Mike.. In 2010, Chris Stapleton left the band to focus on raising his family. He was replaced by Gary Nichols. Mike Henderson left in 2011 and was replaced with Brent Truitt.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony, with the third line sung solo

Mary Ann

Key of Bb, 83 BPM

Johnny Stills and Lonnie Treat (ver. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, 1974)

I IV I
There's a girl on my mind I can't get over

V I
Who'd break the heart of any man

IV I
Without her things just fall to pieces

V I
Oh I'm singing about my Mary Ann

V I
So I'll just keep touching up my gray hair

V I
Live and hope someday she'll understand

IV I
It's no matter if I live to be a hundred

V I
There'll always be a place in my heart for Mary Ann

I know she's out there somewhere in a world that can't be found

Just to think of her still tears me down

If teardrops were pennies I'd be a wealthy man

From the tears I've cried for Mary Ann

Chorus

Written by Johnny Stills and Lonnie Treat, they used "Mary Ann" after Mary Ann Garrison, who was president of the Jimmy Martin fan club.

There is a live version of this song from the album "Live, 1973 Bean Blossom." This album was (obviously) recorded live at the 1973 Bean Blossom festival, and features Bill Monroe, Jimmy Martin, Lester Flatt, Jim and Jesse McReynolds and James Monroe. There is a studio version on the Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys 1974 album "Fly Me to Frisco." The Lonesome River Band also did a version on their album "Talkin' To Myself" from 2000 (with Ronnie Bowman singing lead).

Chorus is done in three-part harmony.

I Wouldn't Change You If I Could

Key of F, 85 BPM

Paul Jones and Arthur Q. Smith (ver. Reno and Smiley, 1959)

I V
I wouldn't change a single thing about you if I could

I
The way you are just suits me too a tee

V
A princess in a storybook a queen upon her throne

I
That's what you are and you belong too me.

IV I
I wouldn't change you if I could I love you as you are

IV I V
You're all that I would wish for if I wished upon a star

I V
An angel sent from heaven you're everything that's good

You're perfect just the way you are

I
I wouldn't change you if I could.

Your eyes your lips, your tender smile I'd leave them as they are

And come what may I'd love you just the same

And if I were a potter and you a piece of clay

The only thing I'd change would be your name.

Chorus

Written by Paul Jones and Arthur Q. Smith. Arthur Smith (born Arthur Pritchett) was a chronic alcoholic and sold a number of his songs to other artists, such as "Crying My Heart Over You," "Wedding Bells" and a number of songs to Bill Monroe (sometimes selling them for bottles of liquor). Sometimes this song is falsely attributed to Jim Eanes.

Recorded by Don Reno and Red Smiley, this song was the A-side to a 1959 album (the instrumental "Little Rock Getaway" was the B-side). It is also on the 1976 album "Country Singing & Instrumentals." It was also recorded by Jim Eanes on the self-titled album released in 1959. Ricky Skaggs also recorded a version of this song in 1982 on his album "Highways & Heartaches.

The chorus was originally sung as a duo.

Old Salty Dog Blues

Key of G#, 124 BPM

Wiley and Zeke Morris (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1950)

I VI
Standin' on the corner with the low down blues

II
A great big hole in the bottom of my shoes

V I
Honey let me be your salty dog

Let me be your salty dog
Or I won't be your man at all
Honey let me be your salty dog

Looking here Sal, I know you
Run down stockin' and a worn out shoe
Honey let me be your salty dog

Chorus

Down in the wildwood sitting on a log
Finger on the trigger and an eye on the hog
Honey let me be your salty dog

Chorus

Pulled the trigger and the gun said go
The shot fell over in Mexico
Honey let me be you salty dog

Chorus

Chorus

Considered to have been written sometime around the 1900s, this song has been covered by jazz, blues and country artists as well as bluegrass. The earliest recordings credit Papa Charlie Jackson, and the song has been recorded by Mississippi John Hurt and Lead Belly, just to name a few (sometimes the lyrics are bawdry). Bluegrass versions are based largely on a Morris Brothers recording (lyrics and arrangement) from 1938. Salty Dog has been attributed to food and drinks, but the roots infer that the term "Salty Dog" refers to a sexual partner.

Recorded October 20, 1950 by Flatt and Scruggs and released as the B-side in 1952 (Pike County Breakdown was the A-side). Their instruments were tuned higher than normal, and this song is recorded in G#. This is one of the rare songs where Lester Flatt does not sing lead. Fiddle player Benny Sims sings lead on the original recording. A version sung by Lester Flatt is also on the "Flatt and Scruggs at Carnegie Hall" album, recorded in 1963 (titled "Salty Dog Blues") in the key of G.

The chorus and the last line of each verse are sung in three-part harmony.

Cry, Cry Darling

Key of A, 110 BPM

J. D. Miller and Jimmy C. Newman (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1958)

I IV
Cry cry darling
I V
That's what I'll do if you should leave me with the blues
I IV
Cry cry darling
I V I
That's all I do cause you're the one that's in my heart

V I
For me there'll be no moonlight
II V
If ever we should part
Cry cry darling, that's all I do
'Cause you're the one that's in my heart

Cry cry darling
My eyes will cry and never dry if you should go
Cry cry darling
When shadows creep I'll just weep all night I know

You know how much I'd miss you
If ever we should part
Cry cry darling
That's all I do cause you're the one that's in my heart

J.D. Miller was a music producer and songwriter in Louisiana specializing in Cajun and “swamp blues.” He met Jimmy C. Newman in the 40s. With Miller’s guidance, Jimmy Newman started to learn about the music business. Together, they co-wrote this song and Miller recorded it in 1954, where it reached #4 on the country charts.

Bill Monroe recorded this song and released it on the album “Knee Deep in Bluegrass” in 1958. Johnson Mountain Boys recorded a version on their 1988 album “Requests.” More recently, Chris Thile and Michael Daves have a version on their album “Sleep With One Eye Open,” recorded in 2011.

Originally, the chorus was sung with no harmony. Typically you will now hear this as a duet (sometimes trio) with the lines “For me there’ll be no moonlight, if ever we should part” and “You know how much I’d miss you, if ever we should part” sung as solo.

I Wonder Where You Are Tonight

Key of E, 108 BPM

Johnny Bond (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1962)

I IV
 Now tonight I'm sad, my heart is weary
 V I
 I'm wondering if I'm wrong or right
 IV
 To dream about you though you left me
 V I
 I wonder where you are tonight

IV I
 The rain is cold and slowly falling
 V
 Upon my window pane tonight
 I IV
 And though your love was even colder
 V I
 I wonder where you are tonight

Your heart was cold, you never loved me
 Though you often said you cared
 But now you've gone to find another
 Someone who knows the love I shared

Chorus

Then came the dawn the day you left me
 I tried to smile with all my might
 But you could see the pain within me
 That lingers in my heart tonight

Chorus

Johnny Bond was a session musician and member of the Jimmy Wakely Trio. In addition to recording, was a significant support musician in dozens of Western movies. His song "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight" was first recorded by the Jimmy Wakely Trio and released February, 1941. In the 50s and 60s it was covered by multiple country artists, including Porter Wagoner and Hank Snow.

In 1962, Flatt and Scruggs played this song for their live album "At Carnegie Hall!" Jim and Jesse & the Virginia Boys recorded a version for their album "Bluegrass Classics," released in 1963 (it's also on their 1976 album "Live in Japan" and they recorded a version with Bill Monroe on the 1973 album "Bean Blossom." Since then, it has become a bluegrass standard, recorded by Bill Monroe ("Blue Grass Time" – 1967), Red Allen & the Kentuckians (self-titled album – 1966) and Bluegrass Cardinals (Livin' In the Good Old Days – 1978), just to name a few.

Typically you will hear the chorus with three-part harmony.

On and On

Key of G, 105 BPM

Bill Monroe (ver. Bill Monroe, 1954)

I IV I
Traveling down this long lonesome highway

V
I'm so lonesome I could cry

I IV I
Memories of how we once loved each other

V I
And now you are saying good-bye

On and on I'll follow my darling
And I wonder where she can be
On and on I'll follow my darling
And I wonder if she ever thinks of me

I've cried I've cried for you little darling
It breaks my heart to hear your name
My friends they also loved you my darling
And they think that I am to blame

Chorus

I have to follow you little darling
I can't sleep when the sun goes down
By your side is my destination
The road is clear and that's where I'm bound

Chorus

Written by Bill Monroe and released on the Decca label in 1956 as the A-side (the B-side was "I Believed in You Darling"). While released in 1956, it was recorded in 1954 when Jimmy Martin was still with Bill Monroe.

This song has become a bluegrass standard. Doyle Lawson recorded a version on the 1979 album "Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver." David Grisman recorded a version for his 1976 bluegrass album "The David Grisman Rounder Album." And Tony Rice did a version for his 1993 album "Tony Rice Plays and Sings Bluegrass."

The song originally was sung in three-part harmony for both verses and chorus.

Who's That Knocking at My Door

Key of F, 107 BPM

Pat Enright (ver. Dreadful Snakes, 1983)

I
Who's that knocking at my door, have I heard that knock before

V I
Is it evil trying to get into my room

Who's that tapping at my window, who's calling me to go

V I
To a place that's filled with dark and gloom

Oh this life that I'm living, it seems so unforgiving
I find trouble everywhere that I go
I always seek it first, just to quench my burning thirst
In waters that are cool as fallen snow

Chorus

But the waters are oh so deep, what you sow you must reap
Now I hear a knocking at my door
It's evil standing outside, there's no place to run and hide
It plucks my soul and presses me to the floor

Oh I've been down that pathway that always leads the wrong way
But this time I don't think I'll be back
It's like a freight train pulling me, there's a dark tunnel ahead I see
This train's going down a one-way track

Chorus

Chorus

Pat Enright wrote this song in the early 80s and recorded the song with Bela Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Blaine Sprouse, Roland White and Mark Hembree on the 1983 album "The Dreadful Snakes." Pat Enright had met Bela Fleck in the late 70s and had recorded two albums with Bela as part of the band Tasty Licks (self-titled and "Anchored to the Shore."). The Dreadful Snakes was loosely put together for a few gigs and the one recording. In 1984, Pat Enright and Mark Hembree would join Alan O'Bryant and Mike Compton to form the Nashville Bluegrass Band.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

Willow Garden

Key of G, 71 BPM

Traditional (ver. Osborne Brothers, 1956)

I VIm I VIm
 Down in the willow garden where me and my love did meet
 I VIm I V I
 There we set a-courting my love fell off to sleep
 VIm I VIm I VIm
 I had a bottle of burgundy wine which true love did not know
 I VIm I V I
 There I poisoned that dear little girl down on the banks below

I drew a saber through her which was a bloody knife
 I threw her in the river which was a dreadful sight
 My father often told me that money would set me free
 If I would murder that dear little girl whose name was Rose Connelly

Now he sits in his old cabin door a wiping his tear-dimmed eyes
 A-looking at his own dear son upon the scaffold high
 My race is run beneath the sun the devil is waiting for me
 For I did murder that dear little girl whose name was Rose Connelly

Also known as "Rose Connolly," this song originally was brought to the Appalachian region from Ireland, where it dates back to at least the early 1800s. An Irish Ballad "The Rambling Boys of Pleasure" and "The Wexford Girl" are likely the roots of this song ("The Wexford Girl" is also the source for "The Knoxville Girl," which has a very similar theme to "Willow Garden."

Charlie Monroe recorded this song in 1947 with his band The Kentucky Pardners. The version printed here is the Osborne Brothers with Red Allen. They recorded a version ("Down in the Willow Garden") in 1956 featuring twin banjos, played by Sonny and Bobby. Tim O'Brien recorded a version for his 1999 album "The Crossing." The Lonesome River Band recorded a version on the 2000 album "Talkin' To Myself."

Sung as a duet throughout the song.

East Virginia Blues

Traditional (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1956)

Key of D, 119 BPM

I
I was born in East Virginia
IV I
North Carolina I did go
IV I
There I courted a fair young lady
V I
But her age I did not know

Oh her hair was dark and curly
And her cheeks were rosy red
On her breast she wore white lillies
Where I longed to lay my head

Molly dear, go ask your mother
You're my bride might ever be
If she says no, come back and tell me
And I'll run away with thee

No I'll not go ask my mother
Where she lies on her bed of rest
In her hand she holds a dagger
To kill the man that I love best

I'll go back to East Virginia
North Carolina ain't my home
I'll go back to East Virginia
Leave old North Carolina alone

The ocean's deep and I can't wade it
And I have no wings to fly
I'll just get some blue-eyed boatman
For to row me o'er the tide

Oh you know I'd like to see you
At my door you're welcome in
At my gate I'll always greet you
For you're the girl I tried to win

The earliest reference to this song is from Cecil Sharp – an English historian who “collected” folk songs (listening to hundreds of folk singers, then arranging the songs for piano and choir). He also made trips and collected songs in Australia and the United States. Sharp collected this song “In Old Virginny” in 1917.

The Carter Family recorded this song in 1934. In 1941 they recorded "East Virginia Blues No. 2," with the same melody but completely new lyrics.

In 1956 in a studio in Bristol, Virginia, Ralph and Carter Stanley, along with Ralph Mayo and Curley Lambert, was asked to sing some traditional songs in front of a single microphone. One of the songs recorded that evening was "East Virginia Blues" with Ralph fingerpicking a mandolin. It can be found on the album "An Evening Long Ago." The Stanley Brothers would record the song a number of times throughout the years, with significant variations (and orders) of verses. There is an album released by Ralph Stanley in 1966 with a young Larry Sparks singing lead called "Old Time Music" that has another version of East Virginia Blues – again with Ralph fingerpicking a mandolin. A more recent recording can be found on the Balsam Range album from 2010, "Trains I Missed."

Originally sung as a duet. However, you are more likely to hear it as a trio.

Misery Loves Company

Key of A, 175 BPM

Jerry Reed (ver. Johnson Mountain Boys, 1983)

I IV
I've just left my home place where I couldn't sleep
I V
For missin' a woman that I couldn't keep
I IV
She just walked out and left me for somebody else
I V I
Now her memory keeps hauntin' me when I'm by myself

So break out the bottle bring on the crowd
Tell funny stories turn the jukebox up loud
Come on sit at my table where the drinks are on me
Just gather round me cause misery loves company

Now I'm not the first one that's lost everything
To a false hearted woman with a false hearted scheme
But this is the first time I've suffered myself
Help me get over this love I'll handle the next love all by myself

Chorus

Guitar picker, songwriter, singer and actor Jerry Reed wrote this song, which was first recorded by Porter Wagoner in 1961.

The Johnson Mountain Boys recorded this song for their 1983 album, "Working Close." The Johnson Mountain Boys could be considered a "revivalist" bluegrass band. When many bands had been pushing the boundaries of bluegrass into more "newgrass" territories, The Johnson Mountain Boys recorded songs that were much more closely tied to the traditional bluegrass songs of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The song is sung with no harmony.

Sophronie

Key of B, 133 BPM

Alton Delmore and D.C. Mullins (ver. Jimmy Martin, 1958)

I IV
 Love em and leave em, kiss em and grieve em
 V I
 That used to be my motto so high
 I IV
 Till my Sophronie left me so lonely
 V I
 And now there's a teardrop in my eye

My Sophronie's from Kentucky, she's found another man
 I can't even kiss her, can't even hold her hand
 The moon we used to love beneath is still up in the sky
 So now I'm just a hotshot with a teardrop in my eye

Chorus

Till Gabriel blows his bugle, I'll be a lovin that sweet girl
 She means more to me than the whole wide world
 I used to be a killer with the women me oh, my
 But now I'm just a hot shot with a teardrop in my eye

Chorus

I used to slay the pretty girls from Maine to Alabam
 I love them very much at first but then I let them down
 I've seen so many pretty eyes then filled with bitter tears
 Find them then forget them, but now I have my fears

Chorus

Written by Alton Delmore and D.C. Mullins. Alton Delmore was one of the brothers with The Delmore Brothers – a very influential country duet act that recorded through the 30s and the 40s (sometimes credited with the first rock and roll record, “Freight Train Boogie,” in 1946).

Recorded February 19, 1958 by Jimmy Martin, this was the A-side, with “Ocean of Diamonds” as the B-side. It can found on the album “Moonshine Hollow,” which was released in 1973.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

Tennessee in 1949

Key of B, 98 BPM

Leroy Drumm and Pete Goble (ver. Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers, 1987)

I IV I
 I wonder if it's rainin' in the mountains
 IV I
 I wonder how the old town looks today
 IV I
 And if the church is there beside the river
 II V
 Could I go back and find where mama lay

I IV I
 Does life still go to sleep just after sunset
 IV
 Are the berries still as big on the vine
 I
 Do old men sit and talk about the old days
 V I
 The way they did in nineteen forty-nine

I IV
 Oh oh oh how I'd like to be
 I V
 Back in the hills of Tennessee
 I IV
 Oh oh oh it would be so fine
 I V I
 If I could just go back to 1949

I wonder if by chance they might remember
 A teenage boy so wild and fancy free
 Who always loved guitars and country music
 If I went back would they remember me

I wonder what became of Katherine Ackers
 The girl who broke my heart at seventeen
 I barely can remember what she looks like
 Thirty years ago she was my dream

Chorus

For many years I've searched the wide world over
 For what I don't recall and didn't find
 And now I'm searching pictures in my memory
 For Tennessee in 1949

Leroy Drumm and Pete Goble are an extremely talented songwriting team that also wrote "Blue Virginia Blues," "Joe's Last Train" and "Coleen Malone," just to name a few. Leroy couldn't play an instrument but was an excellent poet, and Pete Goble was able to put many of his poems to music.

Both Larry Sparks and Pete Goble (with Bill Emerson) released this song in 1987 – Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers on the album "Silver Reflections" and Emerson and Goble on the album "Tennessee in 1949."

Originally, the chorus was sung with no harmony. Typically you will hear the chorus with three-part harmony.

Cora is Gone

Key of D#, 190 BPM

Odell McLeod (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1950)

I
Winds through the night, blowing so lonesome

V

Singing to me a song

I

A whippoorwill call is just a reminder

V

I

Pretty girls have hearts made of stone

IV

I

I'll wake with the blues at dawn

IV

I

My darling Corey is gone

I don't know why she told me goodbye

V

I

But my darling Corey is gone

The ring that she wears I bought for her finger
Purchased her raiment so fine
Gave her my last green back dollar
And now she's left me behind

Chorus

Drifting along like brush on the river
Caring not where I roam
Going to live in a deep forest
Dark hollow will be my new home

Chorus

Odell McLeod, also known as Mac Odell, was a singer-songwriter from Alabama. He worked at Mercury Records from 1949 to 1952 and wrote songs that included "Thirty Pieces of Silver" and "From the Manger to the Cross," in addition to "Cora is Gone."

Recorded October 1950. Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal to better match Lester's voice. So to play along with the original recording, a capo is required on the first fret or you need to retune. J.D. Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips (with Jerry Douglas) did a version on the 1985 album "The Bluegrass Album Volume Four."

Originally, the song was sung solo by Lester Flatt. The Bluegrass Album Band sung the chorus as a trio, with "I don't know why she told me good bye" sung solo.

I Wonder How the Old Folks Are at Home

Key of B, 107 bpm

Harry Lincoln and F.W. Vandersloot (ver. Mac Wiseman and the Osborne Brothers)

I IV I
Well I wonder how the old folks are at home
IV
I wonder if they miss me while I roam
I
I wonder if they pray for the boy who went away
II V
And left his dear old parents all alone

You could hear the cattle lowin' in the lane
See the fields of blue grass green
You could almost hear them cry as they kiss their boy goodbye
Well I wonder how the old folks are at home

Just a village and a homestead on the farm
And a mother's love to keep you from all harm
A mother's love so true a sweetheart that loves you
Just a village and a homestead on the farm

Chorus

Chorus

Sometimes attributed to A.P. Carter, the lyrics were written by Herbert Lambert and music by Harry Lincoln – which was a pseudonym of F.W. Vandersloot of the Vandersloot Music Publishing Company – an American publishing company of marches, waltzes, rags, religious and “Tin Pan Alley” music. It was first recorded by Paul Reimers in 1917.

