

rich krueger NOWThen

produced by rich krueger

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BobDog Studios, oak park il <http://www.BobDogStudios.com/>

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all songs written by rich krueger BMI

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we humbly present the following songs for your listening pleasure

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Kenny's (It's Always Christmas In This Bar)

It's always Christmas in this bar
And it's always St. Pat's and also Halloween
Nothing here is ever thrown away
Here, real Art always has its say
Kenny hangs up brand new work
 just about every 30 days
Look around, it's the Fourth of July
It's always Christmas in this bar

At the bar a regular proves once more
 He's just a xenophobic jerk
The piano's always out of tune,
 but just the keys that work
The soundman drinks the night away
His mix might lead you to say
That you have entered Hell,
 but on Hell's most festive holiday

And it ain't only the piano that's been drinking
I'd tip my hat to Kenny,
That is if I could only find my hat
And there's a Ringo built of stars
That hovers proudly 'ore the bar
And someone's playing that house guitar
It's always Christmas in this bar

Johnnie's back from his last bender
He's mixing cocktails behind the bar
He wears his silver rings.
Then he put on a broad-brimmed smile.
He's got a brand new turquoise bolo tie
And for every woman he got a line
They'll be one more bender,
 but he won't return that time

Outside on the corner the young and old share
 their papers their pipes and their pot
Some still smoke tobacco but
 weed says louder "up yours" to the cops
One late night some guy drove a drunken car
Through the front wall right into the bar
Thank God the pizza oven lived or
 some of us might just starve

If you're free on Sunday
there's always a free Sunday meal
All you need to do is say one prayer
And buy yourself a couple beers
Me, I always tip the cook
if I find he's still standing
And I am proud to say that I ain't never throwed up
after eating here

Well somewhere on the Earth there may be a bar I'd find stranger
And the soundman and some women are
real glad Johnnie's gone
But a stranger's just a stranger here
For less than one half a beer
And the only fear we have to fear is
when last call's called

And it ain't only the piano that's been drinking
Tell me, where else have you seen people
juggle people with their feet?
And Picasso and George Bernard Shaw
hold court over Kenny's lovely bar
And it's my turn to plays guitar
It's always Christmas in this bar

February 2018

Girls Go For Arse'oles

Let me start by saying I'm a liar
Can't say how much of this is true
But if it makes things any better
I'll swear by the copper in my tattoo
And you will watch me steal your heart
Watch me drop it at my feet
Watch me brush away your tears
Then go watch me go skipping down the street
And you cry out you've been martyred
Hell, Hell we've all had brighter days
You ask yourself, 'Are we all like this?'
Go on ask me, will I change my ways.

And don't bother me for reasons.
See, the reasons, well they sleep behind
your eyes
They set your head a -swimming
They wrestle Jove between your thighs
And there are those whose dreams ache
To fondle the blackest heart
They know their love with uncorrupt it
They make me laugh until I fart
Did I tell you I love you?
I wouldn't wonder if it's true.
But if I can't be honest with myself, babe,
At least I still can lie to you.
And don't cry out you've been cheated
The vulture is circling today
And those who cry the loudest they've been taken
Always return to play.

Let me start by saying I'm a liar.

June 1993

Elizabeth

As for me, daybreak's built for wonder
And so I wonder, who in the hell chose me as the luckiest guy on earth
Now I agree, I agree that no one deserves this.
But then again,
When was the last time you got what you deserved?

Elizabeth
Now did your mamma teach you
To keep your love from dreamers?
Dreamers all turn cruel.
Protect yourself. Protect your heart
They say 'that a life is best kept fool proof
'Though Elizabeth
No one's as ingenious as a fool.

It's just past noon
And me, I am just past thinkin'.
That when it gets this hot you could waste your time on each and every degree.
And so I try, I try and keep real still
I don't worry what God is up to.
You see, the Devil thinking
It don't seem so hot to me.

