

Joni Mitchell's
Songs of a Prairie Girl
Compiled & Created by Jim Guedo

Remount Draft: April 24th, 2007

Notes:

At this moment, the text & songs are split between nine performers and assigned thus accordingly:

Stephanie Wood is the 'youngest' persona (The Nomad/Poet 1950's).

Hilary Hart (The Dancer; late 1950's).

Janessa Johnsrude (The Rebel; late 1950's/early sixties).

Caitlin Vancoughnett (The Artist; mid to late 1960's).

Jacklyn Green (The Musical Heart; the 1970's).

Vesti Hansen is the 'oldest' persona, in essence straddling the later decades & reflecting back on all these 'lives' lived.

Becky Megyesi, Kristen Holfeur and DeeAnn Issak straddles the eras, and are in a sense a Saskatchewan version of a Greek Chorus.

While not literally & solely age related, the progression is more evolutionary, more an indication of the different aspects of the same person (Joni Mitchell). The poet, the soul, the rebel, the explorer/adventurer, the mother, the artist, the performer etc. are the essence each actor will explore, and which will be clarified once staging & interaction occurs.

Ensemble indicates all actors participate on the assigned line/verse.

Chorus indicates a smaller faction of actors within the Ensemble.

Solo voice indicates a pre-assigned solo line for an individual (Ensemble or Chorus).

This version is meant, more than anything, to reveal how the non-linear nature of the piece (the arc of the album being adhered to and respected, with Joni's additions placed at her wishes) will be augmented/clarified by 'sharing' the text and additional music, as opposed to presenting a straight ahead, traditional "bio".

To clarify the format of the script: anything that has "quotations marks and is not bolded" is text that is spoken, and is a transcribed portion of a Joni Mitchell interview. All her words, though edited and shaped by moi. Anything that has no quotation marks but is bolded is sung.

The stage direction Image indicates that upstage, within the picture frame, a new piece of artwork by Joni will blend from the previous, supporting the new moment onstage.

Soundscape indicates recorded ambiance that will enhance the environmental aspect of the show.

SONGS OF A PRAIRIE GIRL:

ACT ONE:

PROLOGUE:

SONG 1: OVERTURE (from OVERTURE/COTTON AVE.)

Soundscape ambiance of gentle crickets & breeze. Image montage of the vast prairies as soundscape subtly evolves into instrumental / vocal intro as the Chorus sings vocalizations contained in the Overture under this dialogue:

This is spoken as text:

Vesti: *"You're in my blood like holy wine."
 You taste so bitter and so sweet"*

Image shifts as text is now sung/chanted/intoned:

*"I could drink a case of you...
Still I'd be on my feet
oh I would still be on my feet"*

Image dissolves to prairie skies as Vesti sings / Caitlin echoes:

*"I am a lonely painter"
"I live in a box of paints"
"I'm frightened by the devil "
"And I'm drawn to those ones that ain't afraid"*

Image montage through the following text:

Stephanie: *"The royal blue moment of morning."*

Soundscape ambiance layers in dull roll of thunder.

Janessa: *"The fury of a hailstorm that I watched in wonder*

Hilary: *"As it completely devastated a friend's father*

Janessa: *"Who watched his crop, all his work, torn and shredded."*

Sound Crossfade to passing train's lonesome whistle, crickets...

Caitlin: *"The train rolling around the curve at Maidstone,*

Jacklyn: *"With the sun flashing in deep pink from the elevators across the road."*

Vesti: *"That is all part of me."*

Ensemble: *"I am a flatlander."*

OVERTURE continues...

Image (first of Photo Series, 1986).

Jacklyn: *"My family was accustomed to hardship. These were people reared in a complete pioneer setting, and nobody thought to complain. My grandmothers both were frustrated musicians in different ways. My paternal grandmother came from Norway, and the story has it that the last time she cried in her life she was 14, and she was crying because she knew she would never have a piano. And she became a stoic. She had a miserable, nasty life. She had 11 kids and married a mean, poor drunk, but, as anyone knows, never wept again through all the hardship in all her adult life."*

Caitlin: *"My maternal grandmother, on the other hand, was a classical musician who had come west when the Prairies opened up by train. She was Scottish-French, and they brought an organ in for her and a gramophone. She was a poet and musician, but she still kicked the kitchen door off its hinges out of her frustration at being trapped in the role of a housewife."*

Vesti: *"My work reflects the migration of my life."*

Stephanie: *"I was brought up in a tiny hamlet, a place where teams of horses delivered the fresh water for the village. When I was ten, I moved to the town, but I still lived a life on the outskirts. I have a love of raw land that's stayed with me. For a long time I found cities tragic. I was a girl from the prairies with a severe case of the bends."*

Vesti: *"I was born in Fort Macleod."*

Janessa: *"Then we moved to Calgary..."*

Hilary: *"... then we moved to Creelman..."*

Jacklyn: *"... then we moved to Maidstone..."*

Stephanie: *"... then we moved to North Battleford..."*

Vesti: *"... all before I was five."*

Caitlin: *"And because we moved a lot as a child, you couldn't let your roots go down too deep, otherwise pulling them up would be extremely painful. I pulled the weeds out of my soul when they were young, otherwise they would choke me."*

Layering in of ghostly period highway noises... blends into URGE FOR GOING

Vesti: *"Maidstone. Highway 16. When World War II ended, father found us a little house with a picture window."*

Stephanie: *"The only recreation I had was waving to the steam locomotive that blew its whistle at the bend in the tracks as it entered town. "*

Caitlin: *"I think that set up a permanent longing in me to take off and go somewhere."*

Soundscape layers in a lonely train whistle... Image shifts.

Vesti: *"Things coming and going by that window left an impression on me: here they come, where are they going..."*

SONG 2: URGE FOR GOING

*Caitlin: I awoke today and found the frost perched on the town
It hovered in a frozen sky, then it gobbled summer down
When the sun turns traitor cold and all the trees are shivering in a naked row*

Ensemble: She gets the urge for going
Caitlin: But I never seem to go
Ensemble: She gets the urge for going when
Add Caitlin: The meadow grass is turning brown
Add Ensemble hums: Summertime is falling down
Add Vesti: and winter is closing in

Caitlin: I had me a man in summertime
Add Vesti: He had summer-colored skin
*Caitlin: And not another girl in town
My darling's heart could win*
*Add Ensemble: But when the leaves fell on the ground
Bully winds came around, pushed them face down in the snow*

Janessa & Hilary : He got the urge for going
Caitlin: And I had to let him go
Add Jacklyn: He got the urge for going
Add Ensemble: When the meadow grass was turning brown
Vesti & Caitlin (on last phrase): Summertime was falling down and winter was closing in

*Caitlin: Now the warriors of winter they give a cold triumphant shout
And all that stays is dying and all that lives is camping out
See the geese in chevron flight flapping and racing on before the snow*

Add Stephanie: They got the urge for going
Add Janessa: And they got the wings so they can go
Add Jacklyn: They get the urge for going
Add Becky & Hilary: When the meadow grass is turning brown
Add Kristen & DeeAnn: Summertime is falling down
Vesti: and winter is closing in

*Caitlin: Apply the fire with kindling now,
I'll pull the blankets up to my chin,
I'll lock the vagrant winter out and
I'll fold my wandering in
I'd like to call back summertime
Have her stay for just another month or so*

*Vesti (Ens. hums) But she's got the urge for going
So I guess she'll have to go
She gets the urge for going
When the meadow grass is turning brown*

Vesti & Caitlin: All her empire's falling down

Becky: **(Study war no more)*
*Tokyo Rose on the radio *(Lay down your arms)*
Vesti: *She says she's leavin' but she don't go*

Hilary: **(Study war no more)*
Out of the blue just passin' thru
A young flight sergeant
*On two weeks leave *(Lay down your arms)*
Says:
DeeAnn: "Molly McGee no one else will do!"
*Becky: And seals the tea-leaf prophecy *(Lay down your arms)*
DeeAnn, Hilary, Becky: Oh these nights are strong and soft
*Private passions and secret storms *(Lay down your arms)*
Nothin' about him ticks her off
Kristen: "And he looks so cute in his uniform"

Hilary: **(Study war no more)*
*She plants her garden in the spring *(Lay down your arms)*
**(Study war no more)*
*DeeAnn: He does the winter shoveling *(Lay 'em down lay 'em down now)*
**(Study war no more)*
Caitlin & Stephanie: But summer's just a sneeze
*In a long long bad winter cold *(Lay down your arms)*
**(Study war no more)*
Vesti: She says
Kristen: "I'm leavin' here"
Vesti: but she don't go