The Carter Family recorded the song on November 22, 1929 under the name “The Homestead on the Farm” (with a slightly different melody and chord progression). The Renfro Valley Boys recorded the song in 1932 (Renfro Valley is a community in Kentucky, and was home to the Renfro Valley Barn Dance – similar to the Grande Ole Opry – through the late 1930s, 40s and 50s).

Mac Wiseman originally recorded the song in 1952 as the B-side (the A-side was “You’re the Girl of My Dreams”). The Lilly Brothers recorded a version on their 1964 album “Bluegrass Breakdown” (with some additional lyrics).

When Mac Wiseman originally recorded the song, it had no harmony. Sometimes the chorus is sung as a duet. The Carter Family recorded it with portions of the song as a duet and trio.

A Hundred Years From Now

Key of F, 117 bpm

David McEnery (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1957)

I V
 Lord a hundred years from now I won't be crying
 I
 A hundred years from now I won't be blue
 IV
 And my heart would have forgotten that you broke every vow
 I V I
 I won't care a hundred years from now

Lord it seems that it was yesterday you told me
 You couldn't live without my love somehow
 Now that you're with another it breaks my heart somehow
 I won't care a hundred years from now

Chorus

Now do you recall the night sweetheart you promised
 Another's kiss you never would allow
 That's all in the past dear it didn't seem to last
 I won't care a hundred years from now

Chorus

Sometimes this song is attributed to Silvio Hein, George Hobart and Edwin Milton Royle. Their song is titled "I Won't Care (A Hundred Years From now)" – but it is a different song (different lyrics and melody). This song was originally recorded by country duo Bob Atcher and Bonnie Blue Eyes on June 18, 1940. It was written by David McEnery, a yodeling cowboy and lasso twirler at rodeos. He also wrote the song "Amelia Earhart's Last Flight."

Flatt and Scruggs recorded this song March 24, 1957. It was released as the A-side, with the B-side being "I Won't Be Hanging Around" November 25, 1957. Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so their instruments were tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So while the key of this song is "F," the band would have been playing it with chord shapes of the key of "E."

The Bluegrass Album Band released their version on "Vol. 3 – California Connection."

This song is typically sung with no harmony.

Blue Night

Key of B 113 BPM

David Kirk McGee (ver. Hot Rize, 1979)

I
Blue night I got you on my mind
IV
Blue night can't keep from crying
I IV
You found someone that was new
I
And you quit someone that you knew was true
V I
Blue night got you on my mind

Blue night blue as I can be
Well I don't know what's become of me
Where we used to walk I walk alone
With an aching heart because my love is gone
Blue night blue as I can be

Blue night I'm all alone
I used to call you on the telephone
Well I used to call and it made you glad
Now I call and it makes you mad
Blue night I'm all alone

Blue night all by myself
Since you put me on the shelf
Well there's just one thing you should know
You're gonna reap just what you sow
Blue night, all by myself
Blue night, all by myself

The McGee Brothers were an old-time duo of Sam and Kirk McGee. Sam played guitar and Kirk would play fiddle or banjo. They first appeared on the Grande Ole Opry in 1926. They were a part of Uncle Dave Macon's band, The Fruit Jar Drinkers. They were also in Arthur Smith's band, the Dixie Liners. And in 1940 they toured with Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys.

Hot Rize were a band formed by Tim O'Brien on mandolin, Charles Sawtelle on guitar, Pete Wernick on banjo and Nick Forster on bass. They all were a part of the Colorado music scene in the late 70s – though none of them were original residents of Colorado. The name "Hot Rize" comes from the leavening agent in Martha White Flour. Martha White sponsored the Flatt and Scruggs show through the 50s. In the 80s, the flour company would sponsor the band "Hot Rize." Hot Rize would also perform as a Western swing band called Red Knuckles and the Trailblazers (all adopting different personas and playing different instruments). Charles Sawtelle died of leukaemia in 1999. More recently, Hot Rize has been touring with Bryan Sutton on guitar. Hot Rize recorded this song on their self-titled debut album in 1979.

This song was originally recorded with no harmony.

Little Cabin Home on the Hill

Key of A 90 BPM

Lester Flatt and Bill Monroe (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys 1948)

I IV I
 Tonight I'm alone without you my dear
 V
 It seems there's a longing for you still
 I IV I
 All I have to do now is sit alone and cry
 V I
 In our little cabin home on the hill
 IV I
 Oh someone has taken you from me
 And left me here all alone
 Just listen to the rain beat on my window pane
 In our little cabin home on the hill

I hope you are happy tonight as you are
 But in my heart there's a longing for you still
 I just keep it there so I won't be alone
 In our little cabin home on the hill

Chorus

Now when you have come to the end of the way
 And find there's no more happiness for you
 Just let your thoughts turn back once more if you will
 To our little cabin home on the hill

Chorus

This song is one of the 28 songs recorded by Bill Monroe, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Howard Watts and Chubby Wise (though some of those recordings had Howdy Forrester on fiddle and Joe Forrester on bass). This song was an original written specifically for the band by Lester Flatt and Bill Monroe. Like many of those songs recorded, it would become a bluegrass standard.

This song was first recorded on October 27, 1947 in Chicago. It was released in 1948 as the B-side (the A-side was "I Hear a Sweet Voice Calling").

Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins recorded a very brief version of this song on December 4 of 1956. Porter Wagoner would record a full version in 1965. Flatt and Scruggs played this song live in 1960 with the Foggy Mountain Boys at The Newport Festival, and it was released on the album "The Newport Folk Festival - Volume 2." Ricky Skaggs recorded a version on his 1979 album "Sweet Temptation." Tony Rice recorded a version with David Grisman on mandolin, J.D. Crowe on banjo, Jim Buchanan on fiddle, and Roy Husky Jr. on bass. Curly Seckler also joined them to sing harmony on the David Grisman album "Home is Where the Heart Is," released in 1988.

It was original recorded as a duet with Lester on lead and Bill on harmony. Typically it is sung with three-part harmony on the choruses.

Please Search Your Heart

Key of Bb 91 BPM

Pete Goble and Doyle Lawson (ver. JD Crowe and the Kentucky Mountain Boys, 1971)

I V I IV
Please search your heart and maybe you'll find

I V
A reason to stay I'm begging this time

I V I IV
I know I was wrong and darlin' I've paid

I V I
Please search your heart before it's too late.

V IV I
When you left me I said that I'd never be blue

V IV I
That I wouldn't cry if you found someone new

V I IV
But this is my plea, give me one more try

I V I
Please search your heart, don't tell me goodbye.

Chorus

Pete Goble is one of bluegrass most prolific songwriters. He has written songs including Colleen Malone, Tennessee in 1949 and Big Spike Hammer. He co-wrote this song with Doyle Lawson.

Prior to J.D. Crowe and the New South, J.D. had a band called the Kentucky Mountain Boys. Formed in 1968, originally Red Allen was the lead singer, with Doyle Lawson on mandolin, and Bobby Slone on fiddle and bass. Larry Rice would replace Red Allen in the early 1970s. Larry would play mandolin and Doyle switched to guitar. This song was released on the 1971 album, "Ramblin' Boy." This band would eventually morph into JD Crowe and the New South. This band had a huge impact on bluegrass, bringing a more contemporary sound to the genre.

This song was also recorded by The Bluegrass Album Band in 1983 on their album "Vol. 3 - California Connection." Tony Rice on guitar, J.D. Crowe on banjo, Doyle Lawson on mandolin, Bobby Hicks on fiddle, Jerry Douglas on dobro and Todd Phillips on bass.

With the exception of the first two lines in the chorus, the entire song is sung as three-part harmony.

Knee Deep in Loving You

Key of A 129 BPM

Sonny Throckmorton (ver. Bluegrass Cardinals, 1978)

I IV
I'm knee deep in loving you
V I
I done got deeper than I wanted to
IV
It might drown me before I'm through
V I
Cause I'm knee deep in loving you

I thought I'd wade your waters just enough to cool me down
Wet my feet and find my way to some higher ground
But I keep on getting deeper and there's just one way to go
Too late I find I'm caught up in your undertow

Chorus

Everybody's saying you're not the staying kind
Ain't it like a natural fool to think you will this time
It's too late for changing this feeling down in me
And I'm standing here with more than just sand on my feet

Chorus

Chorus

Sonny Throckmorton has had more than 1,000 songs recorded by various country singers, including Merle Haggard, The Oak Ridge Boys, George Strait and many more. Between 1976 and 1980, at least one of his songs appeared on the country charts almost every week. "Knee Deep in Loving You" was first recorded by Roy Drusky in 1974. But it was Dave & Sugar's recording in 1977 that went to number 2 on the Billboard charts (it was also recorded by Tanya Tucker and Tom Bresh in 1977).

The Bluegrass Cardinals were formed in Los Angeles California in 1974 by Don Parmley, Randy Graham and Don's son, David Parmley. Some interesting trivia – Don Parmley is credited with the banjo work from "The Beverly Hillbillies," though not the intro theme song – the incidental music throughout the show. In 1976 they moved to Virginia and signed with Rounder Records. They were known for their tight harmonies and they were the first bluegrass band to record bluegrass gospel a cappella. The Bluegrass Cardinals recorded this song in 1978 on their album "Livin' in the Good Old Days."

The song is sung as a trio on the choruses.

I'm Lost, I'll Never Find the Way

Key of Bb 136 BPM

Traditional (ver. The Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys, 1956)

I IV I V
 Lonesome, lonesome, pining away
 I
 Now you say its best to part
 IV
 Even though it breaks my heart
 I V I
 I'm lost and I'll never find the way

 I IV
 Since you said we must part darling you have broke my heart
 I V
 I am drifting like a ship lost at sea
 I IV
 In a world of despair it's so lonesome there
 I V I
 Why don't you come back to me

Chorus

You said you'd be true no one else would ever do
 I believed you with all my heart and soul
 But you broke every vow and it's all over now
 I'm left in this world lone and cold

Chorus

When the Stanley Brothers first recorded this song, Ralph Stanley was given a writing credit. However, the song dates back to the 1900s.

The song was first recorded by The Stanley Brothers July 16, 1956 at Bradley Studios in Nashville. Ralph on banjo, Carter on guitar, Curley Lambert on mandolin, Chubby Anthony and Ralph Mayo on twin fiddles and Doug Morris on bass. It was released in 1957 as the A-side (the B-side was "The Flood."). Ricky Skaggs recorded this song in 1982 on his album "Family & Friends. After this album, Ricky Skaggs would switch from bluegrass to country.

The chorus has three-part harmonies.

Drivin' Nails in My Coffin

Key of A 126 BPM

Jerry Irby (ver. The Osborne Brothers, 1968)

I
My sweetheart has gone and I'm so lonely

V

She said that she and I were through

I
I started out drinkin' for past time

Drivin' nails in my coffin over you

I'm just drivin' nails in my coffin
Everytime I drink a bottle of booze
I'm just drivin' nails in my coffin
Drivin' those nails over you

Ever since the day that we parted
I've been so sad and so blue
I'm always thinking of you love
And I just can't quit drinking that old booze

Chorus

Now you turned me down you don't want me
There's nothing now I can lose
I'm just drivin' those nails in my coffin
And worrying my darlin' over you

Chorus

Jerry Irby was a country artist that started singing in the 30s as a duo with Ted Daffan. He was the vocalist with the Bar X Cowboys. In 1945 he recorded this song as a solo artist for Gulf. After leaving the Bar X Cowboys he formed his Texas Rangers and had some recordings with Mercury Records, Imperial Records, 4 Star and MGM. Some of his songs were covered by Bob Wills. This song was covered extensively by country artists, including Ernest Tubb in 1946, Hank Thompson in 1958 and many more.

In the 1960s, The Osborne Brothers caused minor controversy among bluegrass purists by incorporating electronic, pedal steel, piano and percussion instruments in their recordings and live acts. The Osborne Brothers would also record songs that could be considered more country than bluegrass. This is one of those songs, which can be found on their 1968 album "Yesterday, Today, And The Osborne Brothers. Eventually many of these songs would become bluegrass standards, including this song. Rhonda Vincent recorded this song in 2001 on her album "The Storm Still Rages.

This song is typically sung with no harmonies.

How Mountain Girls Can Love

Key of A, 158 BPM

Ruby Rakes (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1958)

IV I
Get down boys, go back home
V I
Back to the girl you love
IV I
Treat her right, never wrong
V I
How mountain gals can love

I
Riding the night in the high cold winds
V I
On the trail of the old lonesome pine
Thinking of you, feeling so blue
V I
Wondering why I left you behind

Chorus

Remember the night we strolled down the lane
Our hearts were gay and happy then
You whispered to me when I held you close
We hoped that night would never end

Chorus

Chorus

The “writer,” Ruby Rakes, is the half-sister to Carter and Ralph Stanley. She was assigned rights to numerous Stanley Brothers songs for personal financial reasons in the late fifties/early sixties.

Recorded September 30, 1958, it was released on the album “Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys.” Tony Rice sings a version on the album “Tony Rice Plays and Sings Bluegrass.” Ricky Skaggs has a version from the album “Ancient Tones”

This song is deceptively fast. The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

Bury Me Beneath The Willow

Key of G, 90 BPM

Traditional (ver. Skaggs and Rice, 1980)

I IV
My heart is sad and I am lonely
I V
For the only one I love
I IV
When shall I see her oh no never
I V I
'Til we meet in heaven above

Oh, bury me beneath the willow
Under the weeping willow tree
So she will know where I am sleeping
And perhaps she'll weep for me

She told me that she dearly loved me
How could I believe it untrue
Until the angels softly whispered
She will prove untrue to you

Chorus

Tomorrow was our wedding day
Oh God oh God where can she be
She's out a courting with another
And no longer cares for me

Chorus

Sometimes credited to A.P Carter, this was one of the first songs recorded by The Carter Family on August 1, 1927 in Bristol, Tennessee. The Carter Family did not write the song. They learned the song from Bradley Kincaid, but it is very likely Kincaid learned it from another person.

The recommended version to listen to is Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice's version from "Skaggs & Rice" – an album of brother-duet songs released in 1980. It is also on the album "Sleep With One Eye Open" recorded by Chris Thile & Michael Daves.

The chorus is typically sung as a duo.

I'm Gone, Long Gone

Key of A, 141 BPM

Red Smiley and Don Reno (ver. Reno and Smiley, 1952)

I
Long gone is how I'm leaving

IV I
Long gone why do you cry

This is what you wanted baby

V I
So I'm gone, long gone

I have tried to make you happy
Still you say I've done you wrong
So I'm giving up my darlin'
I'll be gone long gone

Chorus

Just a few short words of parting
Don't shed your tears they won't atone
For my things are packed to travel
I'll be gone long gone

Chorus

Please don't try to overtake me
What I ride will be too fast
This is it we're through forever
I'm long gone and free at last

Chorus

This song was recorded at Reno and Smiley's first recording session in January, 1952 for King studio, with "I'm Gone, Long Gone" as the A-side and "Tennessee Cutup Breakdown" as the B-side. The song was re-released on the LP "Good Old Country Ballads" (1959) and can also be found on "Bluegrass is Timeless – Country Boy Rock 'n' Roll." Another notable recording is The Lonesome River Band, from the album "Old Country Town."

Originally recorded as a duet with tenor harmony throughout the chorus.

Shady Grove

Traditional (ver. Bill Monroe – 1961)

Key of C, 158 BPM

I
Coffee grows on the white oak trees

The river flows with brandy

The rocks on the hills all covered with the gold

V I

And the girls are sweeter than candy

Shady Grove, my little miss
Shady Grove, my darling
Shady Grove, my little miss
I'm going back to Harlan

I guess you think, my pretty little miss
I can't live without you
I'll let you know before I go
I care but little about you

Chorus

Every time I go up the road
Always dark and cloudy
Every time I see that girl
I always tell her howdy

Chorus

Derived from "Matty Groves," a traditional ballad from either England or Scotland – the roots of this song dates back to at least the early 1600s. This song travelled to the southern Appalachians around the time of the American Civil War. Sometimes "Shady Grove" is a location, sometimes it's a girl. Sometimes it's a love song, sometimes a lament.

This song bridges the gap between "old time" and "bluegrass." Typically, the song is done in the minor key (famously recorded by Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley on the "Original Folkways Recordings: 1960-1962." It was also recorded in this minor key by Tony Rice, Jerry Garcia and David Grisman on "The Pizza Tapes" in 1993.

However, Bill Monroe recorded this song in the major key in 1961. Multiple bands have recorded it, from Doyle Lawson to the Kentucky Colonels to Hot Rize – typically played very fast with three-part harmony on the chorus.

Shady Grove

Key of Dm, 111 BPM

Traditional (ver. Jerry Garcia, Tony Rice and David Grisman, 1993)

Im VII Im
 Peaches in the summertime, apples in the fall
 VII Im
 If I can't get the girl I love, I won't have none at all

Shady Grove, my little love - Shady Grove, I know
 Shady Grove, my little love, I'm bound for Shady Grove

I wish I had a banjo string made of golden twine
 Every tune I'd pick on it, I'd wish that girl was mine

Chorus

Some come here to fiddle and dance, some come here to tarry
 Some come here to fiddle and dance - I come here to marry

Chorus

Every night when I go home, my wife I try to please her
 The more I try the worse she gets, damned if I don't leave her

Shady Grove, my little love, Shady Grove my darlin'
 Shady Grove, my little love, I'm going back to Harlan

Every night when I go home, my wife I try to please her
 The more I try the worse she gets, damned if I don't leave her

Chorus

Fly around my pretty little miss, fly around my daisy
 Fly around my pretty little miss, nearly drive me crazy

Chorus

I'm Head Over Heels

Lester Flatt (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1950)

Key of G, 115 BPM

I
I think I'll go across the ocean

If I don't change my notion
V I
I just got to forget you if I can

IV
Oh I'm feeling so blue
I
I don't know what to do
V I
For I'm head over heels in love with you

Every day is sad and lonely
For I'm thinking of you only
Oh I just can't sleep when I lay down

Chorus

Oh the nights are long and dreary
All I do is sit and worry
I just can't bear the thought of losing you

Chorus

Oh I like to be forgiven
But this life ain't worth living
If I have to sit and worry over you

Chorus

A classic bluegrass song written by Lester Flatt, also titled "Head Over Heels."

Recorded November 21, 1950, it was released as an A-side (the B-side was "We Can't Be Darlings Anymore." Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so Earls' banjo was tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So to play along with the original recording, a capo is required on the first fret or you need to retune. The Osborne Brothers did a version on their 1978 album "Bluegrass Collection." And J.D. Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Bobby Hicks and Todd Phillips (with Jerry Douglas) did a version on the 1985 album "The Bluegrass Album Volume Four."

Originally, the chorus was sung with no harmony. Typically you will hear the chorus with three-part harmony.

Dark Hollow

Key of C, 105 BPM

Traditional/Bill Browning (ver. The Kentucky Colonels, 1965)

I V I
 I'd rather be in some dark hollow
 IV I
 Where the sun don't never shine
 I7 IV
 Than to be home alone and knowing that you're gone
 I V I
 Would cause me to lose my mind

Then blow your whistle freight train
 Carry me farther on down the track
 Well I'm going away I'm leaving today
 I'm going but I ain't coming back

I'd rather be in some dark hollow
 Where the sun don't ever shine
 Than to be in some big city
 In a small room with your love on my mind

Chorus

Chorus

Bill Browning likely adapted these lyrics from an earlier version of this song, but he copyrighted these lyrics and recorded the song in 1957 (for example, some of the lyrics can be found in some versions of "East Virginia Blues"). Country singer Jimmie Skinner recorded a version in 1958 that made it to the top of the Billboard charts.