Elizabeth
What did that gypsy tell you
When you slipped her ten to have a look at your future so far?
Did she smile? Did she cock her head
The way a moon rises on Saturn, as if to say,
All you need to know is who you are.

Well the day is gone and again I have accomplished nothing
Save to notice how the sunset ain't seen colors like this in years.
You see, when you're lucky as me
There's no need to be ambitious,
When you're lucky enough to truly love the one who loves you dear.

Oh Elizabeth
When did you become so foolish?
That you would give your love to me
All dreamers are fools.
And although I cannot say just who will protect your children
Elizabeth
I know the wondrous gifts God gives to fools.
Elizabeth
You are the wondrous gift God gave this fool.

June 1998

Me & Mr. Johnson

Down in Mississippi where even trains turn into ghosts
And the Coffin Maker's* lost her mind,
I was found at midnight where two roads met
When a man dressed to his teeth kinda corporialized
I thought "Is this the devil I've heard so much about"
He smiled even brighter than the moon.
"No, I'm Robert Johnson" is all his eyes said.
Funny who you might just find yourself with
Standing at the crossroads
Me & Mr. Johnson alone together standing at the crossroads.

My head filled up with questions like a child's pail
Left forgotten in the rain, undisturbed.
"When Charlie Patton played for you did it all make sense?"
"When Charlie sang could you ever even understand a word?"
"Was it worth your soul to get to play that way?"
"Should I make the devil the same deal?"
His eyes grew dark as diamonds and without using words
He schooled my soul it ain't the answers, It's the questions,
That moves you through the crossroads
It's the questions not the answers that kick up your gravel
At the crossroads.

And as quick as he appeared Mr. Johnson was gone
And I knew right then I had been a fool
How could I have been so stupid?
How could I have been so wrong?
No one living should never try to ask the dead
To tell their tales out of school

When the moon peers through the bars of cook county jail
To sweet home Mississippi you'll be bound
A breeze will swell and thicken with the sounds he made
Songs that taste like bones a black dog buried in the ground
If you dare to listen hard and long and lonesome enough
You'll feel a jewel form behind your eyes
All the diamonds you'll ever need to mine
Are waiting for you strewn among the gravel
There at the crossroads
They're hidden deep in Mr. Johnson's hat
There at the crossroads

Me & Mr. Johnson at the crossroads

February 2018

*The Tombigbee river in Mississippi derives its name from the Choctaw Indian word for "coffin maker."

The Great War

He was working this waitress.
He looked like he was on relief.
She was simply to the point. I mean even her dress was brief.
She said somethin' 'bout Graham Greene and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
He lied, said he drove a cab, and, on the weekends, tended bar.
She asked if he needed a fare. He said, no, she was almost there.
He knew she felt about as useful as a winter's leaf.

Caught on the spur of the moment, she spent an hour of weakness, at least.
And so began the days of our beauty,
Our beauty and her beautiful beast.
They coined expressions that were funny and a little obscene,
But mostly sad and stupid. He was amazed at what she hadn't seen.
He pulled out what was left in his pants, and dropped it in a pinball machine.
Those were the last quarters and that's when the phone calls ceased.

He cracked a joke over her head,
And she went out like a light in kind.
She was lost when there was nothing said
About "The Power & The Glory" and the paper that Trotsky signed.

And back behind the counter, she was putting her apron on,
Just looking at the paper and not thinking about what must have gone wrong.
Soldiers in Mexico were making the news,
But that only told her what she already knew;
You best be sure what you're hanging on, and the great war went on too long.
Oh, come on, come on, come on, hang on.

Sloopy lived in a very poor part of town.

February 1987

Don

Now's really the time.
There's something I must tell you
But I am not gonna tell you to believe everything I say
Although I swear on my children's heads that all of this is true
You should never ever trust anyone
Who wants to entertain you

When I was 14 I made me a friend
He was 14 too, but with his beard he looked more like 42
And for the sake of this song 'm gonna call him 'Don',
If it's all the same to you,
'Cause Don was his name too.

