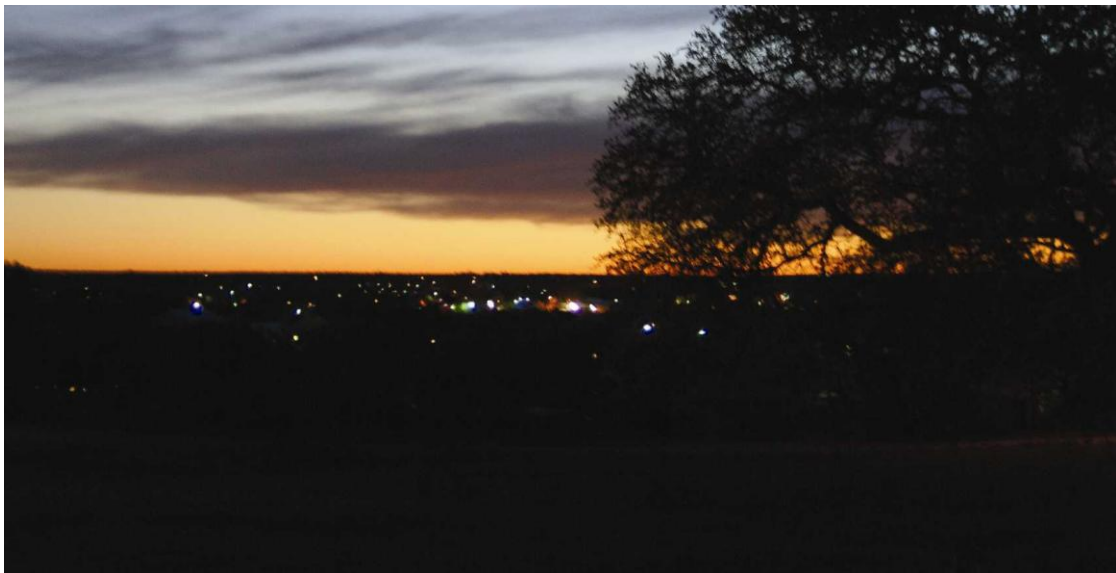


# **“Small Town Sundown”**

**(A Movie In Song)**

**The Companion Book  
that tells the whole story...**



Story and Songs  
Written by George Ensle

# **"Small Town Sundown"**

## **(A Movie In Song)**

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J. D. Anderson, a 28 year old, rugged, stubble-faced, straw-hatted, cowboy-booted, pearl snap shirted character steps off a Greyhound bus heading for the filling station that serves as the bus depot in the small town of Windmill, Texas. He holds open the door for a lady and her young daughter, and then follows into the lobby to the counter where he waits his turn to present his baggage tags for his suitcase and guitar. The bus driver sets them down by his side and he thanks him, then heads out into the bright sunlit street. He looks down and rubs the back of his neck, looks up and down Main Street, then walks toward the Mom and Pop grocery store on the corner. It's an older establishment, probably built in the forties, with some plate glass writing telling of the sales prices for corn and melons, and donning a few flyers, including one about an upcoming town meeting. He steps inside and walks straight to the old fashioned Coke machine chest, where you slip in quarters and slide the glass bottle along a track to the release gate. He is greeted by the proprietor, his grandfather's brother, Uncle Jack with a warm hug and pat on the back.

### **UNCLE JACK**

*"I'm glad you made it J.D. It will mean a lot to your Grandma. Why don't you ride over with us?"*

### **J.D.**

*"This place is just like I remembered it. I always liked the way it smelled in here. Sure, I'll ride with you and Aunt Sally."*

## ***“Mom and Pop’s”***

***JUST A SHORT WAYS OFF THE INTERSTATE  
DOWN A TWO-LANE COUNTY ROUTE  
THERE'S A PLACE CALLED SMALL TOWN U.S.A.  
SLOW DOWN AND COME ON OUT  
WE GOT A CAFÉ, ICEHOUSE, FEED AND SEED  
AND JOHN DEERE TRACTOR SHOP  
AND THEY'RE ALL RUN BY HARD WORKING COUPLES  
WE CALL MOM AND POP***

***AT MOM AND POPS  
YOU'LL FEEL RIGHT AT HOME  
AT MOM AND POPS  
IT'S HAND MADE AND HOMEGROWN  
AT MOM AND POPS  
YOU'LL FIND A PLACE THAT'S FAMILY OWNED  
AND MEET THE TWO WHO BUILT THIS COUNTRY  
EVERY TIME YOU STOP  
AT MOM AND POP'S MOM AND POP'S***