In the early 60s Bill Monroe was performing this with The Blue Grass Boys at live shows (with a young Del McCoury on guitar and vocals). A number of different bluegrass artists put these songs on their albums in the 1960s and 70s. In 1964 a young David Grisman recorded a version (with Del McCoury on guitar and vocals). 1967 Mac Wiseman (self titled). J.D. Crowe and The Kentucky Mountain Boys "Bluegrass Holiday" in 1969. Joe Val and the New England Bluegrass Boys "One Morning in May" in 1971. Country Gazette "What a Way to Make a Living" in 1977. Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers "Dark Hollow" released in 1982.

The version referenced is from the band Muleskinner album "A Potpourri of Bluegrass Jam" recorded March in 1973. Muleskinner. The band was formed by Peter Rowan (guitar), David Grisman (mandolin), Richard Greene (fiddle), Bill Keith (banjo) and John Kahn (bass) to be the band for Bill Monroe for a television program. Monroe's bus broke down so the band played the whole evening on their own. They were going to tour, but Clarence White was killed by a drunk driver July 14, 1973.

The chorus is typically sung as a duo. Muleskinner sung the entire song as a duo.

Roving Gambler

Key of B, 115 BPM

Traditional (ver. Country Gentlemen, 1960)

I
I am a roving gambler, gambled all around
IV I
Ever I meet with a deck of cards
IV I
I lay my money down
V
Lay my money down, lay my money down

I had not been in 'Frisco many more weeks than three
I met up with a pretty little girl
She fell in love with me
Fell in love with me, fell in love with me

She took me in her parlour, she cooled me with a fan
Whispered low in her mother's ear
Love this gambling man
Love this gambling man, love this gambling man

Oh daughter oh dear daughter how can you treat me so?
Leave your dear old mother
And with the gambler go
With the gambler go, with the gambler go

My mother, oh dear mother I tell you if I can
If you ever see me coming back
I'll be with a gambling man
With the gambling man, with the gambling man

I left her in 'Frisco I wound up in Maine
I met up with a gambling man
I got in a poker game
Got in a poker game, got in a poker game

He put his money in the pot and dealt the cards around
Saw him deal from the bottom of the deck
So I shot the gambler down
Shot the gambler down, shot the gambler down

Now I'm down in prison got a number for my name
The Warden said as he locked the door
You've gambled your last game
Gambled your last game, gambled your last game

Dating back to the 16th Century, this song was originally titled “Roving Gamboler,” about a happy traveller. When this song was brought over to America, “Gamboler” morphed to “Gambler,” creating a different main character. In the 1920s, a number of artists recorded versions of the song. In 1927, Vernon Dalhard recorded “Gambler,” which would become the basis for later recordings of the song. However, verses would be added and modified through the years. Other non-bluegrass artists to record this song include The Everly Brothers, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott, Simon and Garfunkel, Robert Mitchum and, more recently, Norah Jones and Billie Joe Armstrong.

The New Lost City Ramblers recorded a version in 1958, but the version referenced here is a 1960 recording by The Country Gentlemen off the album “Country Songs, Old and New.” The Stanley Brothers recorded a live version off their album “The Legendary Stanley Brothers Recorded Live” in 1969. Peter Rowan did a version on his 1982 album “The Walls of Time” and Larry Sparks also recorded this song in 1982 on the album “Dark Hollow” (and rereleased on a 1989 album “Classic Bluegrass”). More recently, Dierks Bentley did a version with the Punch Brothers on the 2010 album “Up On the Ridge.”

Typically the last repeated line of each verse is sung in three-part harmony.

Hard Pressed

Key of B, 135 BPM

Tim O'Brien (ver. Hot Rize, 1986)

I V I
Hard pressed we can find a way

Night is almost gone

IV
It'll be another day

I V I
If you're hard pressed we can find a way

Fears, trials, and troubles have we all
The road is rough and rocky
You'll stumble and fall
Pray to him and he will hear your call
If you're hard pressed we can find a way

Chorus

I'm proud to have a family of my own
I know I'm lucky to have my health and home
I don't have much but I won't be alone
If we're hard pressed we can find a way

Chorus

So make me a pillow for my head
I'll remember words that my daddy once said
When he was trying to keep his family fed
If we're hard pressed we can find a way

Chorus

If we're hard pressed we can find a way

Written by Tim O'Brien

Recorded in 1986 by the band "Hot Rize" – this was from their third album, "Traditional Ties." 1978

The chorus is sung as a trio; however, the lines "Night is almost gone" is sung solo by the lead and "It'll be another day" is sung solo by the tenor.

Long Journey Home

Key of A 155 BPM

Traditional (ver. The Kentucky Colonels, 1964)

I
Lost all my money but a two dollar bill

Two dollar bill lord, two dollar bill

Lost all my money but a two dollar bill

And I'm on my long journey home

Black smoke's a rising, surely is a train
Surely is a train lord, surely is a train
Black smoke's a rising, surely is a train
And I'm on my long journey home

Homesick and lonesome, feeling kind of blue
Feeling kind of blue, lord, feeling kind of blue
Homesick and lonesome, feeling kind of blue
And I'm on my long journey home

Pretty girls a waiting on down the line
On down the line lord, on down the line
Pretty girls a waiting on down the line
And I'm on my long journey home

Chorus

Surprisingly little history exists for a song that has been recorded as frequently as this song (also known as “Two Dollar Bill.”)

On February 17, 1936, Bill Monroe and his brother Charlie recorded for the first time after playing together as a duet for country dances. "My Long Journey Home" was one of ten songs they recorded (in addition to "Nine Pound Hammer," "The New River Train," "Old Cross Roads" and "What Would You Give in Exchange For Your Soul.")

The number of bluegrass artists that have recorded “Long Journey Home” would be too numerous to include here. Some of the bands were The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover, The Stanley Brothers, Jim and Jesse, The Johnson Mountain Boys, Don Reno and Bill Harrell and the Tennessee Cutups and Jim Eanes. The version here is from a live album of The Kentucky Colonels, recorded at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival.

Typically sung as a duet. There are multiple verses, and the order of verses can change (with sometimes the chorus always being sung between verses).

Teardrops in My Eyes

Key of C 118 BPM

Red Allen and Tommy Sutton (ver. Red Allen and the Osborne Brothers, 1956)

I IV
Those heartaches now are on my way
V I
What makes you want to be that way
You cheated on me and you've lied
You put teardrops in my eyes

V I
I found out what they say is true
II V
I hope someday that you'll be blue
I IV
And then you'll know dear why I cry
V I
With these teardrops in my eyes

I heard the rumors all around
That someday you'd let me down
I turn my head when gossip flies
Cause it puts teardrops in my eyes

Chorus

I never thought you'd let me down
But now at last I understand
You wrecked my life and broke our vows
You'll have to pay for it somehow

Chorus

Tommy Sutton was an early western singer/performer who eventually became a disc jockey. He was a regular at the Renfro Valley Barn Dance. Tommy Sutton was a co-writer on multiple songs, including "Della Mae," "It Hurts To Know" and "Two Lonely Hearts," just to name a few.

In 1956, The Osborne Brothers with Red Allen released "Teardrops in My Eyes" as a B-side, along with "Who Done It?" as the A-side. The Osborne Brothers and Red Allen produced music from 1956 to 1958. Red Allen would then team up with Frank Wakefield.

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band recorded a version on their 1974 album "Stars and Stripes Forever." The Rice Brothers recorded a version for their 1989 self-titled album. And more recently, the Grascals recorded a version on their 2005 self-titled debut album.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

My Little Girl in Tennessee

Key of G#, 137 BPM

Lester Flatt (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1949)

IV I
Oh the little girl of mine in Tennessee
V
I know she's waiting there for me
I IV I
Someday I'll settle down in that little country town
V I
With that little girl of mine in Tennessee

I IV I
Oh, a long long time ago when I left my home to roam
V
Down in the hills of Tennessee
I IV I
The sweetest little girl that was ever in this world
V I
Down in the hills of Tennessee

Chorus

Oh, she begged me not to go you'll be sorry, dear, I know
For the way that you were treating me
So I rambled all around and nothing could be found
To take the place of her in Tennessee

Chorus

Oh, someday I'll wander back to that little cabin shack
Little girl that's waiting there for me
I can see her smiling face waiting for me at the gate
Oh that little girl of mine in Tennessee

Chorus

A classic bluegrass song written by Lester Flatt.

Recorded December 11, 1949, it was released as a B-side (the A-side was "I'll Never Love Another." Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so Earls' banjo was tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So to play along with the original recording, a capo is required on the first fret or you need to retune. The Osborne Brothers did a version on their 1973 album "Yesterday, Today, and the Osborne Brothers." Terry Baucom, Lou Reid and Carolina did a version on their 1993 album, "Carolina Moon." More recently, Chris Thile and Michael Daves released a version on their 2011 album "Sleep With One Eye Open."

Typically the chorus is sung as a duet.

The White Dove

Key of E, 105 bpm

Carter Stanley (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1949)

I IV
In the deep rolling hills of old Virginia
I V
There's a place I love so well
I IV
Where I spent many days of my childhood
I V I
In the cabin where we loved to dwell

White dove will mourn in sorrow
The willows will hang their heads
I'll live my life in sorrow
Since mother and daddy are dead

We were all so happy there together
In our peaceful little mountain home
But the Savior needs angels in heaven
Now they sing around that great white throne

Chorus

As the years roll by I often wonder
Will we all be together some day
And each night as I wander through the graveyard
Darkness finds me where I kneel to pray

Written by Carter Stanley in 1949 while on the road with Ralph. Ralph was annoyed because the light was bothering Carter. He was even more annoyed when he found out the song he Carter wrote had killed off their parents. However, it was to become one of the Stanley Brothers most famous songs.

Recorded by the Stanley Brothers on March 1, 1949 at Castle Studio in Nashville. It was released as the A-side. The B-side was "The Master's Bouquet." Osborne Brothers released a version on the 1978 album "The Osborne Brothers' Bluegrass Collection.

Chorus is sung in three-part harmony. On the original recording, at the suggestion of Al Wooten, they modified the standard three-part harmony approach by switching the low baritone to high baritone (Pee Wee Lambert and Ralph sang harmony to Carter).

Dim Lights, Thick Smoke (and Loud Loud Music) Key of F, 95 BPM

Joe Maphis, Rose Lee Maphis and Max Fidler (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1952)

I	IV	
Dim lights, thick smoke, and loud, loud music		
I	V	
Is the only kind of life you'll ever understand		
I	IV	
Dim lights, thick smoke and loud, loud music		
I	V	I
You'll never make a wife to a home-loving man		

A home and little children mean nothing to you
 A house filled with love and a husband so true
 You'd rather have a drink with the first guy you meet
 And the only home you know is the club down the street

Chorus

A drinking and dancing to a honky tonk band
 Is the only kind of life you'll ever understand
 Go on and have your fun, you think you've played it smart
 I'm sorry for you and your honky tonk heart

Chorus

Joe Maphis was born in Virginia but started his musical career after his family moved to Maryland. After playing in a number of different bands across Virginia, he joined the army in 1944, entertaining troops around the world. In 1946 he was discharged, moving to Virginia. His big break came when he moved to California in 1951 (after being invited to by Merle Travis and Johnny Bond. This song he wrote in 1952 after playing in Bakersfield. The story is he wrote this song after listening to Buck Owens perform at the Blackboard Café. While Joe Maphis wrote and performed it in 1952, Joe didn't record it until 1953. Flatt and Scruggs were the first to record the song.

Recorded November 1952 in Nashville as Side B. Flint Hill Special was the Side A. In addition to Flatt and Scruggs, Frank Wakefield and the Good Old Boys covered this song on the 1975 album "Pistol Packin' Mama" (with Don Reno on banjo, Chubby Wise on fiddle, Pat Campbell on bass and David Nelson on guitar). Benny Martin recorded a song (with Bobby Osborne on vocals) on his album "Big Daddy of the Fiddle & Bow" in 1979. Larry Sparks recorded a version on his album "Lonesome and Then Some" in 2014 (with Curly Seckler, Flatt and Scruggs mandolin player). Illrd Tyme Out recorded a version on their live album "Back to the MAC" and the Earls of Leicester recorded this song on their self-titled debut album.

Typically the chorus is sung as a trio.

In the Pines

Key of E 112 BPM

Traditional (ver. Bill Monroe, 1952)

Hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo

I IV I

The longest train I ever saw

V I

Went down that Georgia line

IV I

The engine passed at six o'clock

V I

And the cab passed by at nine

In the pines, in the pines
Where the sun never shines
And we shiver when the cold wind blows
Hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo, hoo hoo hoo hoo hoo

I asked my captain for the time of day
He said he threw his watch away
A long steel rail and a short cross tie
I'm on my way back home

Chorus

Little girl, little girl, what have I done
That makes you treat me so?
You caused me to weep, you caused me to moan
You caused me to leave my home

Chorus

This song dates back to the mid-1850s and seems to have originated in the Appalachian region. At that time, it was known as "Where Did You Sleep Last Night," or "Black Girl." There are many different lyrics, but the frequent elements are a chorus with "in the pines," a verse about "the longest train" and/or a verse about decapitation. It was first recorded by Dock Walsh on April 17, 1926. Fiddlin' Arthur Smith recorded a version in 1938. It was also famously recorded by the grunge band Nirvana as "Where Did You Sleep Last Night" on "MTV Unplugged in New York."

The two most influential recordings of the song were Lead Belly and Bill Monroe, and both recorded the song in the 1940s and the 1950s. Bill Monroe's first version was on October 2, 1941, which is considered "pre-bluegrass" (with Clyde Moody singing harmony). He recorded it again on July 18, 1952 (which is the version above) with Jimmy Martin and Sonny Osborne (with Charlie Cline on fiddle). The song has been covered many times. The Louvin Brothers released a version in 1956 on "Tragic Songs of Life." Doc Watson has recorded the song numerous times. The Kentucky Colonels recorded this song at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival (on the album "Long Journey Home"). Another significant version is by Ralph Stanley and Jimmy Martin on the album "First Time Together," released in 1980.

Typically the entire song is sung as a duet. Bill Monroe (and others) also have a wind sound effect after the line "cold wind blows" and after the yodel.

In the Gravel Yard

Key of B 110BPM

Malcolm Pulley (ver. Blue Highway, 1996)

I	IV	I
In the gravel yard, with a number for my name		
	V	I
Making little rocks out of big rocks all day		
	IV	I
Oh, the work is mighty hard in the gravel yard		
	V	I
I'll never be a free man, so they say		

Warden hear my plea, listen now to me
 I killed a man that I caught with my wife
 You'd probably done the same, so I am not to blame
 Sentenced to the rest of my life

Chorus

In the driving rain with a ball and chain
 My hammer rings a low mournful sound
 It sings a little song for the ones who done me wrong
 Who lie beneath the cold, cold ground

Chorus

Chorus

It is rare for a contemporary song to be written and performed that becomes a "jam standard." However, Malcolm Pulley was able to. He has written a few songs that have been recorded by James King and Michelle Nixon, but none, at this time, have reached the popularity of "In the Gravel Yard."

Blue Highway recorded "In the Gravel Yard" in 1995 and it was released on their debut album "It's a Long Long Road." Tim Stafford, originally the guitar player with Alison Krauss and Union Station, helped organize Blue Highway with Wayne Taylor in 1994. Shawn Lane on fiddle, Jason Burleson on banjo and Rob Ickes on dobro would become the band. In 1998, Jason Burleson left the band and was replaced by Tom Adams for two years, at which time Jason returned. Tim Stafford, Shawn Lane and Wayne Taylor are all accomplished songwriters; however, arguably, their most famous song was written by someone else. Blue Highway is one of the leaders of the new, contemporary style of bluegrass, which combines traditional bluegrass with a polished studio sound performed by very accomplished musicians. Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver also recorded a version on the 1995 album "Never Walk Away."

The chorus is sung as a duet by Blue Highway. Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver sung the song as a trio.

How Long Have I Been Waiting For You

Key of B 115 BPM

Jonathan Edwards (ver. Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, 1979)

I

How long have I been waiting for you

IV V I

How long have yo -u been on your way

How long has our love been decided

IV V I

Only forever don't you ever go away

I V IV I

Waiting is a game that I was getting good at

V IV I

Sitting and watching was becoming my style

V IV I

Today I have found I can love again and will

V IV I

You'll be staying in my heart for a long, long while

Chorus

Waiting is a game that I was getting good at

Sitting and watching was becoming my style

Today I have found I can love again and will

You'll be staying in my heart for a long, long while

Chorus

Jonathan Edwards grew up playing music in the Virginia area. In the late 60s and early 70s he played country blues around the New England area, opening for acts such as The Allman Brothers and B.B. King. It was that time he wrote and recorded his most famous song, "Sunshine." In 1983 he joined The Seldom Scene and produced their album "Blue Ridge." Three of his songs are featured on this album, "Sunshine," "Little Hands," and this song, "How Long Have I Been Waiting For You."

Prior to The Seldom Scene recording, Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver recorded this song on the album "Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver," released in 1979. Until this time, Doyle Lawson had been a side musician for a number of bands, including Jimmy Martin, J. D. Crowe and the Kentucky Mountain Boys and The Country Gentlemen. Originally called "Doyle Lawson and Foxfire," Doyle brought together Terry Baucom on banjo, Jimmy Haley on guitar and Lou Reid on bass. They would become known for their focus on vocals, particularly three-part harmonies.

The chorus is sung as a trio.

Hold Whatcha Got

Key of F 97 BPM

Jimmy Martin (ver. Jimmy Martin, 1958)

I
 Hold whatcha got, I'm a-coming home baby
 IV
 Hold whatcha got, and I don't mean maybe
 I V
 Been a-thinking about you and I'm on my way
 I
 Don't sell the house, and don't wreck the car
 IV
 Stay there, honey, right where you are
 I V I
 Hold whatcha got, I'm a coming home to stay

Well... in my mind I can see
 That's a pretty good sign that I need you
 And that's why I can't wait to get back home
 So squeeze yourself real good and tight
 I'll be there before daylight
 If you hold whatcha got, I'm a coming home to stay

Chorus

Well... when I get back, honey, I ain't leaving
 I been too lonely a little too much grieving
 When I get back this time I'm going to stay
 Well we won't fuss and we won't fight
 This time things are gonna be all right
 If you hold whatcha got, I'm a-coming home to stay

Chorus

A classic, hard driving bluegrass song written by Jimmy Martin. This song was originally recorded in 1958 in the key of F by Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys. It was released in 1959 as a B-side (the A-side was She's Left Me Again). The banjo break is an interesting single-string lick that Jimmy Martin pushed JD Crowe to play, likening it to a Tommy Collins guitar lick.. Initially JD Crowe did not like playing it, comparing it unfavourably to picking a tenor banjo. Soon, many banjo players were asking him after a performance to show them the lick.

This song can also be found on the album "Good N' Country" by Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys (released in 1960). Tony Rice recorded a version on the 1979 album "Manzanita." And Jimmy Martin rerecorded it for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band collaborative album "Will the Circle Be Unbroken Volume 3."

The chorus is sung as a duo (originally sung by mandolin player Paul Williams).

