

DAVID GRISMAN
Life of Sorrow

- 01 - A Life of Sorrow with The Nashville Bluegrass Band
- 02 - Doin' My Time with John Hartford
- 03 - We Can't Be Darlings Anymore with The Del McCoury Band
- 04 - When You and I Were Young Maggie with Mac Wiseman
- 05 - All the Good Times Are Past and Gone with Ralph Stanley
- 06 - Tragic Romance with Alan O'Bryant
- 07 - Seven Year Blues with Herb Pedersen
- 08 - You're the Girl of My Dreams with Mac Wiseman
- 09 - Unwanted Love with The Del McCoury Band
- 10 - Man of Constant Sorrow with Ralph Stanley
- 11 - Tennessee Waltz with Del McCoury
- 12 - Bury Me Under the Weeping Willow with Ralph Rinzler
- 13 - Pretty Saro with John Nagy
- 14 - Cabin of Love with The Del McCoury Band
- 15 - Farther Along with Bryan Bowers
- 16 - Sunny Side of Life with Mac Wiseman

BONUS TRACKS -

- 17 - Little Darling Pal of Mine with Ralph Stanley
- 18 - Cabin of Love Alternate with The Del McCoury Band
- 19 - Sunny Side of Life Alternate with Mac Wiseman

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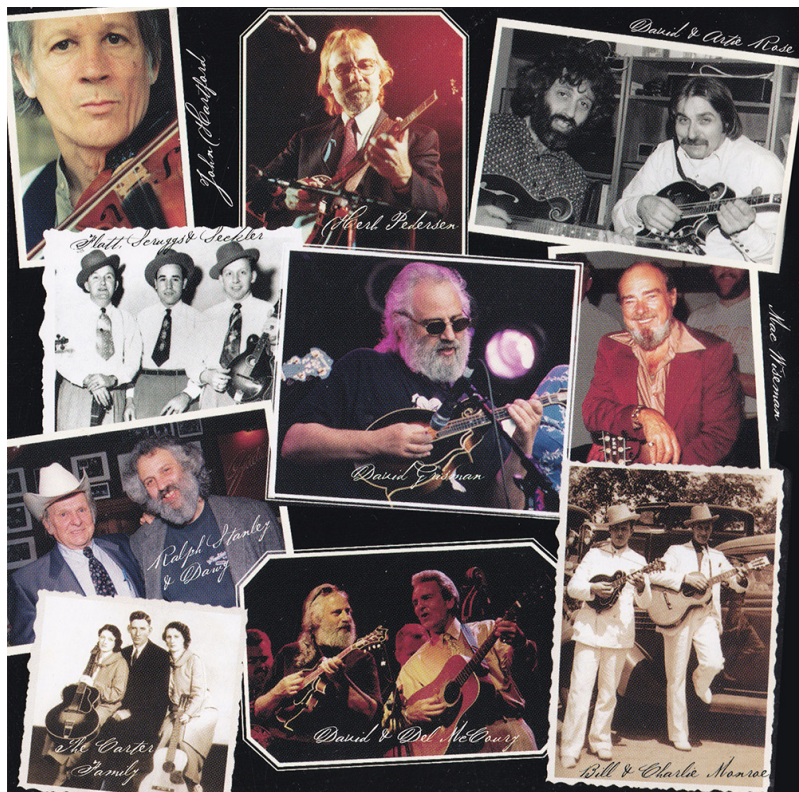
DAVID GRISMAN
Life of Sorrow



featuring

Bryan Bowers - John Hartford - The Del McCoury Band
The Nashville Bluegrass Band - John Nagy
Alan O'Bryant - Herb Pedersen - Ralph Rinzler
Ralph Stanley & The Clinch Mt. Boys - Mac Wiseman and others

DELUXE EDITION



Produced by DAVID GRISMAN for Dawg Productions
Executive Producer CRAIG MILLER
Recorded by LARRY CUMINGS and DAVE DENNISON at Dawg Studios
DAVID FERGUSON at Cowboy Arms Recording Spa
TOM ANDERSON at Bayview Studios
BOB PETRUCCI at Petrucci & Atwell Studios
Mixed by LARRY CUMINGS and DAWG at Dawg Studios
and Bay View Studios
Mastered by PAUL STUBBLEBINE at Stubblebine Mastering
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Art Direction BRENNAM RAMIREZ