Kristen: **(Study war no more)*
**(Study war no more)*
*"Sleep little darlin'! *(Harmony: Janessa, Vesti, Caitlin, Jacklyn)*
*This is your happy home *(Lay down your arms)*
Hiroshima cannot be pardoned!
*Add Janessa: Don't have kids when you get grown *(Lay down your arms)*
Add Vesti: Because this world is shattered
*Kristen, Janessa, V: The wise are mourning *(Lay down your arms)*
The fools are joking
Add Jacklyn/Caitlin: Oh what does it matter?
The wash needs ironing
And the fire needs stoking"

Stephanie: **(Study war no more)*
*She plants her garden in the spring *(Lay down your arms)*
**(Study war no more)*
*DeeAnn: He does the winter shoveling *(Lay 'em down lay 'em down now)*
**(Study war no more)*
Kris, DeeA, Stephanie: The three of 'em laughing 'round the radio

**(Lay down your arms)*
Stephanie: *She says*
Kristen: *"I'm leavin' here"*
Vesti: *but she don't go*

**(Study war no more)*
Kristen: *She plants her garden in the spring* **(Lay down your arms)*
**(Study war no more)*
DeeAnn & Caitlin: *They do the winter shoveling*
**(Study war no more)*
DeeA, Kris& Caitlin: *They sit up late and watch the*
Johnny Carson show
Caitlin: *She says*
Kristen: *"I'm leavin' here"*
Caitlin: *but she don't go*

Vesti: *"To this day she feels a little funny about the rest of the prophecy, I mean, she's a real germ fighter because she's convinced it's a germ that's gonna knock her down. She does yoga, Tai Chi, cross-country skiing, and doesn't even have a quaver in her voice yet."*

I say to her, 'Don't worry about the gypsy, Mom. Two out of three ain't bad.' The gypsy got it wrong. It's me who's gonna die the long and agonizing death, with my bad habits".

Image shifts with a distant period police siren accent. The a cappella top of SHADOWS & LIGHT:

Janessa: *Every picture has its shadows*
And it has some source of light
Ensemble: *Blindness, blindness and light*

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *"Depression can be the sand that makes the pearl. If you get rid of the demons, the angels can fly off too."*

Janessa: *The perils of benefactors*
The blessings of parasites
Ensemble: *Blindness blindness and sight*

Image shift into CHEROKEE LOUISE, with solo aboriginal chant:

Vesti: *"Saskatchewan was where I was shaped, but where I first learned about bigotry. I was raised in Saskatoon with its religious bigotry - you know, the Catholic West and the Protestant East Side. In this town they tried to teach you early on about "them and us" and where to go and where not to go, and "they're like that and we're like that" - you know the lines."*

Stephanie: "I remember my first reaction seeing Indians, how interesting and beautiful their clothing was compared to what we wore. I also remember thinking what was called civilization didn't appeal to me very much..."

SONG 4: CHEROKEE LOUISE *(Vesti and/or Ensemble sings back up phrases)

*Holly: Cherokee Louise is hiding in this tunnel
In the Broadway bridge*

Holly/Stephanie: We're crawling on our knees

½ Ensemble: We've got flashlights and batteries

½ Ensemble: We've got cold cuts from the fridge

*Holly/Jacklyn Last year about this time
We used to climb up in the branches
Just to sway there in some breeze*

Holly: Now the cops on the street

Ensemble: They want

Vesti: Cherokee Louise

*Holly: People like to talk
Tongues are waggin' over fences
Waggin' over phones *(Cherokee Louise)
All their doors are locked
God she can't even come to our house
But I know where she'll go *(Cherokee Louise)*

*Holly/Jacklyn: To the place where you can stand
And press your hands like it was bubblebath*

*Holly: In dust piled high as me
Down under the street*

Stephanie: My friend

Vesti: Poor Cherokee Louise

Holly/Jacklyn: Ever since we turned

Ensemble: 13

*It's like a minefield
Walking to the door*

Holly: Going out you get the 3rd degree

Add Stephanie: And comin' in you get the

Add Jacklyn & Ensemble: 3rd world war

*Holly/Jacklyn: Tuesday after school
We put our pennies on the rails
And when the train went by *(Cherokee Louise)
We were jumpin' round like fools*

Holly/Jacklyn: Goin'

Holly: "Look no heads or tails"

Holly/Jacklyn: Goin'

*Jacklyn: "Look my lucky prize" *(Cherokee Louise)*

Holly: *She runs home to her foster dad
He opens up a zipper
And he yanks her to her knees
Oh please be here please*

Stephanie: *My friend*

Vesti: *Poor Cherokee Louise*

Holly/Stephanie: *Cherokee Louise is hiding in this tunnel
In the Broadway bridge *(Cherokee Louise)
We're crawling on our knees*

Holly: *I've got Archie and Silver Screen*

Stephanie: *I know where she is *(Cherokee Louise)*

Holly/Jacklyn: *The place where you can stand
And press your hand like it was bubblebath
In dust piled high as me*

Holly: *Down under the street*

Stephanie: *My friend*

Vesti: *Poor Cherokee Louise*

Holly, Steph & Vesti: *Oh Cherokee Louise *(Cherokee Louise)*

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Segues into ethereal RHAPSODY ON A THEME BY PAGANINI.

Caitlin: *"When I heard Rachmaninov I was in North Battleford and my best playmates at that time were Frankie McKitrick and Peter Armstrong. Frankie was a young classical pianist. He could play the church organ even though his feet barely touched the pedals. Peter Armstrong joined some opera company in Italy when he grew up. He was studying voice and Frankie was studying piano. Frankie and I went to a Kirk Douglas movie called The Story of Three Loves and 'Variations on a Theme by Paganini' was the theme song, only it was called 'The Story of Three Loves.'"*

Jacklyn: *"It was the most beautiful melody I'd ever heard, and in North Battleford there was a department store that had a record section and a listening booth where I'd go to listen. It just nailed me, it hit some raw nerve inside. Every time it used to come on the radio it would drive me crazy. It was a 78. I had 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Tubby the Tuba', but the first one that I loved and had to buy? 'The Story of Three Loves'."*

Cross fade to ethereal solo piano, plunking out the same tune.

Caitlin: *"When I heard that song, I really wanted to play the piano. I began to dream that I could play it beautifully. We bought one and I started lessons, but at a rudimentary level. I wanted to jump immediately into playing the piano beautifully and you had to go through a lot of practicing. I tried to make the jump and the teacher rapped my knuckles with a ruler."*

Piano stops with a sharp splang!

DeeAnn: (As Teacher) *'Why would you want to play by ear...'*

Jacklyn: *--that's what they called composing--*

DeeAnn: (As Teacher) *"...when you could have the masters at your fingertips?"*

Jacklyn: *"I quit. My lessons also conflicted with Wild Bill Hickock..."*

Vesti: *--my father's favorite program---*

Jacklyn: *"...on the radio, so I quit."*

Caitlin: *"That kind of brutality drove my love of music underground until I was eighteen. So you go to art school and innovation is everything, but in music, you're just a weird loner. So I have more of a painter's ego or approach, which is to make fresh, individuated stuff that has my blood in it."*

Jacklyn: *"In recent years my mother said to me:"*

Kristen : *'We spent all that money on your piano lessons and you quit.'*

Jacklyn: *And I said, 'Look, Mom, I think you got your money's worth, you know what I mean?'"*

Image Shift as music Segues into RAY'S DAD'S CADILLAC; * Ensemble croons opening phrase/ vamp under dialogue: *(Ray's Dad's Cadillac times 4)

Hilary: *"Growing up I was pretty much a good-time Charlie. As a matter-of-fact, that was my nickname. I was a bad student. I failed twelfth grade. I did my book reports from classic comics. I was anti-intellectual to the max. I was a nature lover more than a fantasy-head. I think I had a more realistic sense of the world, maybe."*

SONG 5: RAY'S DAD'S CADILLAC

Hilary: *Ray's Dad's Cadillac*

Ensemble: *Rollin'*

Hilary: *past the rink
Past the record shack
Pink fins in the falling rain*

Ensemble: *Rollin'*

Hilary: *To the blue lights past the water mains*

Ensemble: **(Ray's Dad's Cadillac)*

Hilary: *Weekends we'd get*

Ensemble: **(Ray's Dad's Cadillac)*

Vesti: **(... yeah, yeah, yeah... oh... in the darkness...)*

Hilary: *Rock 'n roll in the dashboard
Romance in the back of*

Ensemble: **(Ray's Dad's Cadillac)*

Ensemble vamp/music break under dialogue:

Hilary: *"I did daydream all through the school system but I can't be hypnotized..."*

Vesti: *"I went to get hypnotized for smoking. He was a very intelligent man and he'd hypnotized a lot of people, but he couldn't get me to go under. His explanation for it was that the channel to my subconscious was still wide open. I asked him if that was normal and he said it was fairly uncommon. And I asked him how a thing like that could occur and he said that most children are allowed to daydream up to the age of seven. Then it's no longer cute and everything conspires to snap them out of it."*