And Don, well Don was very strange but very very smart
For instance, he knew more than anyone about WWII
That was in our school where most kids were Jews
The school alumni even included
A couple of the Netanyahus

Well Don was what we call a "contrarian"
He quoted Nietzsche, loved Hitler, and said one day he'd join the Klan
But in the 'burbs of Philadelphia there were no Kleagles that we knew
Besides they'd never let me in.
See, Don was Catholic, too

And although we weren't yet 15, we rolled out his Daddy's Rolls Royce
It was the nicest ride I've ever had to this day
Don drove us down Broad Street to shop for clove cigarettes and throwing knives,
Then we took in a matinee of a very famous Noel Coward play

After, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. met us at the Stage Door
Don wanted to talk to him, and get his autograph
See, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. knew the actress Greta Garbo real well
And Don, he had stacks and stacks at home of
Greta Garbo movie stills

And Don also had stacks of the porno tabloid 'Screw'
And claimed his lawyer father knew Al Goldstein well
At 14 I thought I knew a little something about sin
But boy those rags sure opened wide
My imagination and both my eyes

But Don's real obsession, his most prized possession,
Were guns. He had his own 'private cache of weapons'
He even owed a Carcano rifle
Just like the one that Oswald used
That is if you really believe anything that the government tells us is true

Why would any kid like me who knew that all of this was wrong
Want to pal around with a guy like Don?
Might as well ask 'Why would Bonnie Parker? Or Nathan Leopold?
Why would Eric Harris hang out with Dylan Klebold?

One day his parents sent Don to a military school
Like parents like his always think they should
Me, I never really tried to keep in touch
I never thought I see him again
And hoped I never would

Then one day Don reappeared and he beckoned me over to a car
We sat in the front seat and talked, but not that long.
He wore full military dress and said he was on the run
For beating up an officer.
And by the way it was not his car.

I'll leave you to make up your own minds about Don & me
I ain't made up my own mind to this day
See they'll always be kids like us
That just cannot fit in
Who go through the world as strangers
On the outside looking in

Some live angry. Some live alone.
Some tread a twisted path
Some become songwriters, others sociopaths
But look I felt it was the time to tell all this to you
And then leave you wondering
Just how much of this is true.

Now what I want to know
Is did I entertain you?
Well, did I entertain you?

February 2018

Por Que No Me Amas (Love Me)

Noah went off the pier last night.
Swam out a great distance when it started to rain,
Came to regret filling his pockets with stones,
Then thought about home,
Where his wife had just packed up the kids
and made a bus for the train.

He cried across open water,
'I need a drink or a personal savior
To help me think over a flood like this.
To break me of all this maladaptive behavior,
Christ, I need a big favor.
Jesus, you ain't the last guy been betrayed by a kiss.

'Why don't you, why don't you love me.
Show me forgiveness. Do not tear me apart.
I'll make it up to you, I swear I'll do everything right after tonight,
If I'd known you'd do this, I would never have hit you that hard.'

Now his leg is having some kind of emotional problem.
He limped broken, half-frozen, out of the lake.
And was it that she could walk the way some men write poetry,
Deliberately,
Or maybe, just maybe, it was how she swung open her gate.

Well like an answered rhetorical question,
He lumbered uselessly into the city.
In a coffee shop window, he straightened his tie.
When through his reflection, he swore he saw her there
Sitting, thinking,
At the counter drinking,
A better coffee a millionaire's money can't buy.

'Why don't you, why don't you love me.
I swear I'll pound in this plate glass. Don't turn me away.
See I got nothing to lose here by making a scene,
I've become desperate from dreaming.'
But she couldn't hear him.
A train whistle came between them that day.