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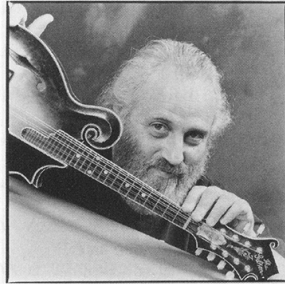
Banana, Rob Bleetstein, Jack Crymes, Jerry Garcia,
Pam & Sam Grisman, D. Brent Hauseman, John Kokoska,
Nobuharu Komoriya, Isabel Miller, John Orleman, Bruce Polansky,
Artie & Harriet Rose, Leslie Rowan, Jon Sievert, Tracy, Bob Zachary
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To an extent, we all live “a life of sorrow.” We all experience pain, suffering, loss and disappointment—and much of our life’s work becomes how we deal with it. The songs in this traditional American collection share common threads of human trials and tribulations; themes of unrequited love, heartache, tragedy, incarceration and death. While some of the melodies are somber and wistful, much of this music is uplifting, despite the dire messages of the lyrics. In essence, these songs are the antidote for the sorrow they depict, and that is perhaps why they are so meaningful.



This project is comprised of recordings, formal and informal, spanning over thirty years of pickin’ and singin’ with some of my best musical friends and heros. Artie Rose and I have been playing together for forty years. I first picked with Del McCoury and Herb Pedersen on different coasts in 1966. John Nagy and I were in Earth Opera (1968) together, and John Hartford played a gig with Old & in the Way (1973.) Friends from years on the festival circuit

include Bryan Bowers, the Nashville Bluegrass Band, and bluegrass patriachs Ralph Stanley and Mac Wiseman. Of course, none of this would have happened if it weren’t for the initial inspiration and encouragement of my friend and mentor, the late Ralph Rinzler, whom I met in my mother’s art class at the age of two. To all of them I say, “Thanks for all your great music and memories.” And may your sorrows be few.

— DAVID GRISMAN, APRIL, 2003

Recorded 9.03.37

Nº. 1 A LIFE OF SORROW (Carter Stanley)

PAT ENRIGHT - guitar, lead vocal; **ALAN O'BRYANT** - banjo, tenor vocal;
STUART DUNCAN - fiddles, baritone vocal; **MARK HEMBREE** - bass;
DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin

THE STANLEY BROTHERS from Virginia first recorded this original variant of “Man of Constant Sorrow” for the Columbia label in 1952. Arranged as a vocal trio, their rendition was immediately striking. Later, in 1957, they re-recorded the song for Mercury with twin fiddles. The Kentucky Colonels frequently performed this song in the 1960’s and re-introduced it to bluegrass audiences under the title, “Journey’s End.” —

*After traveling through this world of sorrow,
No one on earth to call my friend.
I'm on my way back to old Kentucky,
Where I met and loved but couldn't win.*

*I have always loved you little darlin',
My heart will always feel the same,
I could never do one thing to hurt you,
I'd rather die than bring you shame.*

*When the cold dark shroud is wraathed
around me,
They lay my weary head to rest.
Will you stand around and gaze upon me?
For I'm the boy who loved you best.*

*When your golden hair has turned to silver,
The master calls your soul to him.*



CARTER (left), and RALPH STANLEY (right)

*Where we can be free of all our troubles,
I'll meet you there at journey's end.*

Recorded 5.11.74

Nº. 2 DOIN' MY TIME (Jimmie Skinner)

JOHN HARTFORD - banjo, vocal; **DAVID GRISMAN** - mandolin

JIMMIE SKINNER, a radio hillbilly singer from Cincinnati wrote this tune in the late 40's. It was introduced to the bluegrass repertoire by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs on their classic Mercury recording, made at the WDAE radio station in Tampa, Florida, during a hurricane in October of 1950. Both musicians pay homage to Earl's banjo style in this unique minimalist banjo and mandolin duet.