Somehow Tonight

Key of G 118 BPM

Earl Scruggs (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1951)

I
 Somehow tonight I feel lonely, my darlin'
 V
 Somehow tonight I feel blue
 I
 Somehow tonight these tears of mine keep falling
 V I
 Come back, sweetheart and be true

I thought your love was something I could treasure
 To brighten my pathway through the years
 All I can see is darkness in the future
 That's why I long to have you near

Chorus

I never knew what loneliness meant, darlin'
 Until I watched you walk away
 I long to hear you whisper that you love me
 I can't forget our happy days

Chorus

A rarity from the Flatt and Scruggs catalog in that it was written by Earl Scruggs and not Lester Flatt. In fact, it was the first vocal song solely credited to Earl Scruggs.

Flatt and Scruggs recorded this song May 9, 1951 in Castle Studio at the Tulane Hotel. It was the B-side (the A-side was "Jimmy Brown the Newsboy." This recording features Everett Lilly, a mandolin player and singer that played with his brother Bea as The Lilly Brothers. Everett was only with Flatt and Scruggs from 1951 to 1952, at which point Tex Logan convinced the brothers to reunite. Eventually the brothers would move to Boston and have a huge impact on the bluegrass community in the New England area.

This song has been recorded by Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers in 1979 on the album "Kinda Lonesome." The Osborne Brothers recorded a version in 1984 on their album "Some Things I Want to Sing About." JD Crowe has recorded it two times – on the album "Ramblin' Boy" with JD Crowe and the Kentucky Mountain Boys in 1971. This album was re-released as "Blackjack" in 1978. He also recorded a version with The Bluegrass Album Band on their album "The Bluegrass Album Band Volume Four" in 1985.. Both times Doyle Lawson played mandolin. In 1971, Larry Rice played guitar – and in 1985, Tony Rice played guitar. Ricky Skaggs also recorded a version in 1997 on the album "Bluegrass Rules!"

The chorus was originally sung as a duet, with Everett Lilly singing tenor to Lester's lead. However, it is also sung as a trio on the chorus.

Handsome Molly

Traditional (Stanley Brothers, 1962)

Key of A, 128 BPM

I

Well, I wish I was in London,

IV

Or some other seaport town

Set my foot in a steamboat

I

And sail the ocean 'round.

Sailing around the ocean,

Sailing around the sea

I think of Handsome Molly

Wherever she may be

I saw her in church last Sunday

She passed me on by

I knew her mind was changing

By the roving of her eye

Her hair was black as raven

Her eyes were black as coal

Her teeth shone like lilies

Out in the morning cold

Now do you remember Molly

When you give me your right hand?

You said if you ever married

I'd be your man

Now you've broken your promise

To marry who you please

My heart is broken

'Til I get some ease

Repeat first and second verse

A courting ballad that dates back to traditional Irish ballads that include "Farewell Ballymoney" family of songs including "Irish Girl", "Lovely Molly", "Loving Hannah", "Dark-Eyed Molly", and "Going to Mass Last Sunday." The pre-bluegrass recording of significance was a 1927 recording by fiddler G.B. Grayson and guitarist Henry Whitter. The album had "Train 45" as the A-side, and a version of "Handsome Molly" on the B-side.

The Stanley Brothers would regularly perform this song through the 1950s at live concerts. There is a recording from 1956 that was recorded in an impromptu session in a studio in front of a single mic with Ralph Mayo and Curley Lambert. This recording can be heard on the album "An Evening Long Ago." In January of 1961 they did a studio recording of the song (the only session of the Stanley brothers to feature electric bass). It was released on the album "Folk Song Festival."

Other significant recordings include two recordings by The Country Gentlemen – a 1961 recording on the album "Sing & Play Folk Songs & Bluegrass" and a 1963 live recording on the album "On the Road." Doc Watson recorded the song in an old-time style with Gaither Carlton in 1961 and released on the album "Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley's" (and can be found on the compilation album "The Essential Doc Watson"). Bob Dylan, Ian and Sylvia Tyson and even Mick Jagger have recorded versions.

Carter Stanley would sing this song as a solo. Country Gentlemen recorded the song with three-part harmony through the entire song. Verses can vary, and some recordings repeat "Sailing around the ocean..." as a chorus in between each verse, with only the verses in harmony.

It Hurts To Know

Key of C 68 BPM

Tommy Sutton, Red Allen (ver. Osborne Brothers, 1956)

I V
 Today I'm here thinking about you
 I
 It seems I don't know what to do
 V
 No way to turn nothing to look for
 IV V I
 It hurts to know that I've lost you

It hurts to know you're with another
 After what you put me through
 It hurts to start my life all over
 To start all over without you

Someday my darling he will leave you
 Just like the one he left before
 And then you'll know how much it hurts you
 You'll cry, can't sleep and walk the floor

Chorus

Tommy Sutton was an early western singer/performer who eventually became a disc jockey. He was a regular at the Renfro Valley Barn Dance. Tommy Sutton was a co-writer on multiple songs, Harley "Red" Allen at 22 met a teenage mandolin player Frank Wakefield and formed the Blue Ridge Mountain Boys (with Ohio banjo player Noah Crase). In 1956 Red would join with the Osborne Brothers and record some of the most influential vocal trios in bluegrass music. This songwriting duo also wrote "Teardrops in My Eyes."

Red Allen joined the Osborne Brothers for only a span of two years, from 1956 to 1958. But in that short time, they would record some very influential bluegrass songs. Typically, the lead singer was in the middle of a vocal stack, with a higher harmony (the "tenor") and a lower harmony (the "baritone"). With Bobby Osborne's naturally high voice, his lead was the highest in the vocal stack. Red Allen's powerful voice sang below Bobby – the baritone. Sonny would sing below Red Allen, the "low tenor" creating a very interesting vocal configuration. This can be heard most memorably on the song "Once More," but can also be heard in this recording.

This song was released on the 1959 album "Country Pickin' and Hillside Singin'" by the Osborne Brothers and Red Allen (released after Red left the band in 1958). The Laurel Canyon Ramblers also recorded a version in 1998 on the album "Back On the Street Again."

The entire song is sung in three-part harmony.

Hello City Limits

Key of B 141 BPM

Johnny Elgin and Benny Martin (ver. Red Allen and the Kentuckians 1956)

I
 Hello, city limits I see your sign
 IV I
 Left all my worries way behind
 V
 Left all my troubles and heartaches there too
 IV V I
 Hello, city limits I'm starting out brand new

I need a change of scenery, need it real bad
 To help me forget all the troubles I've had
 I've got a feeling I'll find a love that's true
 Hello city limits I'm starting out brand new

Chorus

I haven't told a soul just where I'll be
 I don't want the blues to catch up with me
 I may decide to change my name too
 Well hello city limits, I'm starting out brand new

Chorus

Chorus

Johnny Elgin was a host and frequent performer on the Peach State Jamboree radio show in Georgia. In 1957 he had a hit single with "Sittin' Alone with the Blues," but was working as a manager and ad salesman for radio. However, his song "Hello City Limits" became a country hit with Benny Martin, which allowed Elgin to pursue music full-time as a writer and producer of music. Elgin eventually joined Spar Records, producing the Nashville Country Jamboree. These albums featured the handiwork of Elgin and Nashville session musicians, such as Floyd Cramer, Hargus "Pig" Robbins, Norbert Putnam, Wayne Moss, Charlie McCoy, David Briggs, Norbert Putnam, and Pete Drake

Red Allen and the Kentuckians released this song as the A-side in 1965 (with the B-side being "Flowers By My Graveside"). It was also released on the album "The Solid Bluegrass Sound of The Kentuckians." Bill Emerson was on banjo, Bill Yates on Bass, Red Allen on guitar and vocals, Wayne Yates on mandolin and Chubby Wise on fiddle. Hugh Moore released a version in 1986 on the album "Hello City Limits." The Blue Canyon Boys also released a version in 2008, also on an album titled "Hello City Limits."

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

Drink Up and Go Home

Key of C 189 BPM

Freddie Hart (ver. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys)

I
You sit there a-crying, right in your beer
IV V
You say you got troubles, my friend listen here

IV I
Don't tell me your troubles, got enough of my own
IV V I
Be thankful you're living, drink up and go home

IV I
I'm fresh out of prison, six years in the pen
IV V
Lost my wife and family, no one to call friend

Chorus

Back there sits a blind man, so blind he can't see
Yet he's not complaining, why should you or me?

Chorus

I'm fresh out of prison, six years in the pen
Lost my wife and family, no one to call friend

Chorus

Freddie Hart is probably best known for his song “Easy Loving,” which was first recorded in 1969, but was re-released in 1971. However, Freddie Hart was active in the country music scene all through the 50s and 60s, writing songs for Carl Smith, George Jones, Porter Wagoner and Patsy Cline. In the early 50s he moved out to California, becoming involved with Buck Owens in the “Bakersfield sound.” Freddie continues to perform gospel. This song was first recorded by Carl Perkins in 1955.

Jimmy Martin recorded the song in 1961 in Nashville with Paul Craft on banjo, Roy Huskey Jr. on bass and Paul Williams on mandolin (and a very subtle snare drum by Willie Acerman. It was released on the 1962 album "Country Music Time." The song structure is unique as it could be considered to have two separate choruses with unique chord structures that are also slightly different from the chord structure of the verse.

This song is a classic example of the bluegrass 3/4 time. You can hear in Carl Perkin's version, the emphasis is on beat 1. In bluegrass, the emphasis is on beats 2 and 3. Additionally, Carl's version has a "II-chord" at the line "Lost my wife and family..."

The last line of the chorus "Be thankful you're living..." is in three-part harmony.

Will the Roses Bloom (Where She Lies Sleeping) Key of C#, 86 BPM

J and I Bevins (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1949)

I		IV
Will the roses bloom where she lies sleeping		
I		V
Will the flowers shed their petals there		
I		IV
Will the dewdrops fall upon the roses		
I	V	I
Where my darling sleeps beneath the sand		

Her lips were like a bunch of roses
 Her eyes shine like the starlit sky
 And her hair was dark and it was curly
 I'll love her till the day I die

Chorus

How I miss my darling as she's sleeping
 Underneath the beautiful sky
 I miss her more now since she has left me
 I know we've said our last goodbye

Chorus

I believe the Bevins Brothers is an alias, but I can't be certain. If The Bevins Brothers did write this song, it's their only writing credit.

Recorded by Flatt and Scruggs on October 20, 1950. Jody Rainwater, the bass player, played mandolin on the original recording while Benny Sims, the fiddle player, played upright bass. It was released as a B-side (the A-side was "Preachin', Prayin', Singin'.")

Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so Earls' banjo was tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So to play along with the original recording, a capo is required on the first fret or you need to retune.

Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice recorded this song in 1980 on the album "Skaggs & Rice."

Typically the chorus is sung as a duet.

I'm Sittin' on Top of the World

Key of D, 115 BPM

Carter and Jacobs (Walter Vinson and Lonnie Chatmon) (ver. Bill Monroe, 1957)

I
Was in the spring one sunny day
IV I
My good gal left me, she gone away

But now she's gone and I don't worry
V I
Lord I'm sitting on top of the world

She called me in Dallas and El Paso
Said come on daddy, I need you so

Chorus

Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust
Show me a woman a man can trust

Chorus

The Mississippi River, runs deep and wide
The one I'm loving is on the other side

Chorus

(additional verses)

You don't like my peaches, don't you shake my tree
Get out of my orchard, let my peaches be

Chorus

Don't you come here running, holding out your hand
I'll get me a woman like you got your man

Chorus

Written by two members of the band "The Mississippi Sheiks," who recorded the song in 1930. Walter Vinson (who would sometimes go as Walter Jacobs) was a guitarist and singer, and Lonnie Chatmon (who would write under the last name Carter) was the fiddle player. This song became a standard of Americana music. It became a popular western swing number after Milton Brown recorded it in 1934 and Bob Wills recorded a version in 1935. Ray Charles did an early version in 1949. Howlin' Wolf's 1957 version is very well known, as is Grateful Dead's version from 1967. More recently, Jack White recorded a version in 2003 for the movie "Cold Mountain."

To make this confusing, there is a song "I'm Sittin' On Top of the World" that was popularized by Al Jolson (and written by Ray Henderson, Sam Lewis and Joe Young) in 1926, but they are very different. Bill Monroe sings the Vinson/Chatman version, but gives writing credits to Henderson, Lewis and Young.

Recorded by Bill Monroe on May 14, 1957. It was released as an A-Side (with Molly and Tenbrooks as the B-side), but also released on the album "Knee Deep in Bluegrass." It was recorded by Doc Watson in 1964 on his self-titled Vanguard album. Other notable recordings include Seldom Scene "15th Anniversary Celebration Live at the Kennedy Center" from 1988. Lonesome River Band also recorded a version in 1994 for their album "Carrying the Tradition."

This song has multiple versions of lyrics (sometimes modified from other songs). Bill Monroe sang this song with no harmony. The chorus is typically sung in three-part harmony. There can be a VI minor in the chorus (on the word "worry.")

You're Running Wild

Key of B, 62 BPM

Don Winters and Ray Edenton (ver. Louvin Brothers, 1956)

I V
You're running wild, how long can this go on

IV V
You're leaving me alone, and running wild

You're always gone, my love you've never shared
It's more than I can bare, you're running wild

II V I
You'll settle down some day and find I've gone away

IV V
You'll think of what you've done while running wild

I can't go on, you'll have to choose the way
You'll have to go or stay, stop running wild

Chorus and last verse

Ray Edenton was one of Nashville's most prolific and reliable session musicians, playing rhythm and lead guitar, as well as mandolin and bass. His session work ranged from work with Webb Pierce (There Stands the Glass) to Chet Atkins, Debby Boone, the Beach Boys, Henry Mancini and Andy Williams. Donnie Winters, popularly known as "The Yodeling King" was a singer and songwriter in Nashville and a member of the Marty Robbins' Band. The song was first released by The Louvin Brothers in 1956 as an A-side. The B-side was "Cash on the Barrel Head. Linda Ronstadt, George Jones, and Emmy Lou Harris are just a few of the non-bluegrass artists to cover this song.

The Louvin Brothers were the musical duo of Charlie (on guitar) and Ira (on mandolin). They sang country and secular music through the late 50s and early 60s. Their unique method of harmony singing would have a huge impact on bluegrass, folk and country, influencing everyone from The Eagles to Emmy Lou Harris, The Byrds, and many more. Ira was a prolific songwriter, but this is one of the few songs that he did not write.

Joe Val and the New England Bluegrass Boys recorded a version in 1983 on their album "Cold Wind." Rhonda Vincent recorded a version on her "Back Home Again" album in 2000 (with her brother, Darrin Vincent singing harmony). In 2001, Tony Rice, Larry Rice, Chris Hillman and Herb Pedersen recorded this song on the album "Running Wild." Ronnie Simpkins played bass, Rickie Simpkins played fiddle and Robbie Magruder played drums. Chris Thile and Michael Daves recorded a version on their 2011 album "Sleep With One Eye Open." The Gibson Brothers released a version on their album "Underneath a Harvest Moon" in 1994. Finally, Carl Story and Larry Cordle recorded a version on the compilation album "Livin', Lovin', Losin' (Songs of the Louvin Brothers)" in 2003.

The Louvin Brothers held the note "wild" to overemphasize the reverb that was used at the time. Other recordings by other artists hold the note more consistent with the phrasing of the rest of the song.

The entire song is sung as a duet, except the line "You'll settle down some day, and find I've gone away."

Thirty Years of Farming

Fred Eaglesmith (ver. James King, 2002)

Key of G, 123 BPM

I IV I
 There's a little white note on a gate by the road that a man put up yesterday
 II V
 And when we saw it we all ran out just to see what it had to say
 I IV I
 And when we read it our eyes filled with tears and we fell to the cold hard clay
 Something 'bout a mortgage, something 'bout foreclosure
 V I
 Something 'bout failing to pay

Oh, and on the post by the general store they've put up a little sign
 An auction sale, day after tomorrow at the end of the Lincoln Line
 Thirty years of farming thirty years of heartache thirty years of day to day
 Oh, my Daddy stopped talking the day the farm was auctioned
 There was nothing left to say

Oh, my Mama's tears fell freely down as she walked among the flowers in the yard
 And every number the auctioneer called was like a blow to her precious heart
 And every number the auctioneer called meant another thing was sold that day
 While everything was auctioned we stood there watching
 While they loaded it and drove it away

Chorus

At the day's first dawning we awoke this morning there was nothing for us to do
 Nothing in the granary, no hay in the meadow, no cattle, no tractor, no tools
 So we loaded up the car, took the clothes we wore and a few things we managed to save
 Mama read from The Book, we took one last look
 And then we drove away

Chorus

Written by Fred Eaglesmith, a singer songwriter born near Guelph Ontario. As a teenager, Fred hopped a freight train to western Canada and began his career as a musician. He formed two bands – The Flying Squirrels played folk rock, while the Flathead Noodlers played bluegrass. He frequently collaborated with Willie P. Bennett and Washboard Hank. Fred's songs have been covered by Alan Jackson, Toby Keith, Miranda Lambert and Ani DiFranco. Eaglesmith recorded this song in 1987 on his album "Indiana Road."

James King recorded this song in 2002 on his album "Thirty Years of Farming."

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony. The last time the chorus is sung, the first two lines are sung a cappella.

Red Clay Halo

Key of C, 130 BPM

David Rawlings and Gillian Welch (ver. Nashville Bluegrass Band, 1998)

I
Well the girls all dance with the boys from the city

V
But they don't care to dance with me

I
Well it ain't my fault that the fields are muddy

V I
And the red clay stains my feet

It's under my nails and it's under my collar
And it shows on my Sunday clothes
Though I do my best with the soap and the water
That damned old dirt won't go

IV I
But when I pass through the pearly gates
V I
My gown be gold instead
IV I
Or just a red clay robe with the red clay wings
V I
And a red clay halo for my head

It's mud in the spring and it's dust in the summer
And it rolls in a crimson tide
And the trees and the leaves and the cows are the color
Of the dirt on the mountainside

Chorus

Now Jordan's banks are red and muddy
And the rolling water is wide
But I got no boat, so I'll be good and muddy
When I get to the other side

Chorus

I'll take the red clay robe and the red clay wings
And a red clay halo for my head

Written by Gillian Welch. Gillian was going to college in Santa Cruz, playing bass in a Goth band and drums in a psychedelic surf band, when her roommate played her an album by The Stanley Brothers. From that point on, her musical focus shifted considerably. After finishing a degree in photography, Welch attended Berklee College of Music in Boston. While there she met her musical partner David Rawlings at an audition for Berklee's only country band. Gillian and David released their first album in 1996, *Revival*, which was produced by T-Bone Burnett. "Red Clay Halo" was released on the 2001 album, *Time (the Revelator)*.

Three years prior to Welch and Rawling's release, The Nashville Bluegrass Band released their version of Red Clay Halo on the album "American Beauty." The Nashville Bluegrass Band was originally a group of established, session musicians that joined to be a backing band for Vernon Oxford and Minnie Pearl. Bela Fleck produced their first album, "My Native Home" in 1985. They incorporated spirituals and black gospel with bluegrass, which significantly influenced bluegrass bands through the late 80s and 90s.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

My Cabin in Caroline

Key of G#, 109 BPM

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1950)

I IV I
 There's a cabin in the pines in the hills of Caroline
 V
 And a blue-eyed girl is waiting there for me
 I IV I
 I'll be going back someday, and from her I'll never stray
 V I
 In the cabin in the hills of Caroline
 IV I
 Oh the cabin in the shadow of the pine
 V
 And the blue-eyed girl way down in Caroline
 I IV I
 Someday she'll be my wife, and we'll live a happy life
 V I
 In the cabin in the hills of Caroline

I'm packing my grip for that long, long trip
 Back to the hills of Caroline
 I want to see that blue-eyed girl, she's the sweetest in the world
 And the cabin in the hills of Caroline

Chorus

And when it's late at night and the moon is shining bright
 And the whippoorwill is calling from the hill
 Then I'll tell her of my love, written in the stars above
 How I love her now and I know I always will

Chorus

Written by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs in 1948. It is sometimes credited as "Cabin in Caroline."