These cigarettes are useless. They're thoroughly soaked.
If it keeps on raining, I'll have to cut me a sail.
And after last night, when the cell block got flooded,
They handcuffed us two by two,
To anything that didn't move,
And somehow, I don't think she's gonna show up
to help me make bail

Why don't you, why don't you love me.
Show me forgiveness. Do not tear me apart.
I'll make it up to you,
Baby I swear I'll do everything right after tonight,
If I'd known you'd do this, I would never have hit you that hard.
Oh why
If I'd known you'd do this, I would never have hit you that hard.
Por que no, Por que no, por que no me amas?'

December 1989

In Between Kingfish

Kingfisher's Sam M. Walton will 'splain you from his grave
Just how he can't be undersold
That's where I bought this brand new tent
It run me less than one month's rent
Even less than the monthly mortgage I used to owe
That was 'til the paper was worth more than the house and the bank said: "Go!"
Still, winter 'n Fresno won't meet up again until sometime late Halloween
And by then who knows how bad things just might be
But for now, like the other families
In all these other tents
I just got kinda caught up a little in between
A little in between

Well folks say that California's a garden of Eden Abhez' 'Nature Boys'
As clever as their tans, and beach-stoned to a man
But here in this inland No-Town, lives remain
About as easy as falling 'neath a train.
Our Gov'ner closed New Jack City, but said we can move on up to his state fair
And his state cops can watch us closer there.
Summer in Sacramento bake you drier than a stone
200 miles north of all you had and all you'd known.
And now you're strung out like a wire
Hung from where your future was to where ever the hell your future's gone,
And you're left hanging in between and on your own
Forgotten and alone

The Kingfish Huey P. Long sang there's enough for folks to share
And if y'all work hard, you can even be a millionaire
They called him a demagogue, Bolshevik, cracker and clown
He sang "Every man a king but no man wears a crown"
He built bridges and highways and the hospital at LSU
That was 'til a doctor shot him in 1935 and he bled to death at the age of 42.
Woody Guthrie and F.D.R.
Sit with Sam and Huey in an abandoned car
Behind a vacant Wal-Mart in a town like them that's died.
Huey strums Woodrow's guitar
Sings a song for working folks with kids that gotta live in their cars.
Franklin whispers sweetly, "In this light, Sam, you look just like Eleanor."
And Kingfisher's Sam M. Walton can't recall just what the hell his whole life was for,
'Though he's sure it was gold
Or maybe it was green
Or maybe something in between?

April 2009

Waltz (Terpsichore)

She throws back her head and she laughs
Her hair is as wild as an arsonist's dream
I wake and brush off the cinders, she turns and she whispers,
'Ain't life a scream?'
And I reach for the floor, and I struggle with my shirt over the last cigarette
Oh, she never wastes time. I find it's already burning
And I probably should have known what that meant.

And she shrouds herself in a damp sheet
She stands in the moonlight, her eyes start to gleam,
She says 'Let's run up the iron escape,' and throws up the window
I follow the steam.
And we lie on a rooftop under an infinite ceiling littered with stars
Oh, this may not be freedom, but at this point in our century, pal
I'm not sure freedom's gotten us that far

Then she starts in on a waltz
The kind you don't hear anymore
Where you grab your best girl
And you lead her out of the door
Out on the veranda
Your head swims with fever. There's a pain in your chest
And the bright paper lanterns around you light softly her breasts

Then she pulls a bottle of wine from a smokestack
The way rain is conjured out of thin air
And I'm feeling more strung out than Jesus three days before Easter
She slices me a pear.
And then she unwinds her gown, and dozens upon dozens of roses appear as if from nowhere
And I'm thinking out loud when Christ looks back on the garden,
Did he wonder, should I have taken the dare?

And the city, it spins round in a waltz
The kind you can't feel anymore
Your face is painted blue. You're hardly breathing at all
And the last thing you remember before it all goes gray
Are the bastards who kissed and betrayed you,
The lovers who miss you
And one or two times you got laid.