Hilary: *Ray's dad teaches math*

Ensemble: *Zero*

Hilary: *I'm a dunce*

I'm a decimal in his class

Last night's kisses won't erase

Ensemble: *Zero*

Hilary: *I just can't keep the numbers in their place*

Ensemble: **(Ray's Dad's Cadillac)*

Hilary: *Last night we had*

Ensemble: **(Ray's Dad's Cadillac)*

Vesti: **(... la, la, la... oh...oh...)*

Hilary: *Rock 'n roll in the dashboard*

Romance in the back of

Ensemble: **(Ray's Dad's Cadillac, Ray's Dad's Cadillac...)*

Vesti: *"Somehow or other I had managed to daydream all through school classes, and basically drew and wrote through all my subjects. Basically, I liked to dance and paint and that was about it. I was kind of like the school artist. I did backdrops for school plays, I was always involved in illustrating yearbooks. I designed the UNICEF Christmas card. I had friends who were cheerleaders but I was always an artist and a rock'n'roll dancer. I lived for the dances. And as far as serious discussions went, I found them boring. To see teenagers sitting around trying to solve the problems of the world, I figured, all things considered, I'd rather be... dancing."*

Hilary: *When it comes to mathematics*

I got static in the attic

"No sir, nothin's clear!"

I'll be blackboard blind on Monday

Dreamin' of blue runways

On the edge of here

A little atmosphere

Hilary: *Blue lights out on airport road*

Add Jennelle*: **Motown* in a field in a farmer's grove*

Big planes comin' overhead

Jennelle & Hilary: *Lowdown*

Becky: *You can see the bolts*

You can see the tire treads

Ensemble: *Ray's Dad's Cadillac*
Becky: *Weekends we'd get*
Ensemble: *Ray's Dad's Cadillac*
Vesti: *Oh little darlin'*
Hilary: *Rock 'n' roll in the dashboard*
Becky: *Romance in the back of*
Ensemble: *Ray's Dad's Cadillac (Times 4)*
Hilary: *Ray's Dad's good at math...*

Ensemble fades down "Ray's Dad's Cadillac" back ups as music break at end of song underscores the following dialogue:

Vesti: *"You see, pop music was something else in that time. We're talking about the Fifties now. The Hit Parade was one hour a day – four o'clock to five o'clock. On the weekends they'd do the Top Twenty. But the rest of the radio was Mantovani, country & western, a lot of radio journalism. Mostly country & western, which I wasn't crazy about. To me it was simplistic. Even as a child I liked more complex melody. *In my teens I loved to dance. That was my thing. I instigated a Wednesday night dance 'cause I could hardly make it to the weekends. For dancing, I loved Chuck Berry. Ray Charles. 'What I'd Say.' I liked Elvis Presley. I liked the Everly Brothers."*

***At this point in dialogue Holly overlaps; we crossfade from 'older' to 'younger' ...**

Stephanie: *"In my teens I loved to dance. That was my thing. I instigated a Wednesday night dance 'cause I could hardly make it to the weekends. For dancing, I loved Chuck Berry. Ray Charles. 'What I'd Say.' I liked Elvis Presley. I liked the Everly Brothers."*

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Segues into IN FRANCE THEY KISS ON MAIN STREET

Hilary : *"When I was two feet off the ground I collected broken bottles and bats."*

Caitlin: *"When I was three feet off the ground I made drawings of animals and forest fires."*

Jacklyn: *"When I was four feet off the ground I began to dance to rock'n'roll and sing the top ten and bawdy service songs around campfires..."*

Image Shift.

SONG 6: IN FRANCE THEY KISS ON MAIN STREET

Stephanie: *Downtown
 My darling dime store thief
 In the War of Independence
 Rock 'n' roll rang sweet as victory
 Under neon signs
 A girl was in bloom*

*Add Vesti& Kristen: And a woman was fading
In a suburban room*

Vesti: I said

*Stephanie: take me to the dance
Do you want to dance?
I love to dance*

Vesti: And I told him

*Stephanie: They don't take chances
They seem so removed from romance
They've been broken in churches and schools
And molded to middle class circumstance*

Vesti: And we were

Ensemble: rolling rolling rock 'n' rolling

*Stephanie: Downtown
The dance halls and cafes
Feel so wild you could break somebody's heart
Just doing the latest dance craze
Gail and Louise
In those push-up brassieres
Tight dresses and rhinestone rings
Drinking up the band's beers*

*Add Becky/DeeAnn: Young love was kissing under bridges
Kissing in cars kissing in cafes
And we were walking down Main Street
Kisses like bright flags hung on holidays*

Stephanie: In France they kiss on Main Street

Add Janessa: `Amour, mama, not cheap display

Vesti: And we were

Ensemble: rolling, rolling, rock 'n' rolling

During music break:

Vesti: "I would go hang out on the streets dressed to the T, even in hat and gloves. I hung out downtown with the Ukrainians and the Indians; they were more emotionally honest and better dancers."

*Stephani, Hilary & Janessa: Downtown
In the pinball arcade
With his head full of pool hall pitches
And songs from the hit parade
He'd be singing "Bye Bye Love"(Ensemble back up vocal)
While he's racking up his free play
Let those rock 'n' roll choir boys*

Becky/DeeAnn: Come and carry us away

Stephanie: Sometimes Chickie had the car

Becky: *Or Ron had a car*
DeeAnn: *Or Lead Foot Melvin with his hot-wire head*
Kristen/DeeAnn/Becky: *We'd all go looking for a party*
Looking to raise Jesus up from the dead
Stephanie: *And I'd be kissing in the back seat*
Thrilling to the Brando-like things that he said
Vesti: *And we'd be*
Ensemble: *rolling rolling rock 'n' rolling*

Segues into LET THE WIND CARRY ME with vocalizations & low wind...

Janessa: *"When I went back to my own neighborhood, I found that I had a provocative image. They thought I was loose because I always liked rowdies. I thought the way the kids danced at my school was kind of funny, I remember a recurring statement on my report card –*

Vesti: *'Joan does not relate well.'*

Janessa: *"I know that I was aloof. Perhaps some people thought I was a snob. There came a split when I rejected sororities and that whole thing."*

Vesti: *"I didn't go for that."*

SONG 7: LET THE WIND CARRY ME

Janessa: *Papa's faith is people*
Mama she believes in cleaning
Papa's faith is in people
Mama she's always cleaning
Papa brought home the sugar
Mama taught me the deeper meaning
She don't like my kick pleat skirt
She don't like my eyelids painted green
She don't like me staying up late
In my high-heeled shoes
Add Hilary & Jennelle: *Living for that rock 'n' roll dancing scene*
Janessa: *Papa says*
Add DeeAnn: *"Leave the girl alone, mother*
She's looking like a movie queen"

During musical interlude with vocalizations:

Janessa: *"So I gravitated to the best dance halls from the age of 12 to the age of 16. Not that I liked beer, but we would go from time to time to the bootleggers, and the bootleggers were also brothels. Like any young black trumpet player in the South, like John Handy or any New Orleans musician who knew he was a musician at an early age, somehow I was drawn to where the music was best, and it's always in the roughest areas. And yet, the street had heart then, and a child, a baby, a clean-looking baby was not molested. If anything, they were very protective."*

Stephanie: *"If you've seen pictures of me when I was twenty-five, you'll know I looked twelve then, so you can imagine what I really looked like when I really was 12. Awfully wholesome to be in those places. First of all, they'd say:*

Vesti: *"Get her out of here"*

Stephanie: *"... or, if I insisted on remaining, they'd make sure that someone saw me safely to the bus. They'd say to me..."*

Vesti: *"You look too innocent. Smoke."*

Stephanie: *"So, even the toughest areas, which I went to for the music and the booze or whatever, or to see people drinking, to see life, were very protective and generous to me. But I saw a lot of life, and I had a lot of difficulty."*

Janessa: *"I became an unwed mother..."*

Vesti: *"...and to be pregnant and unmarried in 1964 was like you killed somebody. To be a broke young woman was Dickensian. You really don't want to know the details of how we were treated at that time. It's just disgusting."*

Holly: *"But you have to be able to go out on a limb. To innovate, you have to have a certain kind of fearlessness".*

Janessa: *"I think it helps if at an early age you got used to being shunned and you survived that."*

Vesti: *"If you had to fight some things in your childhood, you can stand alone."*

Janessa: *Mama thinks she spoilt me
Papa knows somehow he set me free
Mama thinks she spoilt me rotten
She blames herself
But papa he blesses me
It's a rough road to travel
Mama let go now
It's always called for me
Sometimes I get that feeling
And I want to settle
And raise a child up with somebody*

Add Vesti: *I get that strong longing
And I want to settle
And raise a child up with somebody*

Janessa: *But it passes like the summer
I'm a wild seed again
Let the wind carry me...*

Hilary: *"But there also came a stage when my friends who were juvenile delinquents suddenly became criminals. They could go into very dull jobs or they could go into crime. Crime is very romantic in your youth. I suddenly thought, 'Here's where the romance ends. I don't see myself in jail..."*

Sound of wind crossfades into adapted percussive intro to DREAMLAND...