*On this old rock pile, with a ball and chain,
Oh they call me by a number,
not a name lord, lord
Gotta do my time, gotta do my time
With an achin' heart and a worried mind.*

*When that old judge looked down and smiled
Gonna put you on that rock pile
for a while lord, lord
Gotta do my time, gotta do my time
With an achin' heart and a worried mind*

*Well it won't be long, just a few more days...
I'm gonna settle down and quit
my rowdy ways, lord, lord
With that gal of mine, with that gal of mine,
She'll be waitin' for me,
when I've done my time.*

JOHN HARTFORD & DAVID



Recorded 1.15.77

Nº. 3 WE CAN'T BE DARLINGS ANYMORE (L. Flatt, C. Seckler)

DEL McCOURY - guitar, tenor vocal; **DAVID GRISMAN** - mandolin (right), lead vocal;
RONNIE McCOURY - mandolin (left); **ROB McCOURY** - banjo;
JASON CARTER - fiddle; **MIKE BUB** - bass

ANOTHER GEM from the Flatt and Scruggs repertoire of the early 50's, this plaintive song was co-authored by Lester Flatt and tenor singer/mandolinist John Ray “Curly” Seckler. Seckler was often cast in Bill Monroe’s shadow throughout his career, both in stints with Bill’s brother, Charlie and his Kentucky Pardners, and the Foggy Mountain Boys, where he in effect, replaced Monroe. This arrangement is influenced a bit by Charlie Monroe, who featured two mandolins on quite a few of his records.

*Darlin' you often said you loved me,
But you've gone on before.
Now you don't know dear
how I miss you,
But we can't be darlings anymore.*

*Chorus:
Darlin' I am sad and lonely,
Since you've gone on before.
But down here on this lonely earth, dear
We can't be darlings anymore.*

*Until we meet up there in heaven,
And we can walk the golden shore.
But down here on this lonely earth, dear
We can't be darlings anymore.*

Chorus

*I have lost a million tears dear
Since you left this world alone,
But we can never again be darlings,
'Til we meet around the throne.*



CURLY SECKLER with FLATT and SCRUGGS

Recorded 9.16.49

Nº. 4 WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG MAGGIE *(J.A. Butterfield)*

MAC WISEMAN - guitar, vocal; **DAVID GRISMAN** - mandolin



MAC WISEMAN, DON RENO & BILL MONROE

THIS TURN OF THE CENTURY chestnut was one of the most popular tunes of pre World War I America. Mac Wiseman remembered hearing this as a child and his “Voice with a Heart” is certainly a match for this type of nostalgia. It’s interesting to note that Don Reno, Mac’s bandmate in the 1949 Bluegrass Boys, recorded the tune as a jazzy instrumental in the mid 50’s with his partner Red Smiley and their Tennessee Cutups.

*I wandered today to the hill, Maggie
To watch the scenes below,
The creek and the old rusty mill, Maggie
Where we sat in the long, long ago.*

*The green growth is gone
from the hill, Maggie
Where first the daisies sprung.
And the old rusty mill
is now still, Maggie
Since you and I were young.*

*A city so silent and lone, Maggie
Where the young and the gay and the best,*

*In polished white mansions of stone, Maggie
Have found a place of rest.*

*They say I am feeble with age, Maggie
My steps are less spritely as then.
My face is a well written page, Maggie
But time alone was the pen.*

*They say we are aged and gray, Maggie
The trials of life nearly done,
But to me you’re as fair as you were, Maggie
When you and I were young.*

Recorded 3.09.46

Nº. 5 ALL THE GOOD TIMES ARE PAST AND GONE *(traditional)*

RALPH STANLEY - banjo, lead vocal; **DAVID GRISMAN** - mandolin, baritone vocal;
RALPH STANLEY II - guitar; **JACK COOK** - bass, tenor vocal; **JAMES PRICE** - fiddle

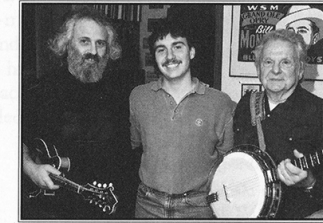
ONE OF THE MANY INCREDIBLE TUNES included on Mike Seeger’s classic Folkways’ collection, Mountain Music Bluegrass Style, “All the Good Times are Past and Gone” has been one of the staples of bluegrass since before it was bluegrass. It was popularized by Bill and Charlie, the Monroe Brothers, who recorded it for Bluebird in August of 1937, but an earlier version was recorded by Fred and Gertrude Gosset from Georgia.