She'll come and sweep off your hat,
She will howl in your alley
She'll lead you back from hell,
She wields the wind of the full force of tenderness,
You pray to God she always will.
'Cause she gave you a gift
A song that preys like a hawk on a wing
You see, it's a question of vision,
And when she lets loose her talons, boys,
That'll be the last time you sing

But in the distance there'll be that waltz
Of the things you can't talk of these days
Of loves best unspoken, of loves that have been driven away
Loves spilt in some barroom
Well I'll stand on your bar and raise a glass to the time that would frighten the sober
If the sober would just bother to ask
What we need here is a waltz
Hmmm die die da die....

July 1993

Oliver Steck - accordion

Yesterday's Wrong (Green)

*Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never Is, but always To be blest:
The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.*
-Alexander Pope (21 May 1688 – 30 May 1744)

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?
- Robert Browning (May 7, 1812 – December 12, 1889)

Once upon a time the time was now.
'Yesterday' was just a popular song.
Tomorrow and today feigned to get along
And then yesterday went wrong.
Brightly shown the mise-en-scene.
The earth the sun and the sea were green.
You knew there was something you were gonna to be
And then, yesterday went wrong.

Where you gonna go
Once the world says, "Man, you no longer belong?"
Where you gonna go
Once yesterday's wrong?

Ain't rained here in real real long.
The earth's parched in tomorrow's heat.
You'd drown at the bottom, but your well's run dry.
Hearts are punished for each done good deed.
Gotta eat a frog, better swallow fast.
Gotta eat two? It's the small one last.
They're all brightly colored as your checkered past
And poison as yesterday's wrong

Where you gonna go
Once your purpose has been scavenged by a murder of crows?
Hope's a magpie choking down stones
And yesterday's wrong.

Do the horrors around us now longer make you gasp?
Does your reach no longer exceed your grasp?
Do sorrow shame and fear burrow to your core?
Have they finally wrestled from you just what a heaven's for?

The future's seared, furred, gone,
Lost to the wind like seed.
But hope springs eternal for the beautiful,
The powerful, the stupid, and effete.
Green expatiates its own kind,
Selling off places man could rest his mind.
Man should have been blessed, but he's lost and unkind,
And his yesterday's all gone.

Where you gonna go
Once the world says, "Man, you no longer belong?"
Where you gonna go
Once yesterday's wrong?

April 2007

In Regard Of Flight

Tonight,
Tonight I will dangle from this pipe.
Inspect the cables one more time.
It's my life.
I'll climb up.
Perch myself upon this tree.
Wave through the spotlights My sequins gleam,
As the clowns sing 'The Man On the Flying Trapeze'.

Hey, kid, the circus is in town.
Scare your parents, run away.
It's your life.
Let go.
Tuck your head between your knees.
Throw your weight and then spin ass over tit,
Then grab the pair of ankles on the next trapeze

And I am lithe in my short-lived man-made flight,
Over the crowned heads of Europe and the gaping mouths of children,
And if I fail and I fall twisted to the earth,
Well, give my regards to Orville and Wilbur Wright.

A boy sleeps on my trailer floor.
A townie from two towns ago.
His name is Wild.
He's up at day break.
He mends the costumes before I wake.
Then, he stands on one foot as he shaves my face
And talks tight ropes the balance of the day

When I was young,
When I was young, I walked the wire.
I worked with an umbrella and no net.
And I was a fool.
Ah, but there's no telling him this.
I know I know that there's no stopping Wild,
The bound and determined future equilibrist.
All I can tell him's, 'Kid you better know your tools damn well'.

There's no trick to living life defying death.
The trick comes in earning a living getting the crowd to hold its breath.
Because they all hope you'll fail,
As you pretend to risk your life.
P. T. Barnum meet The Bros. Wright.

Do you dare?

Do you dare imagine flying through the air?

Or, do you just dangle by your teeth, swinging in the breeze?

Are you waiting for an offer, or the next trapeze?

And I am lithe in my short-lived man-made flight,

Over the crowned heads of Europe and the gaping mouths of children.

And one day I'll fail and I'll fall twisted to the earth.

