



Tunas of Yore

The archives are teetering. My wife Kristi and I have way too much stuff, and the archives of my career with music partner Lou are keeping my file drawers from closing. Lou has reached a point of exasperation at her house and loads me down with another box of band mementoes every time I leave her doorway. She would just as soon toss it all but I can't do that quite yet. So it has fallen to me to dog-paddle through everything THEN throw it out.

I feel disappointed in myself for letting these collections get so out of hand quantitatively and for being so disorganized qualitatively. They aren't even arranged by size, so a 12 by 18 card stock poster of a 1982 concert in Racine is next to a life saver wrapper with a setlist idea from Tuesday.

I tried convincing myself that I've been working toward this pastiche for 69 years and should be proud. It's my masterpiece; I should give tours. But where would people walk?

Anyway, as I go through these heaps, I do come across many a song idea. As I mentioned in a similar Whither Zither of March 2009, for many decades now, whenever I write down a song idea, I put a star ★ by it and write "Tuna," short for "tune idea." I have thousands of tunas. Most of them are either illegible or unintelligible or flat-out stupid, but now and then one shows potential. Which doesn't take much, in our band.

In the off chance that someone may be interested in my lame-ass songwriting process, here are some dribs and drabs -- mostly drabs -- from the tuna jar of a minor midwestern lyricist pushing seventy. A reminder: Even I don't know what some of these mean, but they all had the star and "tuna" written on them, so they were song ideas. Some rhyme, some don't. Some are funny, some aren't. Here goes; hang on:

★Jeeze whee what a klontz I am
★I feel my forehead unwrinkle this side of the Granville Bridge
★TV. Backlight. Liverpool ranch house. Icy feet lonesome hammer handle. Good old boy.
★Earlier in the day, behind the drawers of the brown desk, things had picked up.
★Oh Chevy Moon your headlights shine on longer evenings.
★A car is half across a country bridge, a girl is stepping with a loaf of bread & a light bulb in a paper bag, a bomb is floating down the sky, a television is warming up, a man is reaching for a quarter in his pocket.
★A well dressed woman in a year gone by painting a painting.
★The shoes on last, the socks on first.
★Remember, he said, as he started to chew, your wife's in Dubuque, you're eating for two.
★The wild wind of autumn blows; Behind the dog and up my nose
★Yellow Oleo: Gramma and Grampa would swallow their pride, & drive thru the darkness like Bonnie & Clyde; Up to the border thru blizzards & cold, & back with a trunkful of Michigan Gold.
★A song which describes the forest from the top down. The beautiful canopy, the blossom, down & down, the bird, the sumac, the tire, the condom, the beercan, the fiddlehead fern, the mushroom, the primordial asphalt.
★Decaf coffee in a demitasse cup.
★Like a vine on the side of a silo.
★I know the brown Kaukaunian sky; I know the Norski Nookian pie
★Then Again: It was a really hot day. Then again not for September. Then again they hadn't gotten out that much so it may have been hotter. All things considered it didn't matter. At least not to her. Then again it mattered more than lunch, which she had postponed.
★Perfect Flight Simulator song. Infinite detail. You can fly down & land at a farmer's airstrip, go in the farmhouse & watch the farmer & his girlfriend making blintzes.
★Hymnlike, but painters as saviors: Rembrandt loves me this I know, for his paintings tell me so. A Mighty Fortress Is Our Klimpt. Guide Me, O Thou Great Picasso; Nearer My Bosch To Thee; What A Friend We Have in Warhol; How Great Thou ART.

★I don't mind the willies, but save me from the jitters.
★Insane and in pain
★Porta Bella Cinderella, incidental monthly rental, overeager minor leaguer, dromedary Ben & Jerry, salivation Ken L Ration
★therapeutic paroxysm and you
★f'l'donly adda g'rage I'd a been a great inventor.
★Use your imagination, paintings can look like drop-cloths, apples can smell like old shoes, fir trees can smell like cat pee. use your imagination. eyebrows can look like lint.
★Were you on the Ford Trimotor back in '26? On the way to Valentino's funeral?
★Out of sorts, out of whack, out of town, out of mind; Out of breath, out of dough, out of luck, out of line, Out of gin, out of oomph, out of doors, out of time.
★Is this love or is it a placebo
★you can't expect a cut of meat without a line of gristle; you can't gambol the meadowland without a sting of thistle; you can't get down the football field without you hear a whistle; you can get to the pearly gates without a guided missile
★If you're gonna name your spiders, don't name your flies
★Lunchtime lunchtime oh boy lunchtime; yay hooray oh clap clap clap: yippee sandwich apple cupcake; cup of coffee ginger snap
★The onion is weeping, the carrots are cold; exhausted asparagus bunks in the hold; The boat is a basket and leaks like a sieve; But they have to get where the vegans don't live
★gonna fix my soft'ner; It oughta soften oftener
★there's nothing left for me to do, but lie down on the ground. My life is done, my race is run, my girl friend turned me down
★She says every time I thump thru the kitchen the spider goes into her hole. I say when I'm gone you'll have to be the one to thump thru the kitchen.
★Dichotomous key to Hieronymous Bosch
★I know my dog as well as I know myself. And I don't know my dog very well
★the beaverboard is nothing if not rotten; the insulation feels like soggy cotton; throw some angry wasps into the mixture; I don't think I'll ever fix this fixture.

--WZ for Sept 2016