***NOW POP'S HANDSHAKE IS ALL YOU NEED  
FOR A LIFETIME GUARANTEE  
MOM IS BACK IN THE KITCHEN  
FIXIN' ALL YOU CAN EAT  
THEY AINT JUST MAKING A LIVING  
THEIR MAKING A LIFE  
AND TRYING TO MAKE A LAST STAND  
THIS HEARTLAND MAN AND WIFE***

***WE CALL MOM AND POP  
YOU'LL GET AN HONEST DEAL  
AT MOM AND POPS  
YOU'LL GET A HOMECOOKED MEAL  
AT MOM AND POP'S  
YOU'LL KNOW HOW IT FEELS  
TO MEET THE TWO WHO BUILT THIS COUNTRY  
EVERY TIME YOU STOP  
AT MOM AND POP'S***

***THEY'RE THE SALT OF THE EARTH  
THEY'RE THE AMERICAN DREAM  
WORKING SUNUP TO SUNDOWN  
IN OVERALLS AND JEANS***

**FILLING PEWS ON SUNDAY MORNING  
SINGING THEM OLD TIME HYMNS  
THEY'RE DOWNHOME FOLKS AND I'M PROUD TO SAY  
THEY'RE MY NEXT OF KIN**

**SO COME TO MOM AND POP'S  
IT'S MADE WITH FAMILY PRIDE  
AT MOM AND POPS  
THEY'LL FIX IT UNTIL IT'S RIGHT  
AT MOM AND POP'S  
YOU'LL GET SOMETHING YOU CAN'T BUY  
FROM THE TWO WHO BUILT THIS COUNTRY  
EVERY TIME YOU STOP  
AT MOM AND POPS**

**JUST A SHORT WAYS OFF THE INTERSTATE  
DOWN A TWO-LANE COUNTY ROUTE  
THERE'S A PLACE CALLED SMALL TOWN U.S.A.  
SLOW DOWN AND COME ON OUT**

J.D. is hatless, wearing a black suit with a white shirt and bolo tie, one of six pall bearers, including his uncle Jack, carrying a casket from the hearse to the burial tent on that same hot Texas afternoon, sweat soaking his shirt and dripping from his brow, not entirely a welcome sight to the rest of the old timers, who remember his escapades as a youngster. His older brother, Price, is also a pall bearer. He stands tall and thin, wearing alligator boots, a tailored sharkskin suit, wide brimmed black Cowboy hat, and several gold and diamond rings. As they set the casket down on the lift over the grave opening, a blue butterfly lights on J.D.'s shoulder and hangs on during the entire graveside prayer and the throwing of the dust to dust dirt on the casket. J.D. remains standing at his Grandma's side during the ceremony, and only when he leans down to kiss her forehead does the butterfly slowly take flight.

Soon, J.D. is sitting at the "Lone Star Bar", with a long neck beer, catching up with the proprietor, his old high school buddy, Jimmy, a light hearted handsome and fit character wearing a ball cap and a friendly smile.

## ***“The Ballad of Cynthia Brown”***

**I COME IN FROM TULSA  
ON A GREYHOUND LAST NIGHT  
IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE I'S BLINDED  
BY THEM BUS STATION LIGHTS  
BUT YOU LOSE TRACK OF TIME  
WHEN YOU'RE PLAYIN' AROUND  
I GUESS YOU HEARD ABOUT GRANDPA  
BEING WHY I'M IN TOWN  
FOR AN OLD FARMER'S GRAVE  
I'S AMAZED AT ALL THE FACES  
THAT GATHERED AROUND  
STILL I'S HALFWAY HOPING  
I MIGHT GET A CHANCE TO SEE  
CYNTHIA BROWN**

**I DON'T KNOW WHY I GOT SO RESTLESS  
COME SUMMERTIME  
WHY SOME NIGHTS I FELT LIKE  
I'S LOSING MY MIND  
OR WHY ALL I THOUGHT ABOUT  
WAS MAKING MY GETAWAY  
OR WHY I CALLED GRANDPA A FOOL  
FOR THINKING I MIGHT STAY  
OR WHY I GOT DRUNK THAT NIGHT  
AND TOOK HIS CHEVY SCREAMING  
THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF TOWN  
OR WHY I WANTED MORE  
THAN THOSE WINDBLOWN KISSES  
FROM CYNTHIA BROWN**

**SO YOU'RE STILL HERE POURING BEERS  
I REMEMBER THAT BOOTH  
THE NIGHT I TOLD YOU I'S LEAVING  
ON MY SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH  
THE WAY YOU SHOOK YOUR HEAD  
AND THREW YOUR FIST DOWN  
AND SAID THE TRUTH WILL FIND YOU  
WHEN IT'S TIME TO GET FOUND  
WELL MAN THAT'S NO LIE  
SETUMUP I'M BUYING  
THAT LINE THE NEXT ROUND  
IT'S THE LEAST I COULD DO**