This song was recorded by Flatt and Scruggs in November, 1948 and was released in 1949 as the B-side (the A-side was "We'll Meet Again Sweetheart"). This was one of the first four songs recorded for Mercury Records after Lester and Earl left Bill Monroe. Jim Shumate played fiddle and Howard Watts (Cedric Rainwater) played upright bass – there was no mandolin player. Mac Wiseman was at this recording session singing harmonies on the other three songs they recorded, but he did not sing harmony on this song. Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so their instruments were tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So while this song is in the key of G#, they would have been playing in G positions.

This is a classic "jam" song. Originally it was recorded with no harmony. However, most people sing the chorus as a duet or trio, with the third line being sung solo.

We'll Meet Again Sweetheart

Key of B, 104 BPM

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1949)

I IV
 The time has come to say goodbye
 V I
 I'm asking you to please don't cry
 IV
 The time to me won't be so long
 V I
 To know you're happy back at home
 IV
 Someday we'll meet again sweetheart
 V I
 We'll meet and nevermore to part
 IV
 Someday we'll meet again sweetheart
 V I
 Don't cry, so please don't break my heart

So goodbye now don't be blue
 Try to be happy and be true
 And remember what I say
 Sweetheart we'll meet again someday

Chorus

Oh sweetheart I'm leaving now
 Yes I'll soon be on my way
 Each night upon my knees I'll pray
 Sweetheart we'll meet again someday

Chorus

Written by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs in 1948.

This song was recorded by Flatt and Scruggs in November, 1948 and was released in 1949 as the A-side (the A-side was "My Cabin in Caroline"). This was one of the first four songs recorded for Mercury Records after Lester and Earl left Bill Monroe. Jim Shumate played fiddle and Howard Watts (Cedric Rainwater) played upright bass – there was no mandolin player. Mac Wiseman was at this recording session singing harmonies on this song and two others. Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, so their instruments were tuned to G# (to better match Lester's voice). So while this song is in the key of B, they would have been playing in Bb positions.

This is a classic "jam" song. Originally it was recorded as a duet. In live performances, they would sing it as a trio.

White House Blues

Key of B, 176 BPM

Charlie Poole (ver. Bill Monroe and His Bluegrass Boys - 1954)

I
 McKinley hollered, McKinley squalled
 IV I
 Doc said, "McKinley I can't find the cause
 V I
 You're bound to die, you're bound to die"

Doc told the horse, he'd throw down his rein
 He said to the horse, "You gotta outrun the train
 From Buffalo to Washington"

The Doc come a-running, he took off his specs
 He said, "Mr McKinley better cash in your checks
 You're bound to die, you're bound to die"

Look here, you rascal, you see what you've done
 You shot my husband and I've got your gun
 I'm carrying you back, to Washington

Roosevelt's in the White House, he's doing his best
 McKinley's in the graveyard, he's taking his rest
 He's gone, for a long time

First recorded by Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers September 20, 1926. Based on the President McKinley assassination in September of 1901. McKinley was shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz. He was shot in the stomach twice. They found the first bullet but not the second bullet. After appearing to get better, gangrene started to set in. On September 14, McKinley passed away and Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in. Leon Czolgosz was executed and died on the electric chair.

Charlie Poole was an old-time banjo player. The North Carolina Ramblers was a string and country band with Charlie, his brother-in-law-fiddle player Posey Rorer and guitar player Norman Woodlief. They signed on with Columbia Records and recorded "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down" July 27, 1925.. The song sold over 106,000 copies. Charlie Poole would die of a heart attack in 1931 due to excessive alcoholism.

Recorded by Bill Monroe in January of 1954 with Rudy Lyle on banjo, Jimmy Martin on guitar, Ernie Newton on bass and Charlie Cline on fiddle. It was released as a B-side (the A-side was "Get Up John." It was credited to "Wilbur Jones," which was one of the pseudonyms Bill Monroe would use for writing credits.

Flatt and Scruggs performed this song as "McKinley's Gone" at Carnegie Hall in 1962.

It may be easier to cover who hasn't performed this song as this is a favourite of bluegrass artists in live performances. Sam Bush regularly performs this song live, as does Del McCoury, Greensky Bluegrass, Chris Thile, etc..It's on the 1977 album "On Stage in Nashville" by The Bluegrass Cardinals. Boone Creek recorded this song on their 1977 debut album. There are many more.

My Little Georgia Rose

Bill Monroe (ver. Bill Monroe, 1950)

Key of B, 106 BPM

I
Now come and listen to my story
V
A story that I know is true
I
A little rose who bloomed in Georgia
V I
With hair of gold and a heart so true

IV I
Way down in the blue ridge mountains
V
Way down where the tall pines grow
I IV
Lives my sweetheart of the mountains
I V I
She's my little Georgia rose

Her mother left her with another
A carefree life she had planned
The baby now is a lady
The one her mother couldn't stand

Chorus

We often sing love songs together
I watched her do her little part
She smiled at me when I would tell her
That she was my sweetheart

Chorus

Written by Bill Monroe in the late 40s. The song is autobiographical about his child born out of wedlock with Bessie Lee Maudlin. Bessie first met Bill Monroe in 1938 and would be his bass player (and harmony singer) from 1953 to 1964. Bessie had the child in secret in Georgia and left the child with friends (left for adoption). When "Georgia Rose" was older, she would sometimes go on tour with Monroe. "Georgia Rose" never publicly identified herself and died on July 24, 1998.

The song was first recorded by Bill Monroe February 3, 1950 with Jimmy Martin on guitar, Rudy Lyle on banjo, Vassar Clements on fiddle and Joel Price on upright bass. It was re-recorded on June 26, 1954 with Jim Smoak on banjo, Edd Mayfield on guitar, and Ernie Newton on upright bass and featuring triple fiddle, with Charlie Cline, Gordon Terry and Red Taylor. The Seldom Scene also recorded this song and released it on their 1973 album "Act 3." David Grisman released a version on the 1988 album "Home is Where the Heart Is."

Originally this was recorded with no harmony. Most bands perform this song with harmony.

Carolina in the Pines

Key of B, 140 BPM

Michael Martin Murphey (ver. Special Consensus, 2002)

I IIm
 She came to me, said she knew me
 IV I
 Said she'd known me a long time
 IIM IIIM
 And she spoke of being in love
 IV V I
 With every mountain she had climbed

And she talked of trails she'd walked up
 Far above the timberline
 From that night on I knew I'd write songs
 IV V I - IIm - IV - I
 With Carolina in the pines

There's a new moon on the fourteenth
 First quarter the 21st
 And the full moon in the last week
 Brings a fullness to this earth

There's no guesswork in the clockwork
 On the worlds part or of mine
 There are nights I only feel right
 With Carolina in the pines

When the frost shows on the windows
 And the wood stove smokes and glows
 As the fire grows we can warm our souls
 Watching rainbows in the cove

And we'll talk of trails we've walked up
 Far above the timberline
 There are nights I only feel right
 With Carolina in the pines

Carolina in the Pines was written by Michael Martin Murphey. It was released in August of 1975 and reached #21 on the U.S. Billboard top 100 chart. Martin wrote the song for his wife, Caroline. John McEuen, banjo player for The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, played banjo on the 1975 recording

Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver released this song on the album "Once & For Always" in 1985. In 2002 Special Consensus recorded a version for the album "Route 10."

The choruses (every second quatrain that ends "With Carolina in the pines" are sung with harmony.

Somebody Loves You Darling

Key of D, 134 BPM

Wiley Morris and Zeke Morris (ver. Jim and Jesse McReynolds, 1963)

IV I
Somebody loves you darling
VII I IV
Somebody loves you I know
I
Somebody loves you dearly
VII I IV
Why did you let them go

I V
I see the postman coming
IV V I
He's coming down the street
V
And I know he's got a letter
IV V I
For he's headed straight for me

Chorus

There's going to be a wedding
It's going to be in the fall
So boys and girls get ready
I'm going to invite you all

Chorus

The Morris Brothers were a popular brother duet group through the 30s, recording for RCA Victor. They played with J.E. Mainer (and Wade Mainer) in the Crazy Mountaineers and also played with fiddle player Homer Sherrill. They are best known for their recording of "Salty Dog Blues." Zeke Morris also played with Charlie Monroe when Bill left Charlie. Somebody Loves You Darling was the B-side to the 1945 recording of Salty Dog Blues.

Jim and Jesse McReynolds recorded this in 1963 on their album "Bluegrass Special." Allen Shelton is on banjo, Jim Buchanan is on fiddle and Dave Sutherland is playing bass. This song is also on the 1972 Stanley Brothers album "Together for the Las Time," from a live performance recorded at the 1966 Bean Blossom Festival (with three verses that are different from this version). Another significant recording is by Frank Wakefield, Red Allen, Pete Kuykendall and Tom Morgan, recorded live in 1963 at the radio station WDON ("The WDON Recordings 1963).

Jim and Jesse sung the chorus as a duet. Many will sing it in three-part harmony. NOTE: Jim and Jesse also do a key change for the chorus. Most recordings don't do the key change, keeping the chord progression the same through verses and choruses.

Have a Feast Here Tonight

Key of D, 175 BPM

Traditional (ver. Monroe Brothers, 1938)

I
There's a rabbit in the log and I ain't got my dog

V
How will I get him I know

I
I'll get me a briar and twist it in his hair

V I
That way I'll get him I know

I know (yes I know)
I know (I surely know)
That way I'll get him I know
I'll get me a briar and I'll twist it in his hair
That way I'll get him I know

I'll build me a fire and I'll cook that old hare
Roll him in the flames and make him brown
Have a feast here tonight while the moon is shining bright
And find them a place to lie down

To lie down (to lie down)
To lay down (to lie down)
Find them a place to lie down
Have a feast here tonight while the moon is shining bright
And find them a place to lie down

I'm going down that track and my coat ripped up my back
Soles on my shoes are nearly gone
Just a little ways ahead there's a farmer's shed
That's where I'll rest my weary bones

Weary bones (weary bones)
Weary bones (you lazy bones)
That's where I'll rest my weary bones
A little way's ahead there's a farmer's shed
That's where I'll rest my weary bones

The Prairie Ramblers recorded this song in 1933. This "hot string band" and "hot fiddler band" played with a very aggressive style that had a big impact on Bill Monroe, so it's not surprising that Bill would record this song in 1938 with his brother Charlie. The Prairie Ramblers had B-movie actor Floyd "Salty" Holmes on harmonica, jug and guitar. This band also featured Patsy Montana (famous for her song "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart.") This song does go back earlier than that – with one of the verses being identified as African-American origin in North Carolina Folklore Volume III, identified as "Rabbit in the Log" – which this song is also known by.

The Monroe Brothers recorded this song in 1938 as “Have a Feast Here Tonight” as the A-side (the B-side was “Goodbye, Maggie.” It would become a bluegrass standard, recorded multiple times by Bill Monroe (including live recordings with Doc Watson). It would become a signature song for The Stanley Brothers. David Grisman would record a version with Doc Watson and Ricky Skaggs on the album “Home is Where the Heart Is.” It can also be found on the 2003 album “Three Pickers” with Earl Scruggs, Ricky Skaggs and Doc Watson. More recently, Chris Thile and Michael Daves recorded their version on the album “Sleep With One Eye Open (as Rabbit In the Log”).

This song is typically sung as a duet throughout (with the tenor singing the words in bracket).

Little Maggie

Key of G, 130 BPM

Traditional (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1947)

I VII V
Over yonder stands little Maggie

I V I
With a dram glass in her hand
She's drinking away her trouble
And a courting some other man

Oh how can I ever stand it
To see them two blue eyes
A shining in the moonlight
Like two diamonds in the sky

Pretty flowers were made for blooming
Pretty stars were made to shine
Pretty women were made for loving
Little Maggie was made for mine

Last time a saw little Maggie
She was sitting on the banks of the sea
With a forty-four around her
And a banjo on her knee

I'm going down to the station
With my suitcase in my hand
I'm going to leave this country
I'm going to some far and distant land

Go away go away little Maggie
Go and do the best you can
I'll get me another woman
You can get you another man

This song comes from the song "Darling Corey," and shares some of the same lyrics. Little Maggie has the distinctive seven chord. It was first recorded by G.B. Grayson – a blind fiddler - and Henry Whitter, a guitar player. Whitter and Grayson were also the first to record "Tom Dooley," "Train 45" and "Handsome Molly." G.B. Grayson died in 1930 from a fall, riding on the running boards of a car. The song was sung in the Appalachian region as early as 1915. Wade Mainer, Zeke Morris and Steve Ledford also recorded this song in 1937.

The Stanley Brothers recorded this at their second session with the company Rich-R-Tone in 1947 – it was released as the B-side (the A-side was "Little Glass of Wine"). Little Maggie would become a signature song for Ralph Stanley's voice. "Little Maggie" was the first song recorded by Bill Monroe with Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt on the Grande Ole Opry March 23, 1946 (though not their first appearance with Bill on the Grande Ole Opry). It has been recorded and played live by countless bluegrass bands. Typically the song is sung with no harmony.

Is It Too Late Now

Key of C# 98 BPM

Lester Flatt (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1950)

I	IV
Is it too late now to tell you that I love you	
V	I
Or is there still a chance for me somehow	
	IV
Oh they tell me now that you have found another	
V	I
Darlin' please don't say it's too late now	

I know this heart of mine could never stand it
 If I should have to give you up somehow
 Oh won't you say that you'll give me one more chance dear
 Darlin' please don't say it's too late now

Chorus

I confess I know I done you wrong, dear
 Oh can't you see my side of it somehow
 All I ask of you is one more chance dear
 Darlin' please don't say it's too late now

Chorus

Recorded at the third recording session of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, after they left Bill Monroe. This session was the first session with fiddler Benny Sims, December 11, 1949 in Cincinnati. It was released in 1950 as the A-side. The B-side was the gospel song "So Happy I'll Be." It was at this session they recorded "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." Lester is given full writing credit on this song. Flatt and Scruggs tuned their instruments one semi-tone higher than normal, (to better match Lester's voice). So while the key is in C#, they would have been playing out of C-shapes. To play this song with the original recording, you may wish to retune.

This song was originally recorded with no harmony. It was recorded by The Bluegrass Album Band on their second release, Volume 2. The Bluegrass Cardinals recorded a version on their album "Livin' in the Good Old Days" with three-part harmony.

Mr. Engineer

Key of G 117 BPM

Paul Williams and Jimmy Martin (ver. Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys - 1961)

IV V I
 Engineer reach up and pull the whistle
 IV V I
 Let me hear that lonesome sound
 For it blends with the feeling that's in me
 The one I loved has turned me down

I'm gonna catch me a freight train
 Lord I'm leaving this lonesome town
 The one I loved and gave my heart to
 That's the one has turned me down

Engineer reach up and pull the whistle
 Let me hear that lonesome sound
 For it blends with the feeling that's in me
 The one I loved has turned me down

There's sixteen cars behind each engine
 I'll ride the last one to the end of the line
 I don't know where I'm going or where I'll wind up
 Just anything to ease my worried mind

Chorus

Paul Williams, mandolin player for Jimmy Martin, likely wrote this song. Jimmy Martin shares credit, which some bandleaders did at the time. Paul was guitarist and lead singer for the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers before joining Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys in 1957. Paul married Jimmy's half sister in 1962, who told him that "he couldn't play bluegrass music and live for the Lord." So he quit the Sunny Mountain Boys to sing and play gospel music.

The song was recorded October 30, 1961 in Nashville. Paul Williams played mandolin and sang tenor. Paul Craft was the banjo player and sang baritone. Roy Husky Jr played bass, and you can hear Willie Ackerman play very soft brushes (drums). This song appears on the album "Mr Good 'N Country Music," released in 1966 (not to be confused with "Good 'N Country" which was released in 1960.).

Other notable recordings include JD Crowe and The New South in 1994 (Richard Bennett on guitar and lead vocals, Don Rigsby on mandolin and tenor). Tony Rice also sings a version on his self-titled album from 1977 (JD Crowe on banjo, Larry Rice on mandolin and tenor vocals, Richard Greene on fiddle, Jerry Douglas on dobro and Todd Phillips on bass).

Rank Stranger

Key of F# 150 BPM 3/4

Albert Brumley (ver. The Stanley Brothers- 1960)

I V I
I wandered again to my home in the mountains

Where in youth's early dawn I was happy and free
V

I V I
I looked for my friends, but I never could find them

V I IV I
I found they were all rank strangers to me

Everybody I met (everybody I met)
Seemed to be a rank stranger (seemed to be a rank stranger)
No mother nor dad (no mother or dad)
V
Not a friend could I see (not a friend could I see)
I
They knew not my name (they knew not my name)
And I knew not their faces (and I knew not their faces)
I found they were all (I found they were all)
V I IV I
Rank strangers to me (rank strangers to me)

"They've all moved away, " said the voice of a stranger
 "To a beautiful home by the bright crystal sea"
 Some beautiful day I'll meet 'em in heaven
 Where no one will be a stranger to me

Chorus

Written by Albert Brumley. Albert was born in 1905 near Sprio Oklahoma. In 1926 he enrolled in the Hartford Musical Institute of Hartford, Arkansas. Albert would purchase the Institute in 1948. In addition to writing "Rank Stranger," Brumley also wrote "I'll Fly Away," "Turn Your Radio On," and "He Set Me Free." All told, he wrote more than 800 songs through his life. His son, Tom Brumley, was a pedal steel guitar player that played with Buck Owens and Ricky Nelson.

The Stanley Brothers recorded this song in 1960 as the A-side (the B-side was "The Master's Bouquet (Gathering Flowers)"). Starday reissued the song for the 1963 album "The Mountain Music Sound. It is considered The Stanley Brothers best-selling song.

Ricky Skaggs recorded a version with Kentucky Thunder for his 1997 album "Bluegrass Rules!" Hot Rize recorded a live version on their 1996 album "Hot Rize Presents Red Knuckles & The Trailblazers / Hot Rize in Concert."

The song is typically sung with full harmony throughout. The verses have a held tone by the harmony singers as the lead sings over top. While the chorus has a call and response-type harmony.

Don't Neglect the Rose

Emma Smith (ver. Larry Sparks, 1987)

Key of G 80 BPM

I
There stands a rose, down in your garden

V I
You left it there, so all alone
It's been neglected, feels unwanted
Since no love to it is shown

It's beauty now, is fastly fading
Once it was, the brightest red
It's withering fast, It's head is bowing
And no kind words, to it are said

Please don't neglect the rose, in your garden
Show it your love, every day
Then it will bloom for you in all its beauty
And it will not, fade away

I guess by now, you know my story
Don't neglect, a love that's true
For it may prove to be, the sweetest flower
That will ever, bloom for you

It could be a mother, sister or brother
A husband, wife, or little child
Or it may be, your own true lover
That you've neglected, all the while

Chorus

Emma Smith made her recording debut in 1972 with "Angel Mother," a song written after her mother passed way. The song became a local hit, and Emma became a popular performer in Hazard, Kentucky. In 1981, Emma moved to Portsmouth, Ohio. There she recorded a number of songs with Larry Sparks (including this song, Don't Neglect the Rose).

Emma Smith first recorded this song in 1984 on her album "Emma Smith With Friends – We Are One." Emma sings lead and Larry Sparks sings harmony. Larry Sparks recorded this song in 1987 on his album "Silver Reflections." Lynn Morris also recorded this song in 2003 on her album "Shape of a Tear."