*I wish to the lord I’d never been born,
Or died when I was young.
I never would have seen
your sparkling blue eyes,
Or heard your lying tongue.*

*Chorus:
All the good times are past and gone,
All the good times are over.
All the good times are past and gone,
Little darling, don’t you weep no more.*

*See that west bound passenger train,
Coming around the bend,
It’s takin’ me away
from this lonesome old town,
To never return again.*

*Chorus
Come back, come back my own true love,
And stay awhile with me.
If ever I’ve had a friend in this world,
You’ve been a friend to me.*



DAVID, RALPH STANLEY II & RALPH STANLEY

*Chorus
See that lonesome turtle dove,
Flyin’ from pine to pine,
He’s mournin’ for his own true love,
Why can’t I mourn for mine?*

Chorus

Recorded 2.07.44

Nº. 6 TRAGIC ROMANCE *(Grandpa Jones)*

ALAN O’BRYANT - banjo, tenor vocal; **DAVID GRISMAN** - mandolin, lead vocal

GRANDPA JONES, combining of the story from the old 1890’s song “After the Ball” with the melody to the old-time murder ballad, “Omie Wise” produced some potent results. The Stanley Brothers recorded a poignant rendition in 1958 on their King album, “Everybody’s Country Favorites” featuring George Shuffler with his unique flatpicking guitar style. Again, it’s bluegrass with just a mandolin and a banjo and voices.

*Nestled in the heart of the Tennessee hills,
Midst peaceful pines
neath the rocks and the rills,
There stands my old homestead of long, long ago,
It brings back fond memories of the one I loved so.*
*I courted a maiden so sweet and so fair,
With hearily blue eyes
and with chestnut brown hair.
She promised to love me and said she’d be mine,
But I went away leaving her there behind.*
*I’ll tell you the reason why I left her there,
To roam this old world with its sorrow and care.
I saw her one night in the arms of a man,
Huggin’ and kissin’ as true lovers can.*

*I went to my home with a heart full of woe,
I packed my belongings, determined to go.
For many long years this old world I did roam,
With thoughts of my sweetheart,
my darlin’, my own.*

*While dining one day in a little country town,
A stranger came in and he chanced to sit down.
While talking of loved ones, I happened to find
That his sister was that old sweetheart of mine.*

*When he heard my story, to me then he said,
The one that you love has a long time been dead.
She waited so long for the day you’d return,
And why you had left her she never did learn.*

*Now I am the man that you saw
that fateful night,
Wrapp’d in the arms of my sister so tight.
She loved me so dearly but you broke her heart,
Now stranger from her ever more you must part.*



ALAN O'BRYANT

Recorded 7.15.37

Nº. 7 SEVEN YEAR BLUES *(I. Louvin, C. Louvin, E. Hill)*

HERB PEDERSEN - banjo, tenor vocal; **DAVID GRISMAN** - mandolin, lead vocal;
DEL McCOURY - guitar; **JIM KERWIN** - bass

IRA AND CHARLES LOUVIN contributed many beautiful melodies and harmonies to the traditional side of country music. Although never exactly a bluegrass act, the Louvins were highly influential and respected by all the bluegrass greats—including Bill Monroe, who proclaimed, referring to Ira, that, “There are only two tenor singers—me and the other one” Bill recorded a solo rendition of “Seven Year Blues” in 1960 on his album, “Mr. Bluegrass.” This duet goes back to the “Smokey Grass Boys”, a short-lived San Francisco aggregation that included both Herb and David (age 22).