## **FOR THE MAN WHO WON THE HAND OF CYNTHIA BROWN**

J.D. walks to the lawyer's office, which is up a long flight of stairs above the Drug store where he used to work at the soda fountain. The lawyer is a fat cigar chewing character in a squeaky wooden captain's chair behind a huge wooden desk, apparently with no fond recollections of J. D. as a teenager. He is the executor of his grandpa's estate, and after informing J.D. that since he was raised by his grandparents because of his parents' deaths in a car accident when he was 2, and since his grandma has been declared "mentally incapable", as a result of his Brother and Sisters efforts, his grandpa's will has a clause that left him and his siblings all his assets, including the farm, which has a substantial and currently 4 months past due mortgage payment. Half of the farm is his, but his brother and sister each have one quarter. He is told that even though their maternal grandparents raised his older brother and sister, grandpa still wanted them to have their fair share. J.D. is also willed the ancient Allis-Chalmers tractor his grandpa inherited from his father.

### **J.D. SHAKES HIS HEAD AND SMILES**

*"I remember trying to get that damn thing started. Grandpa had the patience of Job."*

J.D. ventures over to visit Grandma. The Nursing home is an older faded brown brick single story building, which is in need of paint and a new roof. J. D. is hit by the foul smell as he enters the lobby and approaches the empty front reception desk. From there he wanders down the hall to find Grandma in the Dining/Activity room playing Gin Rummy with another grey haired lady. Grandma smiles as he approached and introduces him to her partner, Miss Tillie. Grandma rises unassisted to give J.D. a hug and kiss on the cheek, and they walk to her room, a shared twelve by fifteen foot box with a

mineral stained window at the far wall and linoleum floor, housing two twin beds, a nightstand, and two paint chipped chests of drawers. J. D. is appalled at the living conditions and vows to himself that he will break her out of this place. She sits in the chair by the window while they talk about old times, Grandpa, and what J.D. has been up to. As they talk, he notices how ageless and beautiful she looks as the sunset light streams in through the window on her face.

As Tillie is moving passed the hall doorway with her walker, she announces that it's dinner time, and J.D. gives Grandma a goodbye kiss on the cheek.

That night, at Aunt Sally and Uncle Jack's dinner table, Price and J.D.'s sister, Sue, let their wants be known, namely to sell the farm and get as much money as possible from the transaction. And there is already a willing buyer who has made them a cash offer. There is also some heated discussion from J.D. about why their grandma has been declared "mentally incapable" and why she is living in a nursing home rather than on her farm, or with one of them. They give the medical excuse that she needs "skilled nursing care" but J. D. doesn't buy it. He knows after seeing her that she just needs someone to keep her company and remind her of when she needs to take her medicine. Then Price and Sue accuse him of being the most neglectful of all the grandchildren, by leaving town and staying out of the picture for more than ten years, offering no help when times got hard for grandma and grandpa, who died farming the land and trying to keep up the place. Then they discuss who will get what of their grandparent's belongings.

## ***"Grandma's Apron and Grandpa's Vest"***

**GRANDMA'S APRON  
SMELLED LIKE BLEACH  
AND MARTHA WHITE FLOUR**

SOMETIMES SHE'D REACH  
DOWN INTO THE POCKET  
AND PULL OUT A TREAT  
SAYIN, "HOW ABOUT  
A LITTLE SOMETHING SWEET."

IT MIGHT BE A SUGAR COOKIE  
OR A PIECE OF FUDGE  
I COULD FEEL THE WARMTH  
I COULD FEEL THE LOVE  
GRANDMA BAKED  
INTO EVERY BATCH  
WEARING THAT APRON  
STARTING FROM SCRATCH

IT WAS ALL COTTON  
SOFT AND WORN  
USED TO LET ME USE IT  
FOR MY SUPERMAN CAPE  
AND HELD ME BEHIND IT  
WHEN IT THUNDERSTORMED  
GRANDMA'S APRON HAD POWER  
GRANDMA'S APRON HAD GRACE

GRANDPA'S VEST  
WAS COURDORAY  
WE'D WATCH OLD WESTERNS  
IN HIS LAZY BOY  
HE'D REACH IN THE POCKET  
AND PULL OUT A TOY.  
SAYIN, "MY SIDEKICKS'  
BEEN A GOOD BOY"

IT MIGHT BE A MARBLE  
LIKE THE EYE OF A CAT  
OR A WHISTLE FROM A BOX  
OF CRACKERJACKS  
THAT VEST HELD  
HIS SWEET SURPRISES  
THAT CAME WITH A WINK  
FROM HIS TWINKLING EYE