Janessa: "So I went to art school and at the end of my year decided to go to Toronto to become..."

Caitlin: "...a folk singer. Then New York. I was only a folk singer for about two years, and that was several years before I ever made a record. By that time, it wasn't really folk music anymore. It was some new American phenomenon. Later, they called it singer/songwriters. Or art songs, which I liked best.

Jacklyn: "Some people get nervous about that word:"

Ensemble: "Art."

Jacklyn: "They think it's a pretentious word from the giddyap. To me, words are only symbols, and the word art has never lost its vitality."

Add Caitlin: "It still has meaning to me. Love lost its meaning to me."

Add Janessa: "God lost its meaning to me."

Vesti: "But art never lost its meaning. I always knew what I meant by art. Now I've got all three of them back."

Sound of wind crossfades into plane taking off segues into...

SONG 8: DREAMLAND * Ensemble does back ups

Kristen: It's a long long way from Canada
A long way from snow chains
Donkey vendors slicing coconut
No parkas to their name *(4 "Dream Ons")
Black babies covered in baking flour
The cook's got a carnival song
We're going to lay down some place shady
With dreamland coming on

Layer Hilary: Dreamland dreamland
Dreamland dreamland *(3 "Dream Ons", 2 "Dream Ons", 2 "Dream Ons")

Hilary: Walter Raleigh and Chris Columbus
Come marching out of the waves
And claim the beach and all concessions
In the name of the suntan slave *(2 "Dream Ons", 3 "Dream Ons")
I wrapped that flag around me
Like a Dorothy Lamour sarong
And I lay down thinking national
With dreamland coming on

LayerDeeAnn: Dreamland dreamland
Dreamland dreamland *(3 "Dream Ons", 2 "Dream Ons", 5 "Dream Ons")

DeeAnn: Goodtime Mary and a fortune hunter
All dressed up to follow the drums

Mary in a feather hula-hoop
*Miss Fortune with a rose on her big game gun *(Vesti hums)*
All saints all sinners shining
Heed those trumpets all night long
*Propped up on a samba beat *(Harmonies)*
With dreamland coming on
Layer Becky: *Dreamland dreamland*
*Dreamland dreamland *(3 "Dream Ons", 3 Times 2 "Dream Ons")*

Becky: *Tar baby and the Great White Wonder*
Talking over a glass of rum
Burning on the inside
*With the knowledge of things to come *(Vesti "Hey, hey, hey yeahs...")*
There's gambling out on the terrace
And midnight ramblin' on the lawn
As they lead toward temptation
*With dreamland coming on *(Back up vocalizations)*
Dreamland dreamland
*Dreamland dreamland *(3 "Dream Ons", 2 X 2 "Dream Ons", 3 "Dream Ons")*

Vesti: *In a plane flying back to winter*
In shoes full of tropic sand
A lady in a foreign flag
*On the arm of her Marlboro Man *(2 Times "Dream On, Dream On")*
The hawk howls in New York City
Six foot drifts on Myrtle's lawn
As they push the recline buttons down
With dreamland coming on
*Dreamland dreamland *(Back up vocalizations)*
*Dreamland dreamland *(Back up vocalizations)*

Kristen: *African sand on the trade winds*
Hilary: *And the sun on the Amazon*
DeeAnn: *As they push the recline buttons down*
Becky: *With dreamland coming on*
Ensemble: *Dreamland dreamland*
*Dreamland dreamland *(Back up vocalizations that Jacklyn takes over)*

Image montage through the following...

Vesti *"I had no grandiose ideas about the kind of success that I received. In those days it was really a long shot. Especially for a Canadian. I remember my mother talking to a neighbor who asked:*

DeeAnn: *'Where is Joan living?'*

Kristen: *'In New York; she's a musician.'*

DeeAnn: 'Ohhh, you poor woman.'

Vesti: "It was hard for them to relate."

Song 9: DON JUAN'S RECKLESS DAUGHTER

Jacklyn: I'm Don Juan's reckless daughter
I came out two days on your tail
Those two bald-headed days in November
Before the first snowflakes sail
Out on the vast and subtle plains of mystery
A split tongue spirit talks
Noble as a nickel chief
Striking up an old juke box
And he says:

Ensemble: "Snakes along the railroad tracks"

Jacklyn: He says,

Add Ensemble: "Eagles in jet trails"

Jacklyn: He says,

Add Ensemble: "Coils around feathers and talons on scales
Gravel under the belly plates"

Jacklyn: He says,

Add Ensemble: "Wind in the Wings"

Jacklyn: He says,

Add Ensemble: "Big bird dragging its tail in the dust
Snake kite flying on a string"

Jacklyn: I come from open prairie
Given some wisdom and a lot of jive
Last night the ghosts of my old ideas
Reran on channel five
And it howled so spooky for its eagle soul
I nearly broke down and cried
But the split tongue spirit laughed at me
He says,

Add Ensemble: "Your serpent cannot be denied"

Jacklyn: Our serpents love the whisky bars
They love the romance of the crime
But didn't I see a neon sign
Fester on your hotel blind
And a country road come off the wall
And swoop down at the crowd at the bar
And put me at the top of your danger list
Just for being so much like you are

½ Ensemble: You're a coward against the altitude *(Jacklyn says "coward")

½ Ensemble: You're a coward against the flesh *(Vesti says "coward")

*Jacklyn: Coward caught between yes and no
 Reckless this time on the line for yes, yes, yes!
 Reckless brazen in the play
 Of your changing traffic lights
 Coward slinking down the hall
 To another restless night*

*Add ½ Ensemble: As we center behind the eight ball
 Add ½ Ensemble: As we rock between the sheets
 Add Ensemble: As we siphon the colored language
 Of the farms and the streets*

*Jacklyn: Here in Good-Old-God-Save-America
 the home of the brave and the free*

*Add Ensemble: We are all hopelessly oppressed cowards
 Vesti: Of some duality
 Jacklyn: Of restless multiplicity
 Ensemble: (Oh say can you see)*

*Vesti: Restless for streets and honky tonks
 Jacklyn: Restless for home and routine
 Vesti: Restless for country safety and her
 Jacklyn: Restless for the likes of reckless me
 Vesti: Restless sweeps like fire and rain
 Vesti & Jacklyn: Over virgin wilderness
 It prowls like hookers and thieves
 Through bolt locked tenements
 Behind my bolt locked door
 The eagle and the serpent are at war in me*

*Add ½ Ensemble: The serpent fighting for blind desire
 Add ½ Ensemble: The eagle for clarity
 Vesti: What strange prizes these battles bring
 Jacklyn: These hectic joys these weary blues
 Vesti: Puffed up and strutting when I think I win
 Jacklyn: Down and shaken when I think I lose
 Add ½ Ensemble: There are rivets up here in this eagle
 Add ½ Ensemble: There are box cars down there on your snake
 Vesti & Jacklyn: And we are twins of spirit
 No matter which route home we take*

*Add Caitlin/Janessa: Or what we forsake
 Jacklyn: We're going to come up to the eyes of clarity
 Vesti: And we'll go down to the beads of guile
 Jacklyn: There is danger and education
 In living out such a reckless life style*

*Add Vesti: I touched you on the central plains
 It was plane to train my twin*

*Jacklyn: It was just plane shadow to train shadow
 But to me it was skin to skin*

*Add Vesti: The spirit talks in spectrums
 He talks to mother earth to father sky*

*Vesti/Jacklyn: Self indulgence to self denial
 Man to woman
 Scales to feathers
 You and I
 (vocalizations from this point on as per the original recording)

Vesti: Eagles in the sky

Vesti/ Jacklyn: You and I

Jacklyn: Snakes in the grass

Vesti/ Jacklyn: You and I

Vesti: Crawl

Jacklyn: and fly

Vesti/ Jacklyn: You and I

Ensemble: (By the dawn's early light...)

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: "I'm still a child. Sometimes I feel seven years old. I'll be standing in the kitchen and all of a sudden my body wants to jump around. For no reason at all. You've seen kids that suddenly just get a burst of energy? That part of my child is still alive. I don't repress those urges-- except in certain company."

Image Shift.