Well, give my regards to Orville and Wilbur Wright.

June 1992 to June 1993

O What A Beautiful Beautiful Beautiful Day

'Well, Honey, giving birth can be sort of uncomfortable.'
Said the nurse with a straight-face somehow
The mom just screamed 'Get this thing out of me!'
As the OB began the episiotomy

Baby's been swimmin' in a pool of its stool
In his mom for quite a while
But once born couldn't care that he was covered in crud
And where's Dad? Passed out at the sight of the blood.

O what a beautiful beautiful beautiful day!
The OB dictates and hopes the insurance will pay
They're playing Brahms overhead on a lousy PA.
We just know you'll enjoy your hospital stay.

The bleary eyed Neo who turned up for the birth
Was real glad the kid turned out to be fine.
The last one he had to tube didn't come out so great.
Aw, what's done is done. There's always next time.
Anyway at home he's got a bottle of wine.

Kid's poked in the arm then gooped in the eyes
As Dad's wheeled down to ER.
It's as special Christmas for the whole family
Just as overpriced
'Cept Junior ain't Christ

Both parents recover from their pain
The head that he hit, and her tore perineum.
The baby goes blind from the lights in the room
'Cause the grandparents just can't wait to see him

The staff takes precautions.
Look they've even washed their hands.
And we can all thank God there's no memory for pain.
O what a beautiful beautiful beautiful day!
We look forward to your next hospital stay.

O what a beautiful beautiful beautiful day!
The Neo and the OB share some Beaujolais
O what a beautiful beautiful beautiful beautiful day!
We just know you'll remember this hospital stay. Hey hey hey

We know you'll always remember this hospital stay.

À Tout Jamais (Pour Eva)

Is this for Eva?

This world that is all that it is?

Whatever it is, or was, it never bothered with me.

So our mad conjurer Wittgenstein strolls out onto the sea

With a small map of Europe tucked under his arm which he unfolds to be

Vast and unwanted new territory.

If you really can't say, try saying nothing

For Eva

For Eva

Again I have chosen to say nothing

For Eva

And for Eva

I'll hide on my side of all our unknowns.

I'm adrift. I'm subditiitious.* I have lost my home.

So I'll winter in the branches of an old dead tree.

And from the branches spread my fingers. Grasp at the breeze

And all these moments between us which could never be ever be requited

For Eva

For Eva

Sometimes some things just cannot be

For Eva

And Eva

When you un-submerge you'll no doubt be found

'Neath that hat where the black-hearted poppy periscopes over the crown.

To spy the horizon, hope's vanishing point, to a green Flanders' field.

I sit nearby where the world came to die, but the poppies here are real

And I break bread with the crosses and stones which stand row upon row upon row

Upon row as no doubt they know

That every one that once was, was once the case.

And every one that was once, once was the case.

For everyone the world lost here the world made its case

In a novena for those the world would never know

And all the others that the world's forgotten

Forever and ever

The ninth day's prayers are held safe

For Eva

November 2008

****subditiitious is an antique word***

1. *Placed underneath; used as a suppository.*

2. *Surreptitiously or fraudulently substituted, suppositious.*

Put secretly in the place of something else; foisted in

Think What You Will

Think what you will.
Say just what you think.
It's a free country
Still.

Tell us what's gone wrong.
Tell us what's at stake
If we deny
What we all know good people hate
About what's happened to this great country.

And everything you think
You know you think is true
Don't you?
And everywhere you go
Folks always see things like you do.
Which only proves
That those who disagree
Well, they're just misinformed
Or more likely, what they are are liars
Invaders
Refuse
Defilers

And of course you think
That no patriot can shrink
From the greater task at hand
To root out those who disagree,
To punish those who've earned our calumny,
To sever the cancer that corrupts
Our once pure country

Only then will we finally see
The wisdom to agree
With righteous men's advice

And once more to trust
Rich white avarice.

September 11 2011 to July 4 2018