HE USED TO LET ME WEAR IT  
WHEN I RODE MY STICK HORSE PONY  
CHASING DOWN OUTLAWS  
BADGE ON MY CHEST



**AND WHEN WE TOOK NAPS  
IN HIS LAZY BOY  
YOU KNOW GRANDPA'S VEST KNEW THE COWBOY WAY  
GRANDPA'S VEST KNEW TENDERNESS**

**SO WHEN IT CAME TIME  
TO DIVIDE THEIR THINGS  
BROTHER WANTED THE CAR  
SISTER WANTED THE RINGS  
I SAID I WANT THEM WAY  
THEY LOVED AND BLESSED  
GIVE ME GRANDMA'S APRON  
AND GRANDPA'S VEST.**

**NOW MY LADY  
WILL WEAR GRANDMA'S APRON  
BAKING SUGAR COOKIES  
WHEN THE GRANDKIDS COME  
I'LL WEAR GRANDPA'S VEST  
IN MY LAZY BOY  
GRANDKIDS ON MY LAP  
I PULL OUT A TOY  
WHILE WE'RE WATCHING  
GENE AND ROY, AND THE DUKE, HOPKINS, CASSIDY, THE  
CISCO KID, THE LONE RANGER, HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL,  
GUNSMOKE, WAGON TRAIN, WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE, RAWHIDE,  
CHEYENNE, THE RIFLEMAN, THE REBEL, MAVERICK, LAWMAN.....**

After a good night's sleep at Uncle Jack's and Aunt Sally's, J.D. hitchhikes a ride in a pickup from an old farmer, then climbs out, retrieving his guitar and suitcase from the bed, and walks up a dusty gravel drive to his grandparent's old white clapboard farmhouse, obviously in need of paint and roof repairs. When he comes in through the unlocked back kitchen screen door, he walks into his past, filled with wonderful childhood memories as he looks around the unchanged kitchen and realizes he was raised by two strong people, who provided a safe "bubble" of love, tolerance, and affection for him. He walks through the house, into his old bedroom, his twin bed with its knotty pine frame and headboard and Indian blanket bedspread, next to a knotty pine night stand with a Roy Rogers lamp on it. He assumed when he moved out and took his

teenage things with him, his grandma put his old childhood things back in the room.

He remembered waking each morning to look out the window at the open field, sometimes seeing grandpa kicking up dust on his John Deere tractor, watching it dissipate with the morning breeze. Then he notices an old trunk with his boyhood toys and games in it, neatly placed as if some day he would need them for his children. Next door was the bathroom and the old claw foot tub he grew up bathing in. He walks out the front door and sits on the front porch swing looking out across the hilly countryside and unplowed fields. Time passes, and the sun sets while he sits and swings, then as night falls he climbs into his childhood bed and sleeps as the window curtains sway in the evening breeze.

Next morning he walks to the garage to take inventory, where he sees the 1962 faded but scratchless, mint green, 4 door Chevy Biscayne grandpa willed to him, covered with a layer of dust. When he climbs in, he is taken back to his teenage days when he used to sneak out at night, getting his buddies to push it far enough down the driveway to start it without waking grandpa or grandma, then cruise over the county line to buy some liquor with a fake I.D., and drink until he could barely drive, take her out on the “strip”, which was a 5 mile stretch of straight two lane shoulderless blacktop, bordered by bar ditches, where they’d “open her up” to see how fast she would go, then sneak her back into the garage just before dawn. Little did he know that grandma and grandpa had found out the where he was going, and what he was doing, but decided to let him sow his wild oats. The Sheriff had his eye on them, from a distance, making sure they didn’t get into any serious trouble.

Now J.D. can’t get her started, but after a jump from the tractor, he heads to his old shade tree mechanic buddy Billy Bob’s house to find out what’s wrong with her. He’s not exactly sure where Billy Bob lives, so he stops to ask directions when he sees his old farmer

neighbor James McAlister sitting on his front porch chair, looking out across a field of Maize.