Song 10: RAISED ON ROBBERY

*Ensemble: He was sitting in the lounge of the Empire Hotel
 He was drinking for diversion
 He was thinking for himself
 A little money riding on the Maple Leafs
 Along comes a lady in lacy sleeves
 She says "let me sit down
 You know, drinkin' alone's a shame
 It's a shame it's a crying shame
 Look at those jokers
 Glued to that damn hockey game
 Hey honey-you've got lots of cash
 Bring us round a bottle
 And we'll have some laughs
 Gin's what I'm drinking
 I was raised on robbery*

*I'm a pretty good cook
 I'm sitting on my groceries
 Come up to my kitchen
 I'll show you my best recipe
 I try and I try but I can't save a cent
 I'm up after midnight cooking*

*Trying to make my rent
I'm rough but I'm pleasin'
I was raised on robbery*

*We had a little money once
They were pushing through a four lane highway
Government gave us three thousand dollars
You should have seen it fly away
First he bought a '57 Biscayne
He put it in the ditch
He drunk up all the rest
That son of a bitch
His blood's bad whiskey
I was raised on robbery*

*You know you ain't bad looking
I like the way you hold your drinks
Come home with me honey
I ain't asking for no full length mink
Hey, where you going
Don't go yet
Your glass ain't empty and we just met
You're mean when your loaded
I was raised on robbery*

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO:

INTRO: *Distant thunder into piano intro of PAPRIKA PLAINS.*

Vesti: "If you can paint with a brush, you can paint with words."

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Jacklyn: "From grade 2 in school, I forged an image of myself as an artist. I just always knew. That was my identity. I'm a painter first so I approach music in a very different way than musicians generally do. I see music very graphically in my head. I evaluate it in terms of a visual abstraction inside my mind's eye."

Caitlin: "To be a painter of any worth you must find an original voice. I've watched all the laws of painting being broken within my time. Warhol broke down the last two: the barrier between fine art and pop art; and the other one, which was still standing when I was in art school, was never use colors of the same intensity because they cause a vibration in the eye. That rule was broken down by psychedelic art. So those two laws were broken a few years after I left art school."

Jacklyn: "To my amazement there were laws still standing in music. It's not that I did things to break the rules, because I didn't even know the rules existed. I'd just say, that sounds fresh. It's very hard to find anything fresh as a painter, especially when it comes to color juxtaposition."

Caitlin: "But I have the drive to be innovative, which is my birthright - where I was born, what time and what day. I was born on the day of the discoverer, so I have a need to plant a flag."

(beat)

Vesti: "I sing my sorrow and I paint my joy."

Image montage through the following as vocals begin:

Song 11: PAPRIKA PLAINS

Holly: *It fell from midnight skies
It drummed on the galvanized
In the washroom women tracked the rain
Up to the make-up mirror
Liquid soap and grass
And Jungle Gardenia crash
On Pine-Sol and beer
It's stifling in here
I've got to get some air
I'm going outside to get some air

Back in my hometown
They would have cleared the floor
Just to watch the rain come down*

*They're such sky oriented people
Geared to changing weather
I'm floating off in time
I'm floating off
I'm floating off in time*

Layer in Vesti:

*When I was three feet tall
And wide eyed open to it all
With their tasseled teams they came
To McGee's General Store
All in their beaded leathers
I would tie on colored feathers
And I'd beat the drum like war
I would beat the drum like war
I'd beat the drum
I'd beat the drum like war*

Holly& Stephanie:

*But when the church got through
They traded their beads for bottles
Smashed on Railway Avenue
And they cut off their braids
And lost some link with nature*

Stephanie fades...

*I'm floating into dreams
I'm floating off
I'm floating into my dreams*

Holly & Vesti:

*I dream paprika plains
Vast and bleak and God forsaken
Paprika plains
And a turquoise river snaking*

Holly:

During orchestral break, this text is delivered:

*Where crows gaze vigilant on wires
Where cattle graze the grasses
Far from the digits of business hours*

Jacklyn:

*The moon clock wanes and waxes
But here all time is stripped away
Nowhere on these plains
Is a sprout or an egg in evidence
To measure loss or gain*

Janessa:

*Only a little Indian band
Come down from some windy mesa
No women to make them food and child
No expressions on their faces*

Caitlin:

*I'm low in a helicopter
And the wind from whirling blades*

Vesti:

*Flaps their woven blankets
 And flags their raven braids
 Hilary : How came they to this emptiness?
 How came they to this dream?
 Vesti: How came I to this view
 From a flying machine
 Of earth and air and water
 Kristen: And a band of Indian men
 Without herds or flocks or crops
 Or families or fires to tend?
 DeeAnn: Like a phoenix up from ashes now
 A blanket figure springs
 With a fist raised up to turquoise skies
 Like liberty
 Becky: And at the point of vanishing
 Where the sky and the earth meet
 A bomb blooms
 Deadly mushroom
 Hilary: White
 Kristen: Gold
 Hilary: Heat
 Like a phoenix up from ashes
 Up from violent mysteries
 Becky: And growing 'till the giant blast
 Is to it like a golfer's tee
 there comes a child's beach ball
 Vesti: And memory takes me back
 to the beach to toss it up
 to the garage to get it patched
 A pink and yellow beach ball
 Hilary: Rolling
 Vesti: : Grand
 Hilary: Detached
 Turning the blues and greens of earth
 From space probe photographs
 Vesti: I float out of the hovercraft
 Naked as infancy
 And weightless
 And drifting
 Horizontally
 Jacklyn: Like a filing to a magnet
 Like the long descent of rain
 I am drawn
 I fall against the ball
 And lose paprika plains*

Vesti: I suckle at my mother's breast
 I embrace my mother earth
 I remember perforated blinds
 Over the crib of my birth

Caitlin: And just as Eve succumbed
 To reckless curiosity
 I take my sharpest fingernail
 And slash the globe to see
 Below me
 Vast Paprika plains

Vesti: And the snake the river traces
 And a little band of Indian men
 With no expressions on their faces

PAPRIKA PLAINS continues

Holly: The rain retreats
 Like troops to fall on other fields and streets
 Meanwhile they're sweet talking and name calling
 And brawling on the fringes of the floor

Layer in Caitlin: I spot you through the smoke
 With your eyes on fire
 From J&B and coke
 As I'm coming through the door
 I'm coming back
 I'm coming back for more!
 The band plugs in again
 You see that mirrored ball begin to sputter lights
 And spin
 Dizzy on the dancers
 Geared to changing rhythms
 No matter what you do

Layer in Vesti:: I'm floating back
 I'm floating back to you!

Image shift as intro begins for A CASE OF YOU:

Vesti: "Love...such a powerful force. Love is a peculiar feeling because it's subject to so much...change. For me, traveling around as a child, being uprooted, made it easier to take loss and rejection. Every time I changed, I would receive a lot of rejection. It had to be done. They were going to get you for staying the same, and they were going to get you for changing. (shrug) So of the two, changing was more interesting. In that way, I am not sentimental. It's easy for me to move."

Janessa: "If a woman has a problem and she tells it to a woman, the woman sympathizes. If a woman has a problem and she tells it to a man, he wants to resolve it..."

SONG 12: A CASE OF YOU

*Caitlin: Just before our love got lost you said
Jacklyn: "I am as constant as a northern star"
Caitlin: And I said "Constantly in the darkness
Where's that at?
If you want me I'll be in the bar"*

*On the back of a cartoon coaster
In the blue TV screen light
I drew a map of Canada
Ensemble: Oh Canada
Caitlin: With your face sketched on it twice
Oh you're in my blood like holy wine
You taste so bitter and so sweet
Oh I could drink a case of you darling
Still I'd be on my feet
oh I would still be on my feet*

Jacklyn: "In music, suspended chords are unresolved chords. If you go from an unresolved chord to an unresolved chord to an unresolved chord, I think it bugs men; they call my chords weird. How can chords be weird? Chords are depictions of your emotions, they feel like my feelings. I call them Chords of Inquiry, they have a question mark in them.

*Caitlin: Oh I am a lonely painter
I live in a box of paints
I'm frightened by the devil
And I'm drawn to those ones that ain't afraid*

*Jacklyn: I remember that time you told me you said
"Love is touching souls"
Caitlin: Surely you touched mine
'Cause part of you pours out of me
In these lines from time to time
Oh, you're in my blood like holy wine
You taste so bitter and so sweet
Oh I could drink a case of you darling
And I would still be on my feet
I would still be on my feet*

Music Break

Jacklyn: "There were so many unresolved things in me that those suspended chords that I found by twisting the knobs on my guitar, they just suited me. But my life has been unresolved, so these chords suit my disposition emotionally; they depict my life. I've lived an emotionally complex life with dramatic changes and my music reflects that."

Caitlin: *I met a woman
She had a mouth like yours
She knew your life
She knew your devils and your deeds
And she said:*

Add Jacklyn: *"Go to him, stay with him if you can
But be prepared to bleed"*

Caitlin: *Oh but you are in my blood
You're my holy wine
You're so bitter, bitter and so sweet

Oh, I could drink a case of you darling
Still I'd be on my feet
I would still be on my feet*

Segues into COYOTE as coyote howls in distance...