DAVID, HERB PEDERSEN & DEL McCOURY

*Just seven years ago today,
Was when you said goodbye.
It broke my heart to see you go,
And yet I could not cry.*

*The sun is slowly sinkin’ down,
To mark the close of day.
To mark the end of seven years,
The ending of my way.*

*I have no one to stand by me,
To count these bitter tears.
I could never lose these lonesome blues
In another seven years.*

*I’ve waited seven years today
To see your face once more.
And if my life would be as long,
I’d wait ten thousand more.*

*Just seven years ago today,
Was when you said goodbye.
It broke my heart to see you go,
And yet I could not cry.*

*I could never lose these lonesome blues
In another seven years.*

Recorded 9.16.38

Nº. 8 YOU'RE THE GIRL OF MY DREAMS (Mac Wiseman)

MAC WISEMAN - guitar and vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin

MAC WISEMAN learned this song from the Carter family, who recorded it in 1937 as "Lover's Lane." Mac contributed an additional third verse, but didn't sing it on this duet recording. He also introduced the dreamy tune to Flatt and Scruggs when he played with them in the late 40's. They performed it on early morning radio shows but never made a studio recording. Mac's version on Dot Records was recorded in 1953.



THE CARTER FAMILY

*When I first met you down in lover's lane,
You were just like an angel,
my little blue-eyed Jane.
We walked along, we sang a song,
the birds were singin' too.
Would be like heaven here on earth,
to be again with you.*

*Refrain:
For you're the girl of my dreams,
But it seems that my dreams
will never come true.*

*At night we'd sit out
in the old porch swing,
The stars were shining brightly,
while softly you would sing.
You sang of happy days gone by,
you made me happy too.
Would be like heaven here on earth
to be again with you.*

Refrain

Recorded 1.15.97

Nº. 9 UNWANTED LOVE (D. Reno, R. Smiley, C. Leftwich)

DEL McCOURY - guitar, tenor vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin, lead vocal
RONNIE McCOURY - baritone vocal; ROB McCOURY - banjo;
JASON CARTER - fiddle; MIKE BUB - bass

DON RENO AND RED SMILEY wrote and recorded this tune for the King label in the late 50's. Many of their songs dealt with the pain of unrequited love but this one is more upbeat musically than most. One of David's earliest "professional" bluegrass experiences was playing mandolin with Red Smiley and his newly-formed Shenandoah Cutups at the second Roanoke Bluegrass festival in 1966.



DON RENO and RED SMILEY

*I'm wanting someone that's loved and lost,
Someone that's known the thrill and paid the cost.
Someone that says they'll never take a chance
Of another broken heart by false romance.*

*Chorus:
Wanted an unwanted love
To share all the this misery and pain
Of a heart that's unwanted in love,
And I'm willing to gamble again.*

*I don't want to love again, I'm sure.
Someone whose love is not sincere.
I don't want someone who hasn't known
How it feels to love and be alone.*

*Chorus
I know there are others like me,
Alone, foot-loose, and fancy-free.
They're chained to a love they'll never claim
And afraid to ever love again.*

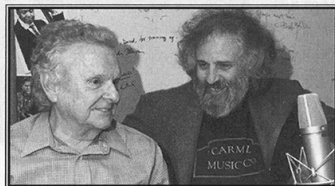
Chorus

Recorded 8.10.36

Nº. 10 MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW (Carter Stanley)

RALPH STANLEY - tenor vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin, lead vocal;
HERB PEDERSEN - rhythm guitars; LAURIE LEWIS - fiddle; JIM KERWIN - bass

ONE OF BLUEGRASS MUSIC'S best kept secrets for over fifty years, this stark lament found unparalleled acceptance with mainstream movie-going audiences who thought that George Clooney was singing it. They, of course, came to find out that it was actually Dan Tyminski, but did they also know that the incredible "chorus" arrangement was from The Stanley Brothers' 1959 King record, as opposed to their original version, recorded for Columbia in 1950 as a solo vehicle for Ralph Stanley? This incredible song was first recorded by Emry Arthur from Wayne County, Kentucky and may be heard on Music of Kentucky, Vol.2 (Yazoo 2014.) It was also recorded by Bob Dylan on his first album.