### ***“Faces in the Sun.”***

***I WAS ROLLIN’ DOWN A BACKROAD WHEN I GOT LOST  
AND SAW HIM SITTING THERE  
A PROUD OLD STRAIGHTBACK FARMER  
ON A FRONT PORCH CHAIR  
STARING OFF INTO THE DISTANCE  
AS A HOT DRY JULY MORNING  
SUN LIT HIS SHINING EYES  
AND THE FARMHOUSE HE WAS BORN IN***

***I STOPPED TO ASK HIM DIRECTIONS  
THEN ASKED WHAT IS IT YOU SEE  
LOOKING OUT ACROSS THAT GRAIN FIELD  
JUST AS EMPTY AS CAN BE?***

***HE SAID, “FACES IN THE SUN  
ON THAT HORIZON  
I SEE THE FAMILY FARMER  
I CAN SEE THE ONES  
WHO WILL COME AND GO  
BUT NEVER DISAPPEAR  
I SEE FACES IN THE SUN  
WHOSE EYES KEEP SHINING CLEAR”***

***HE SAID, “I SEE MY GRANDPA STANDING TALL  
WIPING A FURROWED BROW  
WEARING HIS BIB OVERALLS  
BEHIND THAT MULE AND PLOW  
AND I SEE MY DADDY ON HIS TRACTOR  
WHERE GRANDPA USED TO BE  
OUT THERE WHERE THE EARTH MEETS THE SKY  
I SEE MY LEGACY***

***FACES IN THE SUN  
WHO TAUGHT ME ALL I KNOW  
ABOUT HARD WORK AND FAMILY  
AND REAPING WHAT YOU SOW  
HOW WE COME AND GO  
BUT NEVER DISAPPEAR***

**I SEE FACES IN THE SUN  
WHOSE EYES KEEP SHINING CLEAR**

**I SEE FACES TALKING TO THE SKY  
AND LISTENING TO THE WIND  
I SEE STRONG AND GODLY MEN  
I SEE THE UNSUNG HEROES  
WHO LIVE THEIR QUIET LIVES  
WITH THE SUN UPON THEIR SKIN**

**FACES IN THE SUN  
PORTRAITS OF THE PLAINS  
ON THAT HEARTLAND HILL  
THAT BEARS THE FAMILY NAME  
AND I CAN SEE MY GRANDSON  
ON MY OLD JOHN DEERE  
WITH HIS FACE IN THE SUN  
AND HIS EYES SHINING CLEAR."**

J.D. finds out where Billy Bob lives, and drives to his place to talk about old times and get the Chevy fixed. Billy Bob's house is sitting on a hilltop off the county farm to market road, and from the roadside view appears to be a well kept small framed wooden house, with Billy Bob, a pony tailed, heavily tattooed large character, wearing striped overalls without a shirt, a ball cap backwards, and aviator shades, on the front porch petting a large Rottweiler at his feet, that begins barking the minute J.D. turns in the drive.

**BILLY BOB YELLS FROM THE FRONT PORCH ROCKER**

*"He's all bark and no bite, just like me."*

**J.D. ROLLS DOWN THE WINDOW AND SHOUTS BACK**

*"I don't think I should cut her off. She might not start again."*

**BILLY BOB YELLS BACK**

*"Pull around back."*

When J.D. pulls around his eyes begin to slowly reveal the incredible array of junked out cars, boats, and tractors, rusted and overgrown with weeds.

### ***"Billy Bob's Backyard."***

***BILLY BOB WEARS A BALLCAP BACK'RDS  
AND AVIATOR SHADES  
BLACK GREASE 'NEATH HIS FINGERNAILS  
AND A LITTLE ON HIS FACE  
WITH A SEMI-TOOTHLESS SMILE,  
HE SAID "HOWDY DO"  
I WAS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS  
ABOUT WHAT I'S ABOUT TO DO***

***HE'S A SHADETREE MECHANIC  
AND MY ALTERNATOR WAS GONE  
HE SAID, "IF YOU BROUGHT ONE  
IN AN HOUR I'LL HAV'ER ON"  
WELL, I SAID I HAD A REBUILT  
SETTIN' IN MY TRUNK  
HE SAID, "PULL AROUND BACK," AND THAT'S WHEN  
I SAW BILLY'S JUNGLE OF JUNK***

***BILLY BOB'S BACKYARD  
IS A PACKRAT'S PARADISE  
IT'S A REDNECK COLLECTION  
FROM A BUBBA'S WAY OF LIFE  
IT'S HILLBILLY HEAVEN  
WITH AN OLD ROT STANDING GUARD  
OVER ALL THEM WHITE TRASH TREASURES  
FILLIN' BILLY BOB'S BACKYORD***

***FOUR SKEETER BREEDIN' TIRES  
LEANIN' UP AGAINST AN UGLY SHED  
A STUDEBAKER PICKUP UP ON BLOCKS  
WITH GRASS GROWIN' IN THE BED  
TIN ROOF AND WARPED PLYWOOD  
MAKIN' A CROOKED FENCE  
SLIMY WATER STANDIN' IN A JONBOAT  
THAT'S GOT ABOUT A HUND'RD DENTS***