The song features three-part harmony on the choruses.

Harvest Time

Key of B 113 BPM

Carroll D Dunham, Bill Emerson and Lewis Cris Jr Moore (ver. Lost and Found, 1982)

I V IV I
Cool and cloudy nights upon Boll Mountain, Alabama

 V I
I was stealing corn from Homer Lawson's field
The rattle of the cornstalks and the bark of Homer's hound dog
Made me hug the ground and lie dead still

Flashing through my mind was Big Homer's reputation
A man who really didn't give a damn
They say he shot ol' Mountain Joe for just one ear of corn
And laughed the day they laid him in the ground

 IV I
And, I can hear the breaking of the sticks from someone's footsteps
 V I
But shaky legs just can't get up and run
And as I lay there breathless, the next thing I expected
Was a blast of hell from Homer Lawson's gun

The clouds rolled by and then I saw the shadow of a lady
It was Homer's lovely daughter Julie Ann
I smelled the perfume in her hair as she sat down beside me
Whispered, "Papa's running moonshine again"

I thank God for cloudy nights and Alabama's whiskey stills
And harvest time in Homer Lawson's field
I thank God for cloudy nights and Alabama's whiskey stills
And harvest time in Homer Lawson's field

Not to be confused with the banjo player Bill Emerson – this song was co-written by Carroll Dunham, Bill Emerson and Lewis Cris Jr Moore. Wild Bill Emerson first recorded it in 1973.

Lost and Found recorded this song in 1982 on their album "Endless Highway." Lost and Found first formed in 1973 with Dempsey Young on mandolin, Roger Handy on mandolin, Gene Parker on banjo and Allen Mills on bass. Through the 70s and 80s they would have a huge impact on bluegrass players in Virginia, including Blue Highway, IIIrd Tyme Out and Lonesome River Band. In fact, the Lonesome River Band recorded this song in 2000 on their album "Talkin' To Myself."

The song features three-part harmony on every second line throughout the entire song.

Blue Moon of Kentucky

Key of Bb 105 BPM

Bill Monroe (ver. Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys - 1947)

I IV
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
I V
Shine on the one that's gone and proved untrue
I IV
Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
I V I
Shine on the one that's gone and left me blue

IV
It was on a moonlight night
I
The stars were shining bright
IV
And they whispered from on high
I V
Your love has said good-bye

Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining
Shine on the one that's gone and said good-bye

Repeat

Written in 1946 by Bill Monroe and recorded in 1947 with Bill Monroe on mandolin and lead vocals, Earl Scruggs on banjo, Lester Flatt on guitar, Chubby Wise on fiddle and Howard Watts on upright bass. Originally, the entire song was a waltz. In 1954 Elvis Presley and his band were recording in Sun Studios. While searching for a "B-side" to "That's All Right," Bill Black, bass player, suggested Blue Moon of Kentucky.. Scotty Moore, Elvis Presley and Bill Black started playing it as an up-tempo, 4/4 song. Sam Phillips, Sun Record Owner, exclaimed "Boy, that's fine. That's a pop song now."

Elvis Presley sang the song on the Grande Ole Opry. Elvis approached Bill backstage and apologized for taking liberties with his song; however, Monroe reacted with generosity. In September of 1954, Monroe re-recorded "Blue Moon of Kentucky," singing the first two verses in the waltz, then resinging the verses in 4/4 time.

In 1954, The Stanley Brothers recorded a version very similar to the style of Elvis Presley's version.

Through the years, many artists have recorded the song, including Patsy Cline, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash and Ray Charles.

Additionally, many bluegrass artists have covered this song. The Osborne Brothers recorded a version on their 1969 album "Up to Date and Down to Earth." IIIrd Tyme Out recorded a version in 1998 from their live album "Live at the MAC (The Mountain Arts Centre).

Typically the song is sung with no harmony.

I'm Using My Bible For a Roadmap

Key of A, 94BPM

Charles Schroeder and Don Reno (ver. Reno and Smiley 1952)

I V I
 There'll be no detours in heaven
 II V
 No rough roads along the way
 I IV
 I'm using my Bible for a road map
 I V I
 My last stop is heaven some sweet day

I IV
 I'm using my Bible for a road map
 I V I
 Ten Commandments they tell me what to do
 The twelve disciples are my road signs
 And Jesus will take me safely through

Chorus

I'm using my Bible for a road map
 The children of Israel used it too
 They crossed the Red Sea of Destruction
 For God was there to see them through

Chorus

Cowritten by Charles Schroeder and Don Reno – It was recorded by Don Reno, Red Smiley and the Tennessee Cutups in January of 1952. It was released in March as the B-side (the A-side was "Hear Jerusalem Mourn.")

Porter Wagoner and the Blackwood Brothers Quartet recorded this song in January of 1966, and it became a much-loved gospel number both in bluegrass and country music. The Country Gentlemen recorded a version on the 1971 album, "One Wide River to Cross." Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys recorded a version in 1990 on their album "I'm Gonna Sing, Sing, Sing."

Originally recorded as a quartet on the choruses.

I've Been All Around This World

Key of F, 128 BPM

Traditional (ver. Hot Rize, 1996)

I
 Working on the new railroad, mud up to my knees
 V I IV I
 I'm digging on the new railroad, mud up to my knees
 IV I
 Working for old John Henry, he's mighty hard to please
 V I
 I've been all around this world

Hang me, oh, hang me 'til I'm dead and gone
 Hang me, oh, hang me 'til I'm dead and gone
 I wouldn't mind the hanging it's staying in jail so long
 I've been all around this world

Mama and papa and baby sister makes three
 Mama and papa and baby sister makes three
 March me down to the gallows that'll be the end of me
 I've been all around this world

Out on the Blue Ridge Mountain, there I'll make my stand
 And out on the Blue Ridge Mountain, there I'll make my stand
 The rifle on my shoulder, six shooter in my hand
 I've been all around this world

If you meet a rich gal, just send her down the line
 And if you meet a rich girl, just send her down the line
 But if you meet a poor girl, I'll be she's a friend of mine
 I've been all around this world.

The origins of this song is in reference to an unnamed murderer hanged in the 1870s, under the title "My Father Was a Gambler." It has also been titled "The Gambler," "The New Railroad," "Hang Me Oh Hang Me" and many more. The first recording was sung by Justis Begley and captured by Alan and Elizabeth Lomax in Hazard Kentucky in October of 1937. There are many speculations as to who the person being hanged was. Some believe it was John Childers, who spoke for 16 minutes on the scaffold in 1972. His life would have been spared if he would reveal the name of his accomplices. He refused and asked "Didn't you say you were going to hang me?" After the marshall answered in the affirmative, Childers replied "Then, why in the hell don't you."

The first commercial recording was in 1946 by Grandpa Jones. In 1963, it was recorded by Dave Van Ronk (the movie "Inside Llewyn Davis" is loosely based on Dave Van Ronk's life). Mike Seeger recorded a version in 1973, as did The Grateful Dead. Joe Val and the New England Bluegrass Boys recorded the song in 1995 on the album Diamond Joe. Tim O'Brien regularly performs this song as well, and recorded this song on the album Hot Rize presents Red Knuckles & The Trailblazers in 1996.

There are a wide variation of lyrics and variation in singing. Hot Rize performs this song with harmony on the line "I've Been All Around This World"

I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome

Key of Bb, 70 BPM

Bill Monroe, Hank Williams (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1950)

I IV I
The lonesome sound of a train going by

V I
Makes me wanna stop and cry
I recall the day it took you away
I'm blue, I'm lonesome too

V I
When I hear that whistle blow
II V
I want to pack my clothes and go
The lonesome sound of a train going by
Makes me want to stop and cry

In the still of the night, in the pale moonlight
The wind it moans and cry
These lonesome blues, I just can't lose
I'm blue, I'm lonesome too

Chorus

I'm blue, I'm lonesome too

Originally this song was credited to James B. Smith when it was recorded by Bill Monroe February 3, 1950. It was one of the first songs recorded for Decca Records after Monroe left Columbia. The origins of this song are a little cloudy. Hank Williams joined the Grande Ole Opry in 1949 and worked several shows with Bill Monroe. Originally it was thought the pseudonym of "James B. Smith" was for both Hank and Bill. However, all the royalties for the song went to Bill. Publisher Acuff-Rose challenged successfully for shares of this song in 1990. Bill said that he wrote portions of the song. Jimmy Martin has said that Hank Williams wrote the entire song. Jimmy sang tenor on the original recording.

Having twin credits of Bill Monroe and Hank Williams has made this song very popular in both bluegrass and country. Marty Stuart recorded a country version in 1991 on his album "Tempted." Red Allen, David Grisman, Herb Pedersen, Jim Buchanan, Jerry Garcia and James Kerwin recorded a version on the album "Bluegrass Reunion" in 1992. Red Allen also recorded a version with Frank Wakefield and David Grisman in 1963 (found on the album "Kitchen Tapes." More recently, The Grascals recorded a version with Hank Williams Jr. on the album "The Famous Lefty Flynn's" in 2010.

The song is typically done as a duet, with the line "When I Hear that whistle blow, I want to pack my clothes (suitcase) and go" as a solo.

Back to the Barrooms

Key of Bb, 118 BPM

Merle Haggard, Dave Kirby (ver. J.D. Crowe and the New South, 1950)

I IV
 Now it's back to the barrooms
 I V
 Right back to drinkin' again
 I IV
 Maybe someday you'll love me enough to stay with me
 I V
 And whisky won't be my best friend
 I
 Now it's back to the barrooms again

Now the bartender knows me, he knows how you do me
 And he knows why I'm back here again
 He must be given a prize for his patience
 For bartenders do understand
 Now it's back to the barrooms again

Chorus

With the loud music roarin', the bartender pourin'
 My shaky legs tryin' to stand
 It's over and over I've tried to stay sober
 But, look what a failure I've been
 Now it's back to the barrooms again

Chorus

Chorus

This song was written by Merle Haggard and Dave Kirby. Merle Haggard is a country music legend, writing and recording songs such as "Mamma Tried," "Okie from Muskogee," "Fightin' Side of Me," and many more. Dave Kirby wrote "(Is Anybody Going to) San Antonio" – made famous by Charlie Pride. He also wrote songs for Waylon Jennings, George Jones, Johnny Cash and many other country artists. This song was released on October 10, 1980 on Merle Haggard's album, titled "Back to the Barrooms."

JD Crowe recorded this song in 1999 with his band The New South. This band has had a number of different iterations, including Tony Rice and Keith Whitley. This configuration had Rickey Wasson on guitar, Dwight McCall on mandolin and Phil Ledbetter on dobro. Curt Chapman is on upright bass and Glen Duncan is on fiddle. JD Crowe, especially with Keith Whitley, has taken a number of different country songs and brought them over to the bluegrass genre.

This song has three part harmony on the chorus, with the exception of the line "Maybe someday you'll love me enough to stay with me and whiskey won't be my best friend" – which is sung solo.

Ridin' That Midnight Train

Key of G, 153 BPM

Ralph Stanley (ver. Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys - 1959)

I IV I
No matter what I say or do you're never satisfied
V I
I've tried and tried so many times, I've leaving you now goodbye

I IV I
I'm ridin' on that midnight train my heads a hangin' low
I V I
These awful blues will follow me wherever I may go

Oh why on earth was I ever borned I'll never understand
To fall in love with a woman like you in love with another man

Chorus

You broke a heart that trusted you why wasn't it made of stone
I'm left in a world as black as night, yet I must travel on

Chorus

This song was written by Ralph Stanley and recorded by the Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys in August of 1959. It was released on the album "Mountain Song Favourites."

It was also recorded by Doc Watson with his son Merle in 1986. It was also the title of the album (though modified to the more grammatically correct "Riding on the Midnight Train"). This was the last album Merle Watson recorded before being killed in a tractor accident. This album won the Grammy Award for Best Traditional Folk Album in 1987.

This song was also on the first album released by Rick Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder – the album was released in 1997, and the title was "Bluegrass Rules!"

This song is typically sung as a duet on the chorus.

He Rode All the Way to Texas

Key of Eb 70 BPM

John Starling (ver. Seldom Scene - 1975)

I IV I V
He rode all the way to Texas, on an old freight train
I
He's lettin' you know he's the movin' kind
I IV V
A light shines from my window, I just can't sleep no more
I
Oh Lord, it hurts so much to be alone
But the rail men never do admit that it's them that might be wrong
At least that's what he told me in his song

He rode all the way to Texas
On an old freight train, he didn't miss the girl he left behind
He rode all the way to Texas, didn't shed a tear
He's lettin' you know he's the movin' kind

The freedom that he sings about I guess I'll never know
I just can't shake the guilt or kill the pain
But it helps to ride when the lights turns low, I'll get on board the radio
And take a ride to Texas on his train

Chorus

We're lettin' you know we're the movin' kind

Written by John Starling. John Starling served in the Vietnam War as a surgeon. After Vietnam he completed his residency in Washington D.C. at the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre. While in D.C. in 1971, he met fellow musicians Ben Eldridge (banjo) and Mike Auldrige (dobro) – they used to jam in Ben's basement. The trio were soon joined by John Duffey and Tom Gray. Mike was a graphic artist, Tom was a cartographer with National Geographic, Ben was a mathematician and Duffey repaired musical instruments. They played one night a week in a local club and occasionally played concerts and festivals on weekend. Their friend Charlie Waller (lead singer of Country Gentlemen) joked with Duffey saying "What are you going to call yourselves – the seldom seen." In 1978, after 6 albums and significant interest, John Starling left the band to focus on his medical career as an otolaryngologist.

This song was recorded on the Seldom Scene album "Live at the Cellar Door" in 1975. The Cellar Door was a small club (seated 163 people) in Washington D.C. Other live albums recorded there include Mile Davis (The Cellar Door Session), Danny Gatton (The Redneck Jazz Explosion) and Neil Young (also titled "Live at the Cellar Door"). John Starling also released this album on his 1977 album "Long Time Gone."

The song has been recorded by Tony Rice – originally released on an album by Rickie Simpkins called "Dancing on the Fingerboard" – it was rereleased on a Tony Rice album titled "Nightflyer - The Singer Songwriter Collection" in 2008. Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt and Dolly Parton also released a version on their 1994 album "Trio II" (John Starling was one of Emmylou's favourite singers).

The lines "On an old freight train" and "didn't shed a tear" is sung as a trio, with the tenor and baritone humming through the remainder of the lines in the chorus.

Your Saddle Is Empty Old Pal

Key of F, 63 BPM

Bill Carlisle (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1968)

I
 Dear ol' pinto, you left me last fall
 V
 Your saddle is hanging, on the bronc-house wall
 I
 I'll put on my boots, and my ol' sombrero
 V I
 Tie yippee yi ay, tie yippee yi yo

I'm ridin' the trail, I'm ridin' the trail
 Down by the grave, of my ol' pinto
 Singing a song, as I ride along
 Tie yippee yi yay, tie yippee yi yo

He was my pal, and I loved him so
 Tie yippee yi yay, my ol' pinto
 Often I think I can see my ol' pal
 Walking the trail to the ol' corral

Chorus

Bill Carlisle was a country singer through the 30s, 40s and 50s. He was part of the Carlisle Brothers with his brother Cliff, recording songs with Decca, then King Records until his brother Cliff retired in 1950. As a solo artist he also recorded with Mercury Records. Bill was a guitar picker as well as a yodeler. He had significant success with "novelty songs," probably most notably the song "Too Old to Cut the Mustard." In addition to writing this song, which was covered by Ralph Stanley – Bill also wrote the song "Gone Home" which has been recorded by Flatt & Scruggs and Ricky Skaggs.

In Hazel Green Kentucky on October 21, 1966 while onstage with Ralph Stanley, Carter began hemorrhaging and had to leave the stage. Six weeks later on December 1, at the age of 41, Carter Stanley passed away due to cirrhosis of the liver.

On February 7th, 1967, Larry Sparks joined Ralph Stanley to replace the voice of Carter and continued with Ralph to the end of 1969 (replaced by Roy Lee Centers). "Your Saddle Is Empty Old Pal" was originally recorded on the 14th and 15th of February, 1968. At the session was Ralph on banjo, Larry on guitar, Curly Ray Cline on fiddle, Jack Lynch on bass and Frank Wakefield on mandolin. It was originally released as "The Bluegrass Sound of Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys."

However, in 1973 an album was released titled "The Stanley Brothers of Virginia – Vol. 2 (Long Journey Home)" This was recorded in the early 1960s when the Stanley Brothers were between record labels. Johnny Wilbanks ran a used car lot near Baltimore and would hire bluegrass bands to play in his lot. He also ran the small Wango label. The Stanleys recorded three albums of gospel music and this album that featured strictly secular music. It was originally released in a plain white jacket as "John's Country Quartet" (And "John's Gospel Quartet"). Though this song wasn't included on the original release, only on subsequent reissues. It features beautiful crosspicking by George Shuffler.

The song is sung as a duet throughout. "I'm ridin' the trail" is sung as a call and response.

I'm Gonna Sleep With One Eye Open

Key of Eb, 112 BPM

Lester Flatt (ver. Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys, 1955)

I
 I just found out today the little game you play
 V
 I've been sleeping all my life away
 I
 You've been stepping so they say between midnight and day
 V I
 So I'm gonna sleep with one eye open from now on
 IV I
 From now on (from now on) all night long (all night long)
 V
 You won't have a chance to treat your daddy wrong
 You've been stepping so they say between midnight and day
 So I'm gonna sleep with one eye open from now on

There's honky tonk down the road just a mile or so
 I understand that's where you spend your time
 Baby I got news for you your little game is through
 From now on baby you're gonna toe the line

Chorus

You thought you were being wise running around with other guys
 And leaving me to spend my time alone
 But you'll find out today it don't work out that way
 You started a little game that two can play

Chorus

Written by Lester Flatt and recorded by Flatt and Scruggs January 23, 1955. Paul Warren on fiddle, Curly Seckler on mandolin, Flatt on guitar, Scruggs on banjo and Jake Tullock on upright bass. Eddie Hill was also playing guitar, playing a heavy "vamp" closed chord, sometimes called "sock-rhythm."

This song was first released June 20, 1955 as the B-side. The A-side was "Before I Met You." The song "I'm Gonna Sleep With One Eye Open" was banned on some radio stations, including WSM due to what is implied in this song (similar to bans on the song "Wake Up Little Suzie.")

Hot Rize recorded a version of this song on their live album "Hot Rize Extra Added Attraction Red Knuckles & The Trailblazers - In Concert." Dolly Parton also released a version of this song in 1999 on her bluegrass album "The Grass Is Blue." And in 2011 Chris Thile and Michael Daves recorded a version on the album "Sleep With One Eye Open."

The song is sung as a trio on the very last line of the chorus and the bracketed words in the first line of the chorus as call and response.

Where the Soul of Man Never Dies

Key of E, 118 BPM

William Golden (ver. Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice, 1980)

I IV I
To Canaan's land, I'm on my way,
V
Where the soul (of man) never dies.
IV I
My darkest night will turn to day,
V I
Where the soul (of man) never dies.

No sad farewells. (Dear friends there'll be no sad farewells.)
No tear dimmed eyes (There'll be no tear dimmed eyes.)
Where all is love, (Where all is peace and joy and love.)
And the soul never dies. (And the soul of man never dies.)

The roses bloom in there for me,
Where the soul (of man) never dies.
And I will spend eternity,
Where the soul (of man) never dies.

Chorus

The love light beams across the foam,
Where the soul (of man) never dies.
It shines and lights the way to home,
Where the soul (of man) never dies.