RALPH STANLEY & DAVID

*I am a man of constant sorrow,
Have seen trouble all my days.
I bid farewell to old Kentucky,
State where I was borned and raised.*

*For six long years I've been in trouble,
No pleasure here on earth I've found,
For in this world I'm bound to ramble,
I have no friends to help me now.*

*You may bury me in some deep valley,
For many years where I may lay.
Then you may learn to love another,
While I am sleeping in my grave.*

*Maybe your friends think
I'm just a stranger,
My face you never will see anymore,
But there is one promise that is given,
I'll see you on God's golden shore.*

Recorded 7.16.38

Nº. 11 TENNESSEE WALTZ (R. Stewart, P. King)

DEL McCOURY - guitar, lead vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin

THIS COUNTRY CLASSIC written by Redd Stewart and Frank Kuczynski (Pee Wee King) was first performed by Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys in 1948. It found its way into mainstream America's heart in early 1951 when Patti Page turned it into a number one pop record with twenty weeks in the top ten. In 1965 it became the Tennessee state song. Probably due to this inordinate amount of notoriety, most bluegrass and traditional performers have avoided it.



DAVID & DEL McCOURY

*I was waltzing with my darling
to the Tennessee waltz,
When an old friend I happened to see
I introduced him to my loved one and
while they were waltzing
My friend stole my sweetheart from me.*

*Chorus:
I remember the night and the
Tennessee waltz
Only you know how much I have lost.
Well I lost my little darling the
night they were playing
The beautiful Tennessee waltz.*

Recorded 9.03.90

N^{o.} 12 BURY ME UNDER THE WEeping WILLOW (traditional)

RALPH RINZLER - mandolin (left), lead vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin (right), tenor vocal; ARTIE ROSE - guitar; HARRIET ROSE - bass

ONE OF THE TRULY CLASSIC AMERICAN FOLK ANTHEMS, this was the first song recorded by the Carter Family at their historic first recording session in Bristol, Virginia, on August 1, 1927. The Monroe Brothers recorded a beautiful duet version, "Weeping Willow" for Bluebird in the spring of 1937. Ralph Rinzler made an incredible contribution to American folk culture, in his successful efforts to collect, preserve and pay homage to the great music and the musicians who helped to create it. He was also a great mandolin player and sang from the heart, as this recording (possibly his last) demonstrates.

My heart is sad, love, and I'm in sorrow,
Thinking of the one I love.
When shall I see her, no never,
'Til we meet in heaven above.

Chorus:

Bury me beneath the willow,
Under the weeping willow tree,
So she may know where I am sleeping,
And perhaps she'll weep for me.

The flower let fall from your dear hand,
He placed upon my grave.
To show the world that I died of sorrow
For her love I could not have.

Chorus

It's many a night, love,
while you lay sleeping,
Dreaming in your sweet repose,



RALPH RINZLER

Of a poor boy broken-hearted,
Listening to the wind that blows.

Chorus

You told me that you dearly loved me,
But I couldn't believe it true,
'Til I heard I a soft voice whisper,
She no longer cares for you.

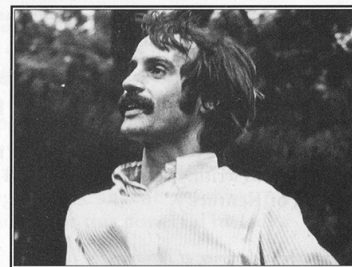
Chorus

Recorded 3.07.69

N^{o.} 13 PRETTY SARO (traditional)

JOHN NAGY - guitar, orchestration, vocals; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin

THIS SONG was collected in North Carolina and Virginia around 1930 by Dorothy Scarborough. She included it in her book "A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains, American Folk Songs of British Ancestry." The word "freeholder" indicates the song is of British origin. John Nagy played bass in Earth Opera with Peter Rowan and myself. He rarely sang in the group, but as this recording attests, his singing was both distinctive and touching. John learned the song from two English "folkies" in front of a pub, where he scribbled down the words and memorized the tune on the spot.