***RUSTY REBAR AND BAGS OF SAKCRETE***

**THAT GOT WET AND TURNED TO STONE  
MOTORLESS LAWMOWERS  
BY A CLOTHESLINE HAYWIRED ONTO  
HIS GIRLFRIEND'S HARLEY TANKTOP  
AND HIS HARLEY TEE  
A DEAD WATER HEATER AND TWO LAWNCHAIRS  
WITH RIPPED OUT STRAP SEATS**

**BEER CANS BEER CANS BEER CANS  
THROWN IN SCATTERED PILES  
CHICKENS PECKIN' IN THE DIRT  
TO AN EIGHT TRACK PLAYIN'  
"BORN TO BE WILD"**

**BILLY CLEARED AWAY JUST ENOUGH SPACE  
TO FIT MY CAR BETWEEN  
A SATELLITE DISH WITH A BIRD NEST  
AND A BROKE DOWN WASHIN' MACHINE  
I WAS LEANIN' ON A CHOPPER FRAME  
WATCHIN' HIM SWEAT AND CUSS  
'NEAT A TORN TARP STRUNG FROM  
HIS MOBILE HOME TO AN OLD VOLKSWAGEN BUS**

They replaced the alternator, and after washing up with GoJo and a garden hose, they have a few beers on the back porch, and as the sun sets, the full moon rises over the hill country taking J.D. back to the days of a boy and his dog exploring " a poor boy's paradise" as they knew it.

## ***"Hill Country Moon"***

**HILL COUNTRY MOON  
SMILING ON ME  
I FEEL LIKE A BAREFOOT KID AGAIN  
NOT A CARE IN THIS WORLD  
JUST A BOY AND HIS DOG  
YOU KNOW I CAN REMEMBER WHEN**

**YOU WERE SMILING ON  
McCALISTER'S POND  
AND ME AND BLUE TOOK A MOONLIGHT SWIM  
I NEVER FELT SO FREE**

**JUST YOU, BLUEBOY AND ME  
I CAN FEEL THE WATER ON MY SKIN**

**NOW I'M RIDING MY BIKE  
DOWN COTTONPATCH ROAD  
WITH THE COOL NIGHT AIR AGAINST MY FACE  
BLUE BY MY SIDE  
I FEEL LIKE I'M FLYING  
WITH OUR MOONSHADOWS GIVING CHASE**

**WHEN YOU LIGHT UP THESE HILLS  
I CAN SEE I'M STILL  
THAT COUNTRY BOY  
WHO JUST GOT LOST FOR A WHILE  
IN THEM BIG CITY LIGHTS  
BUT I'M GONNA BE ALLRIGHT  
NOW THAT I'VE FOUND  
MY HILL COUNTRY SMILE**

**HILL COUNTRY MOON  
I'M IN A POOR BOY'S PARADISE  
THANKS FOR HANGIN' OUT OLD FRIEND  
AND WASHING THIS NIGHT  
WITH YOUR SACRED LIGHT  
AND BRINGING ME BACK HOME AGAIN  
IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK HOME AGAIN**

Billy Bob catches him up on what has happened in the ten years J.D. has been gone, including how he took a job working by day as a mechanic at the John Deere Tractor shop, and tells him about the "Big Box" store, called "Smart Mart", that half the town is fighting to permit, while the other half is trying to defeat.

### **BILLY BOB**

*"The feud goes on and on. Them folks on the North side of the river say it will boost our economy and make Windmill, a wealthy place, bringing in a lot of tax money and all the other service type stores and fast food drive-throughs. Them folks on the South side say it will ruin our town, and turn it into another goldmine for greedy money*

*mongers that don't give a damn about community or the folks that have spent their whole lives making it one. They'll see it as an opportunity to build their little empires, then when things go south, they'll pull out and leave a vacant ugly prefab metal building for us to have to look at every time we drive into town. It depresses the hell out of me. There's gonna be a town council meeting day after tomorrow at the high school gym, when things are really gonna heat up. Them folks from Smart Mart are gonna be there to make their case. It oughta be good."*

**J.D.**

*"I don't really care much about politics. It don't really matter to me what they do. I'm just trying to get my music career going to where I can make a decent living, without having to play honkey tonks that have chicken wire strung across the stage to keep the band from gettin' hit with flying beer bottles. I do wish there was some way I could maybe live in the old farmhouse and take care of Grandma, but I don't know how I could do it and still play my tunes".*

**BILLY BOB**

*"Maybe you should ask the Lord for some advice. We've got a great Cowboy Church just up the road that I go to every Sunday I can. Good folks. Good music. Good grub. Good fellowship, and usually a pretty right on sermon. That preacher knows his business."*

**J.D.**

*"I don't know, man. I can't remember the last time I went to church. It was probably with Grandma. A good ten years ago".*