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Janessa: *"All the standards were written by men for women to sing. And the basic assumption was that the woman was waiting for a man to come along. You know, some day her prince will come and they will move into this nice little bungalow and everything will be nicey-nicey."*

Jennelle: *"A lot of the songs were about being dominated. But I don't think of myself in terms of gender. I write as a voice. It has been said in some places that I documented both the male and the female ego. I am absolutely not a feminist. I prefer the company of men to women, always have."*

Janessa: *"But I don't like to be put on a pedestal. I like a meeting of minds."*

Jennelle: *"I love men's company, and I have enjoyed, since early childhood, a kind of honorary 'male-ship'."*

Image shift.

SONG 13: COYOTE

Janessa: *No regrets Coyote
We just come from such different sets of circumstance
I'm up all night in the studios
And you're up early on your ranch
You'll be brushing out a brood mare's tail
While the sun is ascending
And I'll just be getting home with my reel to reel
There's no comprehending
Just how close to the bone and the skin and the eyes
And the lips you can get
And still feel so alone
And still feel related*

*Like stations in some relay
You're not a hit and run driver no no
Racing away
You just picked up a hitcher
A prisoner of the white lines on the freeway*

*Jennelle: We saw a farmhouse burning down
In the middle of nowhere
In the middle of the night
And we rolled right past that tragedy
Till we turned into some road house lights
Where a local band was playing
Locals were up kicking and shaking on the floor
And the next thing I know
That coyote's at my door
He pins me in a corner and he won't take no
He drags me out on the dance floor
And we're dancing close and slow
Now he's got a woman at home
He's got another woman down the hall
He seems to want me anyway
Why'd you have to get so drunk
And lead me on that way
You just picked up a hitcher
A prisoner of the white lines on the freeway*

*Janessa: I looked a coyote right in the face
On the road to Baljennie near my old home town
He went running thru the whisker wheat
Chasing some prize down
And a hawk was playing with him
Coyote was jumping straight up and making passes
He had those same eyes just like yours
Under your dark glasses
Privately probing the public rooms
And peeking thru keyholes in numbered doors
Where the players lick their wounds
And take their temporary lovers
And their pills and powders to get them thru this passion play
No regrets Coyote
I just get off up aways
You just picked up a hitcher
A prisoner of the white lines on the freeway*

*Jennelle: Coyote's in the coffee shop
He's staring a hole in his scrambled eggs
He picks up my scent on his fingers*

*While he's watching the waitresses' legs
He's too far from the Bay of Fundy
From appaloosas and eagles and tides
And the air conditioned cubicles
And the carbon ribbon rides
Are spelling it out so clear
Either he's going to have to stand and fight
Or take off out of here*

Janessa: *I tried to run away myself
To run away and wrestle with my ego
And with this flame
You put here in this Eskimo*

Split Lines: *In this hitcher
In this prisoner
Of the fine white lines
Of the white lines on the free free way*

Sound of distant children playing as we segue into SONG FOR SHARON.

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *"Growing up, all girls' games are nurses, tea parties and dress up. Sometimes we don't have clothes to dress up in, so we do imaginary dress. I'd say:"*

Stephanie: *'I'm wearing a gold lame dress, and I'm Ginger Rogers, and I'm descending a long stair case.'*

Hilary: *(as a young girl) 'No you're not, I am!'*

Vesti: *"So then I try to play with the boys. The boys play Roy Rogers and war. Roy Rogers is the one that invents all the activities and chooses the site. They choose a new Roy every day. So I say:"*

Stephanie: *'Let me be Roy.'*

Vesti: *"They say"*

Becky, Kristen, DeeAnn: *(as boys): "You can't 'cause you're a girl.'*

Vesti: *"So Christmas comes and I say:"*

Stephanie: *'I want a Roy Rogers shirt and a Roy Rogers hat.'*

Kristen: *'Oh dear'*

Vesti: *"...says my mother. There's a big conference with my father.'*

Kristen: *"The girl wants a Roy Rogers shirt.'*

Vesti: *"This is very bad. My father says:"*

DeeAnn: *'Let her have it.'*

Vesti: "So, come spring...here I stand in my red Roy Rogers shirt, says 'Roy' right on it. And my red Roy Rogers hat, says 'Roy' right on it. And I've got all these places...I know this ravine that would be just great...and I say to the boys:"

Stephanie: 'Let me be Roy.'

Becky, Kristen, DeeAnn: (As boys) 'You can't!'

Stephanie: 'Why not?'

Becky, Kristen, DeeAnn: 'You're a girl.'

Stephanie: 'But look, it says "Roy Rogers" right here!'

Becky: 'That means you're Dale Evans.'

Stephanie: 'Why?'

Kristen: 'Because you're wearing Roy's clothes.'

Stephanie: 'Well, what does Dale do?'

DeeAnn: 'She stays home and cooks.'

Image shift.

SONG 14: SONG FOR SHARON (*Ensemble does back up vocalizations):

Jacklyn: *I went to Staten Island, Sharon
To buy myself a mandolin
And I saw the long white dress of love
On a storefront mannequin
Big boat chuggin' back with a belly full of cars
All for something lacy*

Add Janessa: *Some girl's going to see that dress
And crave that day like crazy*

Jacklyn: *Little Indian kids on a bridge up in Canada *(Vocalization)
They can balance and they can climb
Like their fathers before them
They'll walk the girders of the Manhattan skyline *(Vocalization)
Shine your light on me Miss Liberty
Because as soon as this ferry boat docks
I'm headed to the church
To play Bingo
Fleece me with the gamblers' flocks*

*I can keep my cool at poker
But I'm a fool when love's at stake
Because I can't conceal emotion
What I'm feeling's always written on my face
There's a gypsy down on Blecker Street*

*I went in to see her as a kind of joke
And she lit a candle for my love luck
And eighteen bucks went up in smoke*

Add Caitlin:

*Sharon I left my man
At a North Dakota junction
And I came out to the "Big Apple" here
To face the dream's malfunction*

Jacklyn:

*Love's a repetitious danger
You'd think I'd be accustomed to
Well I do accept the changes
At least better than I used to do*

*A woman I knew just drowned herself
The well was deep and muddy *(Vocalization)
She was just shaking off futility
Or punishing somebody *(Vocalizations)
My friends were calling up all day yesterday
All emotions and abstractions
It seems we all live so close to that line
and so far from satisfaction *(Vocalization)*

Dora says

AddDeeAnn:

"Have children"

Jacklyn:

Mama and Betsy say

Add Kristen & Hilary:

*"Find yourself a charity *(Vocalizations)*

Help the needy and the crippled or put some time into Ecology"

Jacklyn:

*Well there's a wide wide world of noble causes
And lovely landscapes to discover
But all I really want right now
Is find another lover*

Add Stephanie:

*When we were kids in Maidstone, Sharon *(Vocalizations)
I went to every wedding in that little town
To see the tears and the kisses
And the pretty lady in the white lace wedding gown *(Vocalizations)
And walking home on the railroad tracks
Or swinging on the playground swing *(Vocalizations)*

Lose Stephanie:

Love stimulated my illusions

Jacklyn:

*More than anything *(Vocalizations)*

*And when I went skating after Golden Reggie
You know it was white lace I was chasing *(Vocalizations)
Chasing dreams
Mama's nylons underneath my cowgirl jeans *(Vocalizations)
He showed me first you get the kisses
And then you get the tears
But the ceremony of the bells and lace*

*Still veils this reckless fool here *(Vocalizations)*

Add Hilary: *Now there are twenty-nine skaters on Wollman Rink
Circling in singles and in pairs *(Vocalizations)*

Jacklyn: *In this vigorous anonymity
A blank face at the window stares and *(Vocalizations)
stares and stares and stares and stares
And the power of reason
And the flowers of deep feelings
Seem to serve me
Only to deceive me*

With Janessa: *Sharon you've got a husband
And a family and a farm*
Jacklyn: *I've got the apple of temptation
And a diamond snake around my arm
But you still have your music*

Add Vesti: *And I've still got my eyes on the land and the sky*
Jacklyn: *You sing for your friends and your family*
With Caitlin quietly: *I'll walk green pastures by and by*

Segues into an extended intro of RIVER, ethereal and shimmering:

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *"I vividly remember the day I got polio. I was nine years old, and I dressed myself that morning in pegged grey slacks, a red and white gingham blouse with a sailor collar, and a blue sweater. I looked in the mirror, and I don't know what I saw--dark circles or a slight swelling in my face--but I said to myself:"*

Stephanie & Vesti: *'You look like a woman today.'*

Vesti: *"Next day, I woke and my Mum said:"*

Kristen: *'Get up! Come!'*

Stephanie & Vesti: *'I can't'.*

Vesti: *"She didn't believe me and yanked me out of bed, and I collapsed."*

Soundscape of faraway siren layers in.