JOHN NAGY

Down in some old valley, in a far distant place
Where the wild birds do whistle,
and the notes do increase,
Farewell Pretty Saro, I'll bid you adieu,
And remember, my darlin', wherever I go.
My loved one won't have me, and I understand
She wants a freeholder, and I have no land.
I cannot maintain her on silver and gold,
Nor buy her those nice things
that she would hold.

It's not the long journey I'm dreading to go,
Nor leaving this country for a debt that I owe.
There's nothing that grieves me
or bothers my mind,
Like leaving my darlin', Pretty Saro, behind.
If I was a sparrow, had wings and could fly,
T'would be to my darlin', I would draw nigh,
And in her lily white arms
all night I would lay,
And watch little windows
'til the dawning of day.

Recorded 1.15.97

N^{o.} 14 CABIN OF LOVE (Birch Monroe)

DEL McCOURY - guitar, tenor vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin (right), lead vocal; RONNIE McCOURY - mandolin (left); ROBERT McCOURY - banjo; JASON CARTER - fiddle; MIKE BUB - bass

ONE OF TWO DUETS that Carter Stanley recorded with Bill Monroe during his brief stint with the Bluegrass Boys in 1951, "Cabin of Love" was written by Bill's brother Birch, who played bass and fiddle with the band throughout the late 40's and early 50's. The Stanley Brothers first incurred Bill Monroe's ire by recording some of his numbers before he did, but by the mid 50's, he was writing songs for them and even produced their recording of "Blue Moon of Kentucky."

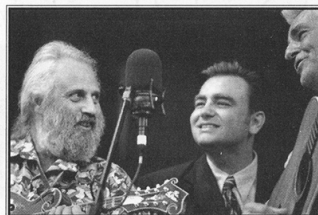
I'm only a dreamer of romance,
My love dreams can never come true,
I'll just pretend to be happy,
And smile through these tears dear at you.

Chorus:

I dreamed of a cabin of love, dear,
Where all of our dreams would come true,
But another has taken my cabin,
And left me so lonely and blue.

Nestled around my cabin,
That means all the world to me,
My love, sweetheart, will always linger,
For you are a part, dear, of me.

Chorus



DAWG, RONNIE & DEL McCOURY

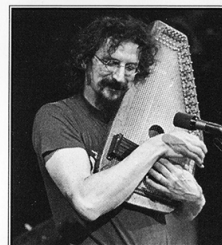
Where is the love we once cherished?
Why didn't our love dreams come true?
All I can do now is dream, dear,
Of my cabin, sweetheart, dear and you.

Chorus

Recorded 12.19.91

N^{o.} 15 FARTHER ALONG (Traditional)

BRYAN BOWERS - autoharp, vocal; DAVID GRISMAN - mandolin



BRYAN BOWERS

Tempted and tried
we're often made to wonder
Why it should be thus all the day long.
While there are others, living about us,
Never more master, though in the wrong.
Chorus:
Farther along we'll know more about it,
Farther along we'll understand why.
Cheer up my brothers,
live in the sunshine,
We'll understand it all by and by.
When death has come
and taken our loved ones,
Leaving our home so lonely and grieved.

RENDITIONS OF THIS AMERICAN GOSPEL CLASSIC can be found in hymnals and song books dating back to the 1890's. It was popularized in the 1930's by the Burnett Sisters, a female gospel trio from Texas. Later versions were recorded by Charlie Monroe, Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe and even Elvis Presley. Bryan Bowers' soulful singing and angelic autoharp playing is perfectly suited for this powerful melody.

Then do we wonder why others prosper
Living as sinners year after year.
Chorus
Often I wonder why I must journey,
Over a road so rugged and steep,
While there are others living in comfort,
While with the lost I labor and weep.
Chorus
Grateful to death sayeth our loving master
Only a world to labor and wait,
All of our toils will soon be forgotten,
When we sweep through the beautiful gate.
Chorus