**BILLY BOB**

*"I figure what have you got to lose. It's over at the old camp meetin' grounds. It's come as you are. I call it "warts and all" church. It aint just for cowboys, hell, we've all stepped in somethin' we've had a hard time getting' off out boots."*

**"Cowboy Church"**

**WAY OUT IN THE COUNTRY  
ON THE CAMP MEETING GROUNDS  
THERE'S A GATHERING EVERY SUNDAY  
FROM THEM HILL COUNTRY TOWNS  
WE MEET AT THE DANCE PAVILLION  
WE SET ON FOLDING CHAIRS  
WE SING 'EM LOUD, WE CLAP OUR HANDS  
AND SHAKE 'EM IN THE AIR**

**SO WON'T YOU COME DOWN COME DOWN CHILDREN  
HEAR THE LOVING WORD  
COME DOWN COME DOWN CHILDREN  
COME TO COWBOY CHURCH  
COME DOWN COME DOWN CHILDREN  
BE THE LIVING WORD  
COME DOWN COME DOWN CHILDREN  
COME TO COWBOY CHURCH**

**SOME COME IN RUSTED PICKUPS  
SOME COME IN CADILLACS  
SOME COME RIDING HARLEYS  
AND SOME ON HORSES BACKS  
'CAUSE EVERYBODY'S WELCOME  
AT THE CHURCH THAT HAS NO WALLS  
SOME COME IN THEIR SUNDAY BEST  
SOME IN BIB OVERALLS**

**NOW THE PREACHER KEEPS IT SIMPLE  
HE SAYS WE'VE ALL GONE ASTRAY  
BUT IF YOU WANT BACK IN THE HERD  
LIVE THE COWBOY WAY  
ALWAYS HELP THE NEEDY**

**LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR EVERY DAY  
ALWAYS FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT  
AND DON'T FORGET TO PRAY**

The next morning J. D. drives to Cowboy church. It is at a hilltop open air pavilion lined out with about ten rows of folding chairs, a small wooden pulpit, two speakers on stands, and some microphones on stands. There is a wide variety of ages and attire, with children running around playing chase and some on the playground swing set. J.D. is amazed by the handshakes and hugs and words of condolence for his losing his Grandpa. Even some of the older folks he used to torment as a teenager are offering him a warm welcome. It's fifth Sunday, so they are having "dinner on the ground", which is a pot luck with bar-b-qued brisket you can smell smoking under the covered concrete pit next to the pavilion. The preacher rings the cowbell, and everyone gathers and starts sitting down in what appears to be their usual seats. He tries to make his move and finds the only seat available is next to Becky, an attractive long-haired brunette, cotton-dressed, and turquoise bejeweled and her three year old daughter, April, wearing a flour sack type calico dress, a small pink cowboy hat and red cowboy boots. When the service starts, Becky holds the handout so he can read the lyrics of the congregational songs, "Farther Along", and "What a friend we have in Jesus."

The Church announcements are given by one of the Elders, during which he mentions the upcoming town council meeting over the Big Box store moving into their community. He talks about how important the meeting is to determine the future of their township and community. He obviously is against allowing the store to be permitted, and gives examples of other towns that have had their character and integrity ruined by Big Box stores.

The next part of the Service involves Prayer and Praise, during which the congregation members stand and tell about how the Lord has been working in their and friends and family member's lives,

then asking for specific prayers for friends and family members. There is an amazing outpouring of testimonials about people becoming cancer-free, elderly people returning home from hospital stays, a soldier returning home safely from Afghanistan, and to J.D.'s surprise, Becky stands up and thanks them all for their prayers for her and April, and says she has finally gotten full custody of April after a long legal battle with her abusive ex-husband.

The preacher is a gaunt, weathered, suntanned, snap shirted, bluejeaned, cowboy-booted, character in his mid-sixties, who hangs his straw cowboy hat on the horse shoe nailed on the podium, while he paces the stage area with a wireless microphone headset. The sermon for this week is all about the Golden Calf that Moses' followers made in his absence on Mount Sinai. He makes obvious references to the Smart Mart Store, and all it has to offer in terms of materialistic gratification, giving a "quick fix" to the economic woes their community is currently suffering, due to drought conditions for farmers and ranchers, and the dilemma of potential foreclosures by the bankers, who would be more than glad to let developers buy up land for a retirement resort, or snowbird RV parks on their spring fed undammed river. He points out that the Israelites were all in a hurry to have their "Promise Land" now instead of trusting in the plan the Lord had in the works.