Vesti: *"My spine was twisted up like a train wreck. I couldn't walk. I was paralyzed. I couldn't stand up, let alone walk. Well, in hospitals the nuns were pretty dim. I was in a polio ward at St. Paul's and they had an annex of trailers because it was so contagious. We were like a leper colony. I was sitting on the edge of the bed with my legs exposed*

Stephanie: *" - I was nine years old -"*

Vesti: *"... and I was singing a Christmas carol to a six-year-old boy who was pouting and picking his nose. He had also turned toward the wall and was telling me to shut up, when a nun rushed in and practically beat me up for showing my legs. A nine-year-old to a six-year-old! But that was the first time I started to sing to people."*

I wanted out of the hospital for Christmas. My mother came with a little mask on, and put a little tree in my room with ornaments. The first night they allowed me to leave it lit an hour after 'lights out'. So I made a pact with my Christmas tree - I don't know if I addressed the Holy Spirit, but I addressed something. I remember saying :"

Stephanie& Vesti: *'I am not a cripple, not a cripple, not a cripple. I'm going home for Christmas. Give me back my legs and I'll make it up to you.'*

Vesti: *"If the disease spread to your lungs, you were doomed to pass the rest of your life reclining in an iron lung with your head sticking out. As I rose to make my walk, I could hear iron lungs wheezing in the background."*

Image shift.

SONG 15: RIVER:

Stephanie: *It's coming on Christmas
They're cutting down trees
They're putting up reindeer
And singing songs of joy and peace
Oh I wish I had a river I could skate away on

I wish I had a river so long
I would teach my feet to fly
I wish I had a river I could skate away on...*

... instrumental as Stephanie hums with new Image (Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *"I walked. I went home for Christmas. So polio, in a way, germinated an inner life and a sense of the mystic.*

Janessa: *"It was mystical to come back from that disease. When I got out and I was asked to join the church choir in Battleford, I took that as a sign that I was to go back."*

Hilary: *"I left the church because I loved stories from an early age, but I like them to have some logic. And the story of Adam and Eve didn't make any sense, so I contested it. Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. And Cain killed Abel, and then he married. Who did he marry? Eve?"*

Caitlin: *"So I chose to sing because nobody else wanted to. I called it the pretty melody, everybody else called it the hard melody. It had a lot of fifths and fourths, singing over and under things. The leaps were easy for me."*

Chorus layers in 'choir' version of RIVER....

Janessa: *“And one night after choir practice, in the middle of the winter, a girl had snatched a pack of Black Cat cork cigarettes from her mother and we all sat by the wintry fish pond in the snow, and passed them around. Some girls choked and some threw up, and I took one puff and felt really smart! I just thought, 'Woah!' My head cleared up. I seemed to see better and think better. So I was a smoker from that day on. Secretly, covertly, and I'm still smoking.*

Jennelle: *“I think that gifts are frequently generated by adversity. They certainly were in my case. Because I was equipped to be an athlete, which would have made me popular within the community. My father was a good athlete. But because of my handicap I had no speed, which gave me an inner life. I lost my running skills, but translated them into something less fast and more graceful; I became a dancer.”*

Vesti: *“Anything that you might regret, sooner or later there is an opportunity that arises out of it for growth. It may not be instant karma. It may take twenty years. Like polio. I would've been an athlete. I probably wouldn't have been an artist. And it wouldn't have been an interesting life without travail. So you have to get into trouble. You have to make mistakes.”*

Stephanie: *It's coming on Christmas
They're cutting down trees
They're putting up reindeer
And singing songs of joy and peace
I wish I had a river I could skate away on*

Segues into intro for CHINESE CAFÉ as Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *“I heard this in an old movie: Women under 18 are protected by law, women over 50 are protected by nature.”*

Image shift.

SONG 16: CHINESE CAFÉ / UNCHAINED MELODY:

Vesti: *Caught in the middle
Carol we're middle class
We're middle aged
We were wild in the old days
Birth of rock 'n' roll days
Now your kids are coming up straight
And my child's a stranger*

Add Janessa: *I bore her
But I could not raise her*

Vesti: *Nothing lasts for long*

½ Ensemble: *Nothing lasts for long*

Add other ½ Ensemble: *Nothing lasts for long*

Ensemble: *Down at the Chinese Cafe
We'd be dreaming on our dimes*

Vesti: *We'd be playing:*

Hilary, Becky: *"Oh my love, my darling"*
Vesti: *One more time*

Jacklyn: *"Somebody told me that in your teens and 20s, that is your lyric period, and then from your 30s through your 40s, that's your epic period as you begin to experience things again and again, like Leonard Cohen's line, 'Are my lessons done? No, do them all again'."*

Vesti: *Uranium money
 Is booming in the old home town now
 It's putting up sleek concrete
 Tearing the old landmarks down now
 Paving over brave little parks
 Ripping off Indian land again
 How long how long
 Short sighted business men
 Ah nothing lasts for long*

½ Ensemble: *Nothing lasts for long*
Add other ½ Ensemble: *Nothing lasts for long*

Ensemble: *Down at the Chinese Cafe
 We'd be dreaming on our dimes*

Vesti: *We'd be playing:*
Hilary, Becky: *"You give your love, so sweetly"*
Vesti: *One more time*

Jacklyn: *"You wake up one day and suddenly you realize your youth is behind you, even though you're still young at heart. You've got to go through this lament for what was and 'surrender gracefully the things of youth'."*

Vesti: *Christmas is sparkling
 Out on Carol's lawn
 This girl of my childhood games*

Janessa hums: *With kids nearly grown and gone*
Add Janessa: *Grown so fast
 Like the turn of a page
 We look like our mothers did now
 When we were those kids' age*

Ensemble: *Nothing lasts for long*
½ Ensemble: *Nothing lasts for long*
Vesti: *Nothing lasts for long
 Down at the Chinese Cafe
 We'd be dreaming on our dimes
 We'd be playing:*

Janessa: *"Oh my love, my darling
 I've hungered for your touch
 A long lonely time
 And time goes by so slowly
 And time can do so much*

Are you still mine?

Vesti: *I need your love
I need your love
God speed your love to me"*

Jacklyn: *"Then, as you approach your 50s and for the rest of your life, now you're developed into a tragedian. Your irony should be in full bloom at this point."*

Hilary, Becky: *(Time goes - where does the time go, I wonder where the time goes)*

Soundscape ambiance of Midway. Segues into HARLEM IN HAVANA.

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Jacklyn: *"I get a thrill out of juxtaposing one color against one another. I get like...a private rush. If I put that color next to that color and add another color, you know, I get a buzz..."*

Janessa: *"The highlight of the summer, when I was growing up in Saskatoon, was the week the fair came to town. At the end of the mile long midway, there were two adult, Vegas-style shows -- Club Lido and Harlem in Havana. Parents seemed to be scared by Harlem in Havana."*

Ensemble: *'Don't let me catch you standing there'*

Stephanie: *"Every kid I knew got that instruction. Every hour or so you could hear the barker shouting through the roar of crowds and rides,*

Vesti: *'Step right up folks - it's Harlem in Havana time.'*

Janessa: *"When I heard this, I'd go running - to see the band file out - horns in hand - and seat themselves behind the blue and silver music stands. They'd begin to play this brassy, stripper groove - so slow and humid. Then, out came the girls - black girls - some chewing gum - and they'd begin to move - slowly - flipping their capes open and closed to the beat - like they had done a million times - a tired, bored tease."*

Image shift.

SONG 17: HARLEM IN HAVANA:

Janessa: *At the far end of the midway
by the double ferris wheel
There's a band that plays so snakey
You can't help how you feel
Emmy May ran away
With a man as dark as night
You can see him, if you go there
Second trumpet to the right*

Kristen: *They play "Night Train"*

DeeAnn: *So snakey
Black girls dancing*

Long and leggy
Stephanie: *Barkers barking*
Vesti/Janessa: *Step right up, folks!*
The show is about to begin
It's Harlem in Havana time
Step right in!
Janessa: *Silver spangles*
See 'em dangle in the
Add Ensemble: *farm boys' eyes*
Janessa: *Hootchie kootchie*
Auntie Ruthie would've cried
If she knew we were on the inside
Janessa: *When Emmy May ran away*
She came back a bottle blonde
God! The gossips had a gourmet feast
Chomping on how she went wrong
Stephanie: *'But miracle of miracles*
'Cause we were underage
She got us nearly front row seats
To the right side of the stage
DeeAnn: *See that tall girl?*
That's a man
Kristen: *That one, too*
With the yellow feather fan
Vesti: *Barkers barking*
Vesti/Janessa: *Step right up, folks!*
The show is about to begin
It's Harlem in Havana time
Step right in!
Silver spangles
See 'em dangle in the
Add Ensemble: *farm boys' eyes*
Janessa: *Hootchie kootchie*
Auntie Ruthie would've died
If she knew we were on the inside

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *"I see myself as a singing playwright and an actress and I try to make plays that are pertinent to our times. And it's different every night, depending what happens to you just before you go onstage. You bring different things to it, and that's the beauty of it being vague rather than specific, in that it remains interpretable and changeable."*

Caitlin: *"That's one thing I resented about the way poetry was taught in school; this need to pin down its meaning. I never thought I would become a poet but when I did and*

people would ask me to interpret those things I realized that even when I've written about something specific, it could be reinterpreted when you bring another experience to it. If it was only about my experience, how would anybody be able to relate to it? If I tell you more than the poem, than I'm ruining its effectiveness and its value in your life.