Chorus (twice)

William Golding was from Webster County, Mississippi. He wrote this song in 1918 while serving an eight-year sentence in the state penitentiary. It was first recorded by Rev. M. L. Thrasher and His Gospel Singers. However, the early recording most associated with this song was the Blue Sky Boys version recorded in July of 1936. Hank Williams and Willie Nelson have also recorded this song.

Earl (guitar) and Bill (mandolin) Bolick made their debut at a small radio station in Asheville, North Carolina in 1935. In 1936 they moved to Atlanta and decided to audition at RCA Records. At first, they were accused of being copies of the Monroe Brothers. However, when Eli Oberstein heard them sing, he immediately signed them to a contract. Their first record was "Sunny Side of Life" coupled with this song "Where the Soul Never Dies." It became an instant hit. And between 1937 and 1941 they recorded approximately 100 songs. In 1949 honky tonk music was becoming popular. RCA asked them to play with an electric guitar and they refused. They retired in 1951. In 1975 they were convinced to record again for Rounder Records and toured for a brief period.

In 1980, Ricky Skaggs and Tony Rice released an album that featured a series of duets accompanied only by mandolin and guitar – a call back to the brother duet groups of the 30s and the 40s. This song was included, and would become a bluegrass standard. The song is sung as a duet with the lead holding on notes while the tenor sings additional words over top.

Steam Powered Aereo Plane

Key of G, 125 BPM

John Hartford (ver. John Hartford, 1971)

(right before vocals)

iim iiim iim I iim iiim IV V

I iim

Well a drifter went away on a steam powered aero plane

IV I

I went and I stayed and I damn near didn't come back again

I didn't go very fast on a steam powered aero plane

Oh the wheel went around and up and down, and inside and then back again

iim I

Sittin' in a 747 just a watching them clouds roll by

iim I

Can't tell if it's sunshine or if it's rain

iim I

A' rather be a sittin' in a deck chair high up over Kansas City

iim V

On a genuine old fashioned authentic steam powered aereo plane

Well I'd like to be a pilot on a steam powered aero plane

Well I'd pull that pilot wheel around and then back again

And I'll wear a blue hat, yeah, that says Steam Powered Aero plane

With letters that go around the rim and then back again

Chorus

John Hartford was born in New York City, but spent his childhood in Missouri on the Mississippi River. His first job on the river at 16 created a love with the Mississippi and river boats. He was a fiddle player, but also a banjo, guitar and mandolin player. In 1967 his song "Gentle On My Mind" received modest success. More importantly, it was noticed by Glen Campbell who recorded it, making it one of the most recorded country songs and provided John with financial freedom. He was also a regular performer on the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour and The Johnny Cash Show.

In 1971 John was working with Warner Bros. Records where he was given significant freedom. Along with Norman Blake, Vassar Clements, Tut Taylor and Randy Scruggs, they recorded an unconventional bluegrass album titled Aereo-Plain. The album, while critically acclaimed, sold very poorly. However, the album would be the start of the newgrass, reinvention of bluegrass music (along with Sam Bush's band, New Grass Revival). Steam Powered Aereo Plane is the best-known song from this album. It was covered by New Grass Revival in 1981 on the album "Commonwealth." It is also a favourite cover by jam bands such as Infamous Stringdusters, Greensky Bluegrass and Leftover Salmon.

The song was originally recorded with no harmony. New Grass Revival recorded some lines as a duet.

Can't You Hear Me Callin'

Key of G, 95 BPM

Bill Monroe (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1950)

I
 The days are long, the nights are lonely
 IV I
 Since you've left me all alone
 IV I
 I loved you so, my little darlin'
 IV V I
 I've worried so since you've been gone

Sweetheart of mine, can't you hear me callin'
 A million times I've loved you best
 I mistreated you, lord and I'm sorry
 Come back to me is my request

I remember, now, the night we parted
 A big mistake had caused it all
 If you return, sunshine will follow
 To stay away would be my fall

Chorus

The days are dark, my little darlin'
 Oh how I need your sweet embrace
 When I awoke the sun was shinin'
 When I looked up, I saw your face

Chorus

Written by Bill Monroe, recorded on October 22, 1949 and released in March 1950 as an A-side (the B-side was "Travellin' This Lonesome Road"). Mac Wiseman was on guitar and vocals, Rudy Lyle on banjo, Chubby Wise on fiddle and Jack Thompson on upright bass. They also recorded the B-side as well as Blue Grass Stomp and The Girl in the Blue Velvet Band.

The song has become a standard for bluegrass – including being the title of the 2001 biography on Bill Monroe, written by Richard Smith ("Can't You Hear Me Callin': The Life of Bill Monroe, Father of Bluegrass"). Country Gentlemen recorded a version for their 1963 album "Folk Session Inside." Boone Creek recorded a version on the 1978 album "One Way Track," as well as a country version on his album "Highways & Heartaches." Del McCoury recorded a version on the album "True Life Blues: The Songs of Bill Monroe" from 1996. And more recently, Crooked Still recorded a version on their album "Shaken By a Low Sound" in 2006 and Volume Five has a version on their album "Children of the Morning" 2011.

The chorus is typically sung as a duet.

1952 Vincent Black Lightning

Key of C, 125 BPM

Richard Thompson (ver. Del McCoury Band, 2001)

I IV
Said Red Molly, to James, "That's a fine motorbike

I
A girl could feel special on any such like"
Said James, to Red Molly, "My hat's off to you
It's a Vincent Black Lightning, 1952

V IV I
And I've seen you at the corners and cafes, it seems

V IV I
Red hair and black leather, my favorite color scheme"

iiM IV
And he pulled her on behind

I
And down to Knoxville they did ride

Said James, to Red Molly, "Here's a ring for your right hand
But I'll tell you in earnest I'm a dangerous man
I've fought with the law since I was seventeen
I robbed many a man to get my Vincent machine
Now I'm twenty-one years I might make twenty-two
And I don't mind dyin' but for the love of you
But if fate should break my stride, then I'll give you my Vincent to ride"

"Come down come down Red Molly," called Sargent McCray
"For they've taken young James Aidee for armed robbery
Shotgun blast hit his chest, left nothing inside
Come down Red Molly to his dying bedside"
When she came to the hospital, there wasn't much left
He was runnin' out of road, he was runnin' out of breath
But he smiled, to see her cry
Said, "I'll give you my Vincent to ride."

Said James, "In my opinion, there's nothing in this world
Beats a '52 Vincent and a redheaded girl
Now Nortons and Indians and Greaveses won't do
Oh, they don't have a Soul like a Vincent '52"
He reached for her hand and he slipped her the key
He said, "I don't have any further use for these
I see angels on aerials in leather and chrome,
Swoopin' down from Heaven to carry me home"
And he gave her one last kiss and died
And he gave her his Vincent to ride

Written by Richard Thompson for his 1991 album "Rumor and Sigh." Richard is a guitar player from England who got his big break playing for the band Fairport Convention in 1967. Through the 70s and he toured with his wife, Linda Thompson. In the 1980s, Linda and Richard split and Richard started to pursue his solo career. The 1952 Vincent Black Lightning is a rare motorcycle – only 30 were made.

Del McCoury was more of a traditional bluegrass artist – most notably singing and playing guitar with Bill Monroe in 1963 before forming his own band, The Dixie Pals, through the 70s and 80s. In the 90s, with his two sons, Ronnie on mandolin and Rob on banjo – along with Jason Carter on fiddle – Del formed the Del McCoury Band. With this band, Del started to incorporate more non-traditional bluegrass songs into his repertoire. In 2001, Del recorded 1952 Vincent Black Lightning on his album “Del and the Boys.” The song would become a bluegrass favourite.

The song typically is sung with no harmony.

Still Feeling Blue

Key of A, 128 BPM

Gram Parsons (ver. Country Gazette, 1973)

I

Time can pass and time can heal,

V

But it don't ever pass the way I feel

IV

You went away a long time ago

V

I

And why you left I never knew

The lonely days and lonely nights

Guess the world knows I ain't feelin' right

And when you're gone the hours pass so slow

And now I'm still feeling blue

V

And baby, since you've walked out of my life, I never felt so low

IV

V

Can't help but wonder why you had to go

There are many girls but I can't say

They come and go but still I feel this way

And ever since the day you said goodbye

No one treats me like you used to do

I hope you're out and happy now

Doing up the town 'cause you know how

Every time I hear your name I want to die

And now I'm still feeling blue (yeah)

(repeat the last three verses)

Gram Parsons had a huge influence on country and rock music, blurring the line between the two of them with bands like The Byrds and The Flying Burrito Brothers. In 1973 he joined with Emmylou Harris and former bandmate Chris Hillman to record a solo album – GP. He was also joined by members of Elvis' band on the record, including guitar player James Burton. The album was well received by critics, but failed to reach the Billboard charts. He would record another solo album – Greivous Angel – but it would be released posthumously. He died in September of 1973 of a drug overdose at the age of 26. This song was off his first solo album, GP.

Alan Munde's first real professional gig was with Jimmy Martin from 1969 to 1971. In 1972 he joined The Flying Burrito Brothers for a brief period before joining Country Gazette. He became very interested in pushing the boundaries of bluegrass music. With Country Gazette he would cover songs like Honky Cat by Elton John. He also covered this song, Still Feeling Blue, on the 1976 album Out To Lunch. Flatt Lonesome would also cover this song on their album Runaway Train. The last two lines of each of the verses are sung in three-part harmony. Harmony on the verse "And baby..." is sung as a modified call-and-response.

Fox on the Run

Key of B, 110 BPM

Tony Hazzard (ver. Country Gentlemen 1971)

I V iiM IV
 She walks through the corn leadin' down to the river
 iiM V IV I
 Her hair shone like gold in the hot mornin' sun
 V iiM IV
 She took all the love that a poor boy could give her
 iiM V IV I
 And left me to die like a fox on the run
 IV I
 Like a fox, like a fox, like a fox like a fox on the run

IV I V I
 Everybody knows the reason for the fall
 IV I II V
 When woman tempted men down in paradise's hall
 IV I V I
 This woman tempted me and took me for a ride
 IV I V I
 Like a lonely fox I need a place to hide

Chorus

We'll pour a glass of wine to fortify our soul
 We'll talk about the world and friends we used to know
 I see a string of girls who have put me on the floor
 The game is nearly over the hounds are at my door

Chorus

Tony Hazzard, a fan of the band Manfred Mann, specifically wrote this song for the English rock band Manfred Mann. Named after the keyboard player, this band was very popular through the 1960s. In addition to "Fox on the Run," they also sang "Do Wah Diddy Diddy." They were one of the first English-based groups to break into the US during the "British Invasion."

Bill Emerson was working with Cliff Waldron and bringing songs to the bluegrass genre that were not bluegrass songs, such as "Proud Mary," "If I Were a Carpenter" and this song, "Fox on the Run." It was recorded on the album "Bluegrass Country" in 1970. But it became entrenched in bluegrass when Bill recorded the song with The Country Gentlemen in 1971 on the album Sound Off. This song was also recorded in 1976 by The Good Brothers here in Canada.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony. The last line of the chorus (like a fox) initially is sung by the lead and each successive "like a fox" adds an additional harmony.

Stone Walls and Steel Bars

Key of Bb, 177 BPM

Ray Pennington and Roy Marcum (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1963)

I IV I
 Stone walls and steel bars a love on my mind
 V I IV I
 I'm a three-time loser I'm long gone this time
 V IV I
 Jealousy has took my young life
 V IV I
 All for the love of another man's wife
 IV
 But I've had it coming I've known all the time
 I V I IV I
 No more stone walls and steel bars or you on my mind

Chorus

Gray-haired warden deep Frisco Bay
 Guards all around me leading my way
 But I've had it coming at the end of the line
 No more stone walls and steel bars and you on my mind

Chorus

Ray Pennington was singer, songwriter and record producer. In addition to co-writing Stone Walls and Steel Bars, he also wrote "I'm a Ramblin' Man" – recorded by Waylon Jennings and "Don't Cheat in Our Hometown (another song co-written with Roy Marcum). As a record producer, he worked with Hawkshaw Hawkins, Reno and Smiley and The Stanley Brothers.

The Stanley Brothers recorded "Stone Walls and Steel Bars" for King Records in August of 1963. It was released later that year as the A-side (the B-side was Lonesome Night). The song would become one of the Stanley Brothers more popular songs of the 1960s. A version of this song was released on a bootleg of Bob Dylan live recordings – After the Heart Attack – in 1997. Ralph Stanley has also recorded this song with Jimmy Martin on the 1980 album Jimmy Martin & Ralph Stanley – First Time Together. Ralph also recorded a version of this song with Junior Brown on the 1998 album Clinch Mountain Country.

The last line of the chorus ("I'm a three-time loser...") is sung as a duet.

With Body and Soul

Key of A, 70 BPM

Virginia Stauffer (ver. Bill Monroe, 1969)

I VII I
 See that train comin' round the bend
 VII V
 Carrying the one that I love
 I IV I
 Her beautiful body is still here on earth
 V I
 But her soul has been called above
 VII I IV
 Body and soul, body and soul
 I V I
 That's how she loved me, with body and soul

Her beautiful hair was the purest of gold
 Her eyes were blue as the sea
 Her lips were the color of summer's red rose
 And she promised she would always love me

Chorus

Tomorrow as the sun sinks low
 The shadows will cover her face
 Her last sun goes down and she's laid beneath the ground
 And my teardrops are fallin' like rain

Chorus

Virginia Stauffer met and was on the road with Bill Monroe from 1963 to 1969. She wrote a number of songs for Bill Monroe, including Road of Life, Show Me the Way and I Live in the Past. Bill Monroe called her "Gypsy" on account of her dark hair and wrote the instrumental Virginia Darlin' in her honour.

Bill Monroe recorded With Body and Soul in April 1969. Seldom Scene recorded the song on their 1972 album Act 1, adding three part harmony on the choruses. The Johnson Mountain Boys recorded this song as well on their 1989 live album "At The Old Schoolhouse."

Originally the song was sung with no harmony. However, it is sometimes sung with three-part harmony through the chorus (with the line "That's how she loved me" sung solo).

Think of What You've Done

Key of C#, 131 BPM

Carter Stanley (ver. Stanley Brothers 1958)

IV I
Is it true that I've lost you
V I
Am I not the only one
IV I
After all this pain and sorrow
V I
Darlin', think of what you've done

Heart to heart, dear, how I need you

V I
Like the flowers need the dew
IV I
Lovin' you has been my life blood
V I
Can't believe we're really through

Chorus

I'll go back to old Virginia
Where the mountain meets the skies
In those hills I learned to love you
Let me stay there till I die

Chorus

Originally recorded by The Stanley Brothers in October, 1958 with King Records, it was released on the self-titled album Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys in December of 1958. The song was originally recorded in C# - though their instruments were probably tuned up a half-step and they would have been playing their instruments in C.

It has been covered extensively. Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers recorded it on the album Dark Hollow in 1982. On the 1985 album High Country Snows, Dan Fogelberg released a version. ON the 1990 album Take It Home, Hot Rize recorded a version. And Ricky Skaggs album Bluegrass Rules from 1997 also includes a version of this song.

The song is sung with three-part harmony on the chorus.

Once More

Key of C#, 68 BPM

Dusty Owens (ver. Osborne Brothers, 1958)

I
Once more to be with you dear
V
Just for tonight to hold you tight
I IV
Once more I'd give a fortune
I V I
If I could see you once more.

V I IV
Forget (forget) the past (the past), this hurt can't last
I V I V
Oh I don't want it to keep us apart
I V I IV
Your love (your love) I'll crave (I crave) I'll be your slave
I V I
If you just give me all of your heart.

Verse 2

Verse 1

Dusty Owens started his radio career at the age of 16 in Flint Michigan. In 1953 he began recording for Columbia as well as being a songwriter for the Acuff-Rose Publishing Company in Nashville. In addition to "Once More," Dusty wrote Hello Operator and Just Call on Me. Dusty originally recorded the song in January 1956 with Donna Darlene with the Rodeo Boys.

In 1958, the Osborne Brothers, along with Red Allen, first appeared on the country charts with this song. The song features the high lead, low baritone and the low tenor stacked below that. In 1982 the band Here Today (Herb Pedersen, Vince Gill, David Grisman, Jim Buchanan and Emory Gordy) recorded their version of Once More on their self-titled album.

The song is sung in three part harmony throughout the entire song (with a call and response on the words in brackets).

Roust-a-bout

Key of F, 96 BPM

Jake Lambert and Josh Graves (ver. Flatt and Scruggs, 1997)

I IV I
 The fog is rolling down the river
 V I
 Dark clouds are hangin' mighty low
 IV I
 Well it's a long long way from old St. Louis
 V I
 To the Gulf of Mexico
 IV I
 Well I make my home on the Mississippi
 V
 I'm a roustabout on a Steamboat line
 IV I
 We hit the deck on a Monday morning
 V I
 But we make the docks on a Saturday night

Well I had me a girl way down in Vicksburg
 I used to stop everytime I passed
 Til she made off with a riverboat gambler
 With a new silk suit and a little mustache

Chorus

Now when I die I've got one favor
 Don't lay me down in the cold cold ground
 Just take me out to the middle of the river
 And roll me over and point me south

Chorus

Jake Lambert was a DJ in Tennessee. Josh Graves first started playing dobro in 1927. While working as an announcer for Knoxville radio station WROL, he adopted the nickname and persona "Uncle Josh." He was a Dobro player for Mac Wiseman, Molly O'Day and Wilma and Stoney Cooper. But it wasn't until he was hired by Flatt and Scruggs that he adapted a three-finger picking style to the Dobro that all bluegrass dobro players would emulate.

Flatt and Scruggs first recorded the song in February of 1967. In addition to Lester and Earl, Paul Warren on fiddle, Josh on dobro and Jake Tullock on bass, Buddy Harman played drums, Grady Martin played another rhythm guitar and Charlie McCoy played harmonica. The song has also been recorded by Larry Stephenson and the New Grass on the album "Best of Bluegrass." Blue Canyon Boys also recorded a version on their album "Next Go 'Round" in 2012.

The song is typically sung with three-part harmony on the chorus.

I've Endured

Key of Bb, 154 BPM

Ola Belle Reed and David Reed (ver. Del McCoury 1975)

I IV
 Born in the mountains fifty years ago
 I
 I traveled the hills and valleys through the rain and snow
 IV I
 Seen the lightning flashing heard the thunder roll
 IV I
 I've endured, I've endured
 IV V I
 How long can one endure?

Barefoot in the summer running through the fog
 Too many mouths to feed they couldn't hold us all
 Trip to church on Sunday to learn the golden rule
 I've endured, I've endured
 How long can one endure?

I've worked for the rich I've lived with the poor
 I've seen many a heartache and I'll see many more.
 I've lived luck and sorrow been to success and stone
 I've endured, I've endured
 How long can one endure?

Ola Belle Reed was born Ola Wave Campbell in 1916 in North Carolina – the fourth of thirteen children. She learned clawhammer banjo and sang old time songs with her family. In the mid-30s she joined the North Carolina Ridge Runners, and then formed the New River Boys and Girls with her brother Alex Campbell. With that band she played a music park called the New River Ranch in Maryland, Pennsylvania. In 1949 she married Ralph Reed and had two sons, David and Ralph. She co-wrote this song with her son David on her 50th birthday in 1966 and would regularly perform it on stage. However, she didn't record it until 1976 on her album "My Epitaph" in 1976.

Prior to Ola Belle Reed releasing the song, Del McCoury recorded the song on a 1975 album titled "Del McCoury." Tim O'Brien recorded the song on his 2003 album "Traveler." And Missy Raines recorded the song on her 2018 album "Royal Traveller."

The song is typically sung with three-part harmony on the end line of each verse "I've endured, I've endured – How long can one endure?"

