

It's knowin' that your door is always open and your  
path is free to walk  
That makes me tend to leave my sleepin' bag rolled  
up and stashed behind your couch  
And it's knowin' I'm not shackled by forgotten  
words and bonds  
And the ink stains that have dried upon some line  
That keeps you in the back roads by the rivers of  
my memory  
That keeps you ever gentle on my mind

It's not clingin' to the rocks and ivy planted on their  
columns now that bind me  
Or something that somebody said because they  
thought we fit together walkin'  
It's just knowing that the world will not be cursing  
or forgiving  
When I walk along some railroad track and find  
That you're movin' on the back roads by the rivers  
of my memory  
And for hours you're just gentle on my mind

Though the wheat fields and the clothes lines and  
the junkyards and the highways come  
between us

And some other woman's cryin' to her mother  
'cause she turned and I was gone

I still might run in silence tears of joy might stain  
my face

And the summer sun might burn me till I'm blind  
But not to where I cannot see you walkin' on the  
back roads

By the rivers flowin' gentle on my mind

I dip my cup of soup back from a gurglin' cracklin'  
cauldron in some train yard

My beard a rustlin' coal pile and a dirty hat pulled  
low across my face

Through cupped hands 'round a tin can I pretend to  
hold you to my breast and find

That you're waitin' from the back roads by the  
rivers of my memory

Ever smilin', ever gentle on my mind