Vesti: "This is a love song between a mother and a daughter. You know, parental disapproval. My mother and I have had a lot of friction. We have our differences. I was always too something, you know. But I think she was a good guide in a lot of ways. We've made our peace. This is so many people's story."

SONG 18: FACE LIFT

Vesti/Stephanie hums: *I went so numb on Christmas day*

I couldn't feel my hands or feet

Vesti:

I shouldn't have come

She made me pay

For gleaming with Donald down her street

She put blame on him

And shame on me

She made it all seem so tawdry and cheap

"Oh, let's be nice, Mama, open up your gifts

You know, happiness is the best facelift"

I mean, after all, she introduced us

Oh, but she regrets that now

Shacked up downtown

Making love without a license

Same old sacred cow

She said,

Vesti & Kristen:

"Did you come home to disgrace us?"

Vesti:

I said, "Why is this joy not allowed?"

For God's sake, I'm middle-aged, Mama

And time moves swift

And you know happiness is the best facelift"

Oh, love takes so much courage

Love takes so much shit

She said

Vesti & Kristen:

"You've seen too many movies, Joni"

Vesti:

She said

Vesti & Kristen:

"Snap out of it!"

Vesti:

Oh, the cold winds blew at our room with a view

All helpful and hopeful and candlelit

We kissed the angels and the moon eclipsed

You know, Happiness is the best facelift

Vesti/Steph hums:

We pushed the bed up to the window

*To see the Christmas lights
On the east bank across the steaming river
Between the bridges lit up Paris-like
Vesti & Stephanie: This river has run through both our lives
Between these banks of our continuing delights
Bless us, don't let us lose the drift
You know, Happiness is the best facelift.*

Segue into STAY IN TOUCH

Vesti: "So I was a sickly child. At three, my appendix burst and they rushed me to the hospital. Then I had German measles and red measles, one of which nearly killed me. At eight I had chickenpox and scarlet fever, plus the arbitrary tonsillitis. At nine I contracted polio. In some ways, my gift for music and writing was born out of tragedy, really, and loss. When my daughter returned to me, the gift kind of went with it. The songwriting was almost like something I did while I was waiting for my daughter to come back."

Image shift.

SONG 19: STAY IN TOUCH:

*Stephanie: This is really something
Vesti: People will be envious
Stephanie: But our roles aren't clear
Vesti: So we musn't rush
Vesti & Stephanie: Still, we're burning brightly
Clinging like fire to fuel
Vesti: I'm grinning like a fool
Vesti & Janessa: Stay in touch
Vesti & Stephanie: We should stay in touch
Stephanie: Oh! Stay in touch
Vesti: In touch

Stephanie: Part of this is permanent
Vesti: Part of this is passing
Stephanie: So we must be loyal and wary
Not to give away too much
Vesti: Til we build a firm foundation
And empty out old habits
Stephanie: Old habits
Vesti: Stay in touch
Vesti & Stephanie: We should stay in touch
Janessa: Oh! Stay in touch
Stephanie: In touch

Vesti: During times like these
The wise or influential
Jacklyn: They can bear the imperfections
They can keep the honey*

Vesti & Stephanie: *No doubt about it*
Jacklyn: *No doubt that's essential*
Janessa: *No doubt that's always been a tricky one for me*
Vesti & Stephanie: *So, we should just surrender*
Let fate and duty shape us
Let light hearts make us
Let the worries hush
Stephanie: *In the middle of this continent*
Vesti: *In the middle of our time on Earth*
Stephanie: *We receive one another*
Vesti: *Stay in touch*
Vesti & Stephanie: *We should stay in touch*
Stephanie: *Oh! Stay in touch*
Vesti, Stephanie, Janessa: *In touch.*

Image (Detail from Photo Series, 1986).

Vesti: *"Freedom to me is the luxury of being able to follow the path of the heart."*
Stephanie: *"That's the only way that you maintain the magic in your life, that you keep your child alive."*
Caitlin: *"My music is influenced by the prairies. When I was a kid, my mother used to take me out to the fields to teach me bird calls. There was a lot of space behind individual sounds."*
Hilary: *"You carry your childhood with you regardless of who you are. Saskatchewan is in my veins."*
DeeAnn: *"There's a stride to a flatlander that I know is part of me, part of walking across fields for hours."*
Janessa: *"I spent a lot of my childhood just sitting in the bush all by myself, watching the light come through the leaves. I always was thrilled by color and landscape. I wasn't lonely but I was a lone person."*
Jacklyn: *"But that is part of being an artist. Long walks across the prairies, the colors always changing, sitting in a bluff of trees."*
DeeAnn: *"Becoming very aware of the subtle shapes and tones."*
Becky: *"When the first crocuses pop up through the snow."*
Hilary: *"When I find a beautiful place in a field."*
Kristen: *"Where birds fly in and out."*
Jacklyn: *"I've talked with other 'flatlanders' about this, and there is a distinctly prairie point of view."*
Stephanie: *"It is still a province of sky-watchers."
 "And it gives you a sense of renewal when you go back."*

Images shift on each following lines:

Janessa: "I am a poet who doesn't like much poetry."
Jacklyn: "I'm a musician who doesn't like much music. "
Caitlin: "I am a painter who loves painting."
Vesti "I am still a work in progress."

FINALE: SONG 20: COME IN FROM THE COLD

Montage of images return full circle to the images from the top of the show:

Vesti: *Back in 1957*
Vesti & Stephanie: *We had to dance a foot apart*
Vesti, Stephanie & Caitlin: *And they hawk-eyed us from the sidelines*
Holding their rulers without a heart
And so with just a touch of our fingers
I could make our circuitry explode
Add Chorus: *All we ever wanted*
Was just to come in from the cold

Ensemble: *Come in*
Come in from the cold
Caitlin: *(we were so young)*
Oh come in
Come in from the cold

Hilary : *We really thought we had a purpose*
Add Jacklyn: *We were so anxious to achieve*
Add Janessa: *We had hope*
The world held promise
For a slave to liberty
Add Vesti: *Freely I slaved away for something better*
And I was bought and sold
And all I ever wanted
Was to come in from the cold

Ensemble: *Come in*
Come in from the cold
Caitlin *(we were so sure)*
Ensemble: *Oh come in*
Come in from the cold

Vesti: *I feel your leg under the table*
Leaning into mine
I feel renewed
Stephanie: *I feel disabled*
Stephanie: *By these bonfires in my spine*
Caitlin: *I don't know who the arsonist was*
Which incendiary soul
Vesti: *But all I ever wanted*
Was just to come in from the cold

Ensemble: *Come in*
Come in from the cold

Caitlin: *(you were so warm)*

Ensemble: *Oh come in*
Come in from the cold

Ensemble: *I am not some stone commission*
Like a statue in a park
I am flesh and blood and vision
I am howling in the dark
Long blue shadows of the jackals
Are falling on a pay phone by the road
Oh, all they ever wanted
Was to come in from the cold

Ensemble: *Come in*
Come in from the cold

Caitlin: *(I was so low)*

Ensemble: *Oh come in*
Come in from the cold

Ensemble: *I know we never will be perfect*
Never entirely clear

Caitlin: *(when the moon shines)*

Ensemble: *We get hurt and we just panic*
And we strike out
Out of fear

Caitlin: *(you were only being kind)*

Ensemble: *I fear the sentence of this solitude*
200 years on hold

Caitlin: *(for my loving crime)*

Ensemble: *Oh and all we ever wanted*
Was just to come in from the cold

Ensemble: *Come in*
Come in from the cold

Caitlin: *(when the moon shines)*

Ensemble: *Oh come in*
Come in from the cold

Ensemble: *Come in*

Caitlin: *(you were so kind)*

Ensemble: *Please come in*

Caitlin: *(so kind)*

Ensemble: *Come in from the cold*
Come in come in
Come in from the cold

END OF SHOW.