Wrong Road Again

Key of Ab, 113 BPM

Allen Reynolds (ver. Joe Val and the New England Bluegrass Boys, 1983)

I IV I
 I can't seem to learn not to love you
 V I
 For you get to me every time
 IV I
 You're someone I just can't say no to
 V I
 And you're so good at changing my mind

Here I go down that wrong road again
 Going back where I've already been
 Even knowing oh where it'll end
 Here I go down that wrong road again

I see the web you are weaving
 You and your soft evil lies
 Before I can think I'm believing
 And I'm falling for you one more time

Chorus

Chorus

In the mid-70s, country music was making a major move into pop music with musicians such as Dolly Parton, Kenny Rogers and Eddie Rabbit. Crystal Gayle (sister to Loretta Lynn) recorded this song in 1975 – her first single from her album “Crystal Gayle.” The song would peak at number 6 on the Billboard Country charts, helping to launch Crystal Gayle’s country career.

Joe Val and the New England Bluegrass Boys would be the first band that would bring this song into the bluegrass genre, recorded in 1983 on the album “Cold Wind.” John Hartford also recorded the song in 1984 on his album Gum Tree Canoe. Other recordings include Lynn Morris’ version from 1999 on the album “You’ll Never Be the Sun” and most recently, The Lonesome River Band in 2017 on the album Mayhayley’s House.

The song can either be sung solo throughout, or with three-part harmony on the chorus.

Are You Missing Me?

Key of G, 117 BPM

Charlie and Ira Louvin (ver. Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys, 1952)

I IV I
 The day that I kissed you and told you goodbye
 V I
 Your lips told me that you would wait
 But your lips deceived me and told me a lie
 While your heart was sealing my fate
 I
 Are you all alone
 V I
 With a memory
 Now that I am gone
 Darling, are you missing me

Out of the clear sky a letter then came
 And just like a bolt from the blue
 My castles came tumbling as I read it o'er
 I still can't believe that it's true

Chorus

It's said that in spite of the vows you had made
 The glitter of gold turns your head
 And while I was trying employment to find
 You married another instead

Chorus

In the 1950s, the Louvin Brothers were still trying to make their big break in country music. They had recorded a number of demos of songs they had written. One of those songs, "Are You Missing Me" was recorded by another brother group trying to break into the country/bluegrass scene. They were signed by Capital Records and the demo "Are You Missing Me" would be the first song they recorded and released with Capital Records in 1952 as an A-side (the B-side was "I'll What Your Love From My Heart). This song became popular as the Korean War was going on at this time.

As a side note, Charlie Louvin would play with Jesse McReynolds as they were both serving in Korea. They would play in Officer's Clubs as the band The Dusty Roads Band from 1952 to 1954.

Mac Wiseman would record his version of this song on the 1962 album "Bluegrass Favourites." In 1976 The Bluegrass Cardinals would record their version of "Are You Missing Me" on their self-titled debut album. More recently, Herb Pedersen and Chris Hillman recorded a version on their 2002 album "Way Out West."

The song is sung as a duet on the chorus.

Rocky Top

Key of B, 157 BPM

Boudleaux and Felice Bryant (ver. Osborne Brothers, 1967)

I IV I VI^m V I
Wish that I was on ol' Rocky Top down in the Tennessee hills
Ain't no smoggy smoke on Rocky Top ain't no telephone bills

Once I had a girl on Rocky Top half bear the other half cat
Wild as a mink, but sweet as soda pop I still dream about that

Vim V VII IV
Rocky Top, you'll always be home sweet home to me

I
Good ol' Rocky Top

VII I VII I
Rocky Top, Tennessee Rocky Top, Tennessee

Once two strangers climbed ol' Rocky Top lookin' for a moonshine still
Strangers ain't come down from Rocky Top reckon they never will

Corn won't grow at all on Rocky Top dirt's too rocky by far
That's why all the folks on Rocky Top get their corn from a jar

Chorus

I've had years of cramped-up city life trapped like a duck in a pen
All I know is it's a pity life can't be simple again

Chorus

I VII IV I
Rocky Top, Tennesseeeeeeeee

Boudleaux and Felice Bryant were a married songwriting duo. Famously they wrote for the Everly Brothers, including songs such as "Bye Bye Love," "Wake Up Little Susie," "All I Have to Do is Dream" and many more. But they also wrote "Raining in My Heart" for Buddy Holly and this song, Rocky Top. In 1967 the Bryant's were writing slow-paced songs in Gatlinburg, Tennessee for Archie Campbell and Chet Atkins. As a diversion they decided to write a fast-paced song. This song was written in 10 minutes.

The Osborne Brothers recorded the song in November, 1967 and it was released Christmas day that same year. It sold 85,000 copies in two weeks. It has been extensively covered by country artists such as Porter Wagoner, Conway Twitty, Lynn Anderson and many, many more. It became a regular song performed on Hee Haw by Buck Owens and Roy Clark.

The song was originally sung in three-part harmony with a high lead, baritone and low tenor.

The Fields Have Turned Brown

Key of D, 65 BPM

Carter Stanley (ver. The Stanley Brothers, 1950)

I
I left my old home to ramble this country
IV I
My mother and dad said son don't go wrong
IV I
Remember that God will always watch o'er you
V I
And we will be waiting for you here at home

IV I
Son don't go astray was what they both told me
V I
Remember that love for God can be found
IV I
But now they're both gone this letter just told me
V I
For years they've been dead, the fields have turned brown

For many long years I've travelled in sorrow
No thoughts of the day when I would return
Now as I go home and find no one waiting
The price I have paid to live and to learn

Chorus

Recorded by the Stanley Brothers November 20, 1949 for Columbia Records. It was released as the "A-side" February 13, 1950 (the "B-side" was The Old Home"). This was written by Carter Stanley and became a recent subset of country and bluegrass – the boy lamenting leaving the farm/small town to move to the city or move elsewhere in the country.

This song was covered by The Country Gentlemen in 1961 on the album "The Country Gentlemen Sing & Play Folk Songs & Bluegrass." John Duffey would also perform this song with The Seldom Scene and most notably record it on the album "Live At The Cellar Door" in 1971. It was also covered by Bluegrass Reunion (Red Allen, David Grisman, Herb Pedersen, Jim Buchanan, James Kerwin and Jerry Garcia" on the 1992 album, "Bluegrass Reunion."

Sung as a trio during the chorus.

The Man in the Middle

Key of G, 97 BPM

Tom "Harley" Campbell (ver. Hot Rize, 1981)

I
Three men on the mountain up on Calvary
IV I
And the Man in the middle was Jesus
V I
He died for you and me

VII
Well the man on the left was a sinnin' man

I
Tied to the cross, he bled
IV I
He could have been forgiven
V I
But he mocked the Lord instead

You say you are the Son of God
They nailed you to that tree
Come down, come down and save us
If God your Father be

Chorus

Well the man on the right was a sinner too
But he was sorry for his sins
He begged the Lord's forgiveness
And Jesus said to him

Fear not, fear not this earthly death
Before this day is o'er
You'll be with me in Paradise
On Heaven's golden shore

Chorus

Thomas Campbell, also known as Harley, was an upright bass player for the bluegrass band The Hotmud Family.

The song was first recorded by The Hotmud Family in 1979 on the album "Live, As We Know It." It was also recorded by Bill Grant and Delia Bell in 1980 on their self-titled album. But it was Hot Rize that would make this song a bluegrass standard when they would record it on their 1981 album "Radio Boogie." This song tells the story of the two men that joined Jesus on the top of Calvary. Interestingly, the only person in the bible that was guaranteed a place in heaven – the unnamed thief (also known as the "Good Thief," the "Penitent Thief" or the "Thief on the Cross").

Sung as a trio during the chorus.

Columbus Stockade Blues

Key of G, 83 BPM

Traditional (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys 1963)

I
Way down in Columbus, Georgia
V I
Wanted back in Tennessee
Way down in Columbus Stockade
Friends have turned their backs on me

IV I
Go and leave me if you wish to
IV V
Never let me cross your mind
I
In your heart you love another
V I
Leave me darling, I don't mind

Last night as I lay sleeping
I dreamed I held you in my arms
When I awoke I was mistaken
I was peering through the bars

Chorus

Chorus

The Columbus Stockade is a real place. It existed as two buildings and served as a jail and police headquarters starting from the 1850s. In 1906 it was joined together into one structure and still stands today.

The first known recording of this song was from 1927 by Tom Darby and Timmy Tarlton. While this recording would have influenced many early singers of this song, the actual song likely predates this duo. Darby and Tarlton sang blues-influenced duets through the 1920s and were quite influential on the later brother acts of the 30s and 40s. In April of 1927, with Darby playing guitar and singing lead and Tarlton on steel guitar and singing tenor harmonies, recorded "Birmingham Jail" and "Columbus Stockade Blues" for Columbia Records. "Columbus Stockade Blues" would sell more than 200,000 copies and become a country, bluegrass, blues and jazz standard.

Bill Monroe sang this song on the Grande Ole Opry with his Blue Grass Boys on July 18, 1942. He would record and release it on his 1963 album "Bluegrass Special." Doc Watson would record a version in a minor key on his 1975 album "Memories." The song can also be found on "Billy Ray Latham Presents The Kentucky Colonels – Live in Stereo" which was recorded January 15th, 1965 in Vancouver. You can find many recordings of this song with

The 1963 recording has the tenor harmony only on the choruses. However, this song can be sung as a duet (NOTE: The 1942 recording by Bill Monroe has harmony through the entire song and is significantly faster – at ~150 bpm).

My Old Kentucky Home

Stephen Foster

I IV I
Oh the sun shines bright on my old Kentucky home

V
It's summer, the people are gay

I IV I
The corn top's ripe and the meadow's in bloom

V I
While the birds make music all day

Weep no more my lady
Oh weep no more today
I'll sing you a song for my old Kentucky home
My old Kentucky home far away

The young folks roll on the little cabin floor
All merry, all happy and bright
But by hard times come-a-knocking at the door
Then my old Kentucky home good night

Chorus

Chorus

Written by Stephen Foster after being inspired by the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Originally it was titled "Poor Uncle Tom, Good Night" in Foster's sketchbook. It was changed to "My Old Kentucky Home Good Night" and over time has been shortened to the title we know today. This anti-slavery song was written in 1852 and quickly grew in popularity. During the American Civil War, soldiers passed this song all through the United States. It has been recorded countless times by artists from multiple genres. It is sung every year at the Kentucky Derby, and in 1928 became Kentucky state's official song.

As bluegrass has its roots in Kentucky, this was a song that resonated with many bluegrass bands have sung and recorded this song. Most famously, Vern Williams and Ray Park used to play this song regularly.

The chorus is sung in three-part harmony.

Christmas Time's a Comin'

Key of F, 105 BPM

Tex Logan (ver. Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys, 1951)

I V
Christmas time's a comin', Christmas time's a comin'
I V I
Christmas time's a comin' and I know I'm going home

Snowflakes a' falling, my old home's a calling
Tall pines are humming, Christmas time's a coming

I IV
Can't you hear them bells ringing, ringing joy, joy hear them singing
I V I
When it's snowing I'll be going back to my country home

Chorus 1

White candles burning, my old heart's a yearning
For the folks at home when Christmas time's a coming

Chorus 2
Chorus 1

Holly's in the window, home where the wind blows
Can't walk for running, Christmas time's a comin'

Chorus 2
Chorus 1

Written by Benjamin "Tex" Logan. Logan had a B.Sc in electrical engineering and completed his Masters at MIT. And a Ph.D. at Columbia University, working at Bell Labs. He initially played with Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper from 1949 to 1951. Before joining up with the Lilly Brothers. Will with the Lilly's, he wrote "Christmas Time's A Comin'," but had Bill Monroe in mind. Logan was able to play and sing the song for Bill, who agreed to record it in 1951.

Released in November of 1951 as the A-side (the B-side was The First Whipporwill). Tex Logan was supposed to play fiddle on the recording, but due to a traffic accident, was unable to make it in time for the recording session. Monroe played the fiddle break over the phone for Tex to ensure he was happy with the recording (which he was). The song would become a favourite of radio DJs at the time to play for the Christmas holidays. It has also been covered by many bluegrass and country artists – including Dolly Parton, Rhonda Vincent, Ricky Skaggs and many more.

Typically sung with both choruses as a trio.

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

R. Fisher Boyce (ver. Stanley Brothers, 1964)

Key of E, 61BPM

I
 Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem
 IV I
 Shining far through shadows dimmed
 V
 Giving a life to those who long have gone
 I
 And guiding the wise men on their way
 IV I
 Unto the place where Jesus lay
 V I IV I
 Beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem
 Shine upon us until the glory dawn
 Give us the light to light the way
 Unto the land of perfect day
 Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Oh beautiful star the hope of light
 Guiding the pilgrims through the night
 Over the mountains 'till the break of dawn
 Into the land of perfect day
 It will give out a lovely ray
 Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Chorus

Oh beautiful star the hope, the grace
 For the redeem of good and blessed
 Yonder in glory when the crowd is one
 For Jesus is now the star divine
 Brighter and brighter he will shine
 Oh beautiful star of Bethlehem shine on

Chorus

Written by R. Fisher Boyce. When R. Fisher couldn't concentrate due to his children making too much noise in the house, he walked across the road to the barn and wrote the song. His daughter, Nanny Lou, worked with her father later that day at the piano, putting music to the lyrics. R. Fisher received a one-time payment for the song, and publishing rights (and royalties) went to Adger M. Pace, Music Editor for Vaughan publications.

In April of 1964, The Stanley Brothers recorded a version of “Beautiful Star of Bethlehem” and released it on their album “Hymns of the Cross.” Featured prominently is the cross-picking of George Shuffler. Ralph Stanley would record the song once again in 1977 with Keith Whitley on vocals, on the album “Clinch Mountain Gospel.” Larry Sparks, Rhonda Vincent, and Emmy Lou Harris have also recorded versions, just to name a few. Jamie Dailey and Darrin Vincent also recorded a beautiful version of the song (available on the compilation album “Christmas Grass Volume 2”).

The Stanley Brothers sang the song as a trio, with “high baritone.” However, it is also sung as a duet.

Song list alphabetical

1952 Vincent Black Lightening	Del McCoury Band	Page 113
A Hundred Years From Now	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 47
Are You Missing Me	Jim and Jesse McReynolds	Page 124
Ashes of Love	Jim and Jesse McReynolds	Page 25
Back to the Barrooms	J.D. Crowe and the New South	Page 105
Beautiful Star of Bethlehem	Stanley Brothers	Page 131
Big Spike Hammer	Osborne Brothers	Page 19
Blue Moon of Kentucky	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 101
Blue Night	Hot Rize	Page 48
Blue Ridge Cabin Home	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 13
Born With a Hammer in My Hand	Blue Highway	Page 28
Bury Me Beneath the Weeping Willow	Skaggs & Rice	Page 56
Can't You Hear Me Callin'	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 112
Carolina in the Pines	Special Consensus	Page 91
Christmas Time's a Comin'	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 130
Columbus Stockade Blues	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 128
Cora is Gone	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 45
Cry, Cry Darling	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 34
Crying Holy	J.D. Crowe and the New South	Page 24
Dark Hollow	Kentucky Colonels	Page 61
Dim Lights, Thick Smoke	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 69
Don't Neglect the Rose	Larry Sparks	Page 99
Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 17
Drink Up and Go Home	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 79
Drinkin' Dark Whiskey	Steeldrivers	Page 30
Driving Nails in My Coffin	Osborne Brothers	Page 54
East Virginia Blues	Stanley Brothers	Page 39
Fields Have Turned Brown	Stanley Brothers	Page 126
Fox on the Run	Country Gentlemen	Page 116
Handsome Molly	Stanley Brothers	Page 75
Hard Pressed	Hot Rize	Page 64
Harvest Time	Lost and Found	Page 100
Have a Feast Here Tonight	Monroe Brothers	Page 93
He Rode All the Way to Texas	Seldom Scene	Page 107
Hello City Limits	Red Allen and the Kentuckians	Page 78
Hit Parade of Love	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 26
Hold What'cha Got	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 73
How Long Have I Been Waiting For You	Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver	Page 72
How Mountain Girls Can Love	Stanley Brothers	Page 55
I Know You're Married but I Love You Still	Reno and Smiley	Page 49
I Wonder How the Old Folks Are at Home	Mac Wiseman	Page 46

I Wonder Where You Are Tonight	Jim and Jesse McReynolds	Page 35
I'll Never Shed Another Tear	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 14
I'm Blue I'm Lonesome	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 104
I'm Gone, Long Gone	Reno and Smiley	Page 57
I'm Gonna Sleep With One Eye Open	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 109
I'm Head Over Heels in Love	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 60
I'm Sittin' on Top of the World	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 81
I'm Using My Bible For a Roadmap	Reno and Smiley	Page 102
I've Been All Around This World	Hot Rize	Page 103
In Despair	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 29
In the Gravelyard	Blue Highway	Page 71
In the Pines	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 70
Is It Too Late Now	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 96
It Hurts To Know	Osborne Brothers	Page 77
I've Endured	Del McCoury	Page 122
Knee Deep in Loving You	Bluegrass Cardinals	Page 52
Little Cabin Home on the Hill	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 50
Long Journey Home	Kentucky Colonels	Page 65
Lost and I'll Never Find a Way	Stanley Brothers	Page 53
Man in the Middle	Hot Rize	Page 127
Mary Ann	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 31
Misery Loves Company	Johnson Mountain Boys	Page 41
Molly and Tenbrooks	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 22
Mr. Engineer	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 97
My Cabin in Caroline	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 87
My Little Georgia Rose	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 90
My Little Girl in Tennessee	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 67
My Old Kentucky Home	Vern Williams and Ray Park	Page 129
My Walking Shoes	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 16
Nellie Kane	Hot Rize	Page 27
Nine Pound Hammer	Tony Rice	Page 18
Ocean of Diamonds	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 15
Old Home Place	J.D. Crowe and the New South	Page 20
Old Salty Dog Blues	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 33
On and On	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 36
Once More	Osborne Brothers	Page 120
Please Search Your Heart	Bluegrass Album Band	Page 51
Rank Stranger	Stanley Brothers	Page 98
Red Clay Halo	Nashville Bluegrass Band	Page 85
Ridin' That Midnight Train	Stanley Brothers	Page 106
Rocky Top	The Osborne Brothers	Page 125
Roust-a-bout	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 121
Roving Gambler	Stanley Brothers	Page 62

Shady Grove	Doc Watson	Page 58
Somebody Loves You Darling	Jim and Jesse McReynolds	Page 92
Somehow Tonight	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 74
Sophronie	Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys	Page 42
Steam Powered Aero Plane	John Hartford	Page 111
Still Feeling Blue	Country Gazette	Page 115
Stone Walls and Steel Bars	Stanley Brothers	Page 117
Teardrops in My Eyes	Osborne Brothers	Page 66
Tennessee in 1949	Larry Sparks	Page 43
The White Dove	Stanley Brothers	Page 68
Think of What You've Done	Stanley Brothers	Page 119
Thirty Years of Farming	James King	Page 84
We'll Meet Again Sweetheart	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 88
Where the Soul of Man Never Dies	Skaggs & Rice	Page 110
Whitehouse Blues	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 89
Who's That Knocking At My Door	Dreadful Snakes	Page 37
Will the Roses Bloom	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 80
Willow Garden	Osborne Brothers	Page 38
With Body and Soul	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	Page 118
Wouldn't Change You If I Could	Reno and Smiley	Page 32
Wrong Road Again	Joe Val and the New England Boys	Page 123
Yonder Stands Little Maggie	Stanley Brothers	Page 95
You're Running Wild	Louvin Brothers	Page 83
Your Love is Like a Flower	Flatt and Scruggs	Page 21
Your Saddle is Empty Old Pal	Stanley Brothers	Page 108