When the service is over, J.D. introduces himself to Becky and April, then shares small talk standing in line at the buffet table. He asks if he can sit to eat with them at their picnic table. Becky agrees. April is timid and wary of J.D., as he tries to make friends with her. They part at the end of the dinner, and while April is on the swing set, J.D. tells Becky he'd like to see her again. She says she has just gone through a horrible divorce with April and really isn't looking for a relationship at this time. She wants to dedicate her time to April. J.D. says he understands, but inside knows he is going to pursue.

On his way home J.D. takes a drive to the ancient hilltop Sinclair service station icehouse that still has a dinosaur with a 22

bullet hole through it on the sign he fondly remembers from his childhood days. He sees the three older style gas pumps and Hardy Ferguson, a large man, in his late seventies, who is still strong, healthy and actively living the good old days. There are a couple of old timers inside playing dominoes at a card table.

J.D. remembers riding his bike here to pick up a loaf of bread for Grandma, or to spend hot summer afternoons, drinking an Orange Crush, and helping him work on cars, listening to Hardy's life story.

### ***"Small Town Sundown"***

***I BOUGHT THAT BLUE 63 BONNEVILLE  
OFF A FORT WORTH SHOWROOM FLOOR  
I PAID CASH FOR IT WITH THE MONEY I'D SAVED  
WORKING SUMMERS ON THE RIGS OFFSHORE  
SOMETIMES I STILL PUT HER TOP DOWN  
AND GO CRUISING 'CROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE  
JUST TO FEEL FREEDOM'S WIND BLOWING THROUGH MY HAIR  
AND THANK THE GOOD LORD I'M ALIVE  
IT WAS BUILT IN THE DAYS WHEN THIS COUNTRY  
TOOK PRIDE IN DOING HARD WORK  
AND I HAD "MADE IN THE U.S.A."  
ON THE TAG OF MY BLUE COLLAR SHIRT.***

***I'VE BEEN MARRIED TO THE SAME FINE LADY  
SINCE 1952  
AND OUR LOVING'S JUST GOTTEN STRONGER  
FROM ALL THE LIVING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH  
SHE STILL KEEPS THE LETTERS I SENT HER  
WHEN I'S OFF FIGHTING IN THAT KOREAN WAR  
TIED UP WITH HER YELLOW HAIR RIBBON  
BY HER BIBLE IN HER NIGHTSTAND DRAWER  
YOU KNOW WE STILL GO OUT DANCING  
MOST EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT  
THESE DAYS WE DON'T TAKE QUITE AS MANY STEPS  
BUT WE HOLD EACH OTHER JUST AS TIGHT.***

***WE HAD TWO BEAUTIFUL TWIN DAUGHTERS  
IN 1958  
THEY'VE GIVEN US SIX GRANDKIDS  
AND THEY'VE GIVEN US THREE GREATS***

**THE YOUNG ONES STILL SPEND SUMMERS WITH US  
THEY LOVE MAAMA'S DEWBERRY JAM  
SHE TAKES THEM OUT IN HER GARDEN  
SO THEY CAN KNOW THE FEEL OF DIRT IN THEIR HANDS  
YOU SEE THEY WAS ALL RAISED IN THE CITY  
WE TRY TO SHOW THEM A SIMPLER WAY  
SOMETIMES WE LAY IN THE YARD AND TRY TO COUNT ALL THEM  
STARS  
AND CATCH DINNER OUT OF BLUE CYPRESS LAKE**

**I'VE BEEN GOING TO THE SAME LITTLE WHITE CHURCH  
SINCE THE SUNDAY AFTER I'S BORN  
AND WHEN I DIE THEY'LL PLANT ME IN THAT CHURCH CEMETARY  
OVERLOOKING THE MCALISTER FARM  
IT'S THE CLOSEST THING TO HEAVEN  
ON THIS EARTH I'VE EVER SEEN  
THAT CREEK WINDING THROUGH SHIMMERING COTTONWOOD  
TREES  
AND A THOUSAND SHADES OF GREEN  
I'M NOT MUCH ON BIBLE POUNDERS  
I BELIEVE JESUS WAS A QUIET MAN  
AND FORGIVENESS AND LOVE WERE THE BIGGEST PART OF  
WHAT HE TRIED TO HELP US UNDERSTAND.**

**I BOUGHT THIS FILLING STATION  
IN 1964  
I STILL CLEAN YOUR WINDSHIELD  
AND I STILL CHECK YOUR OIL  
AND AT THE END OF THE DAY WHEN MY WORK IS DONE  
I DRIVE TO MY HOUSE JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN  
I SIT ON THE BACK PORCH WITH THE LOVE OF MY LIFE  
AND WATCH A SMALL TOWN SUN GO DOWN.**

The next day J.D. wakes up to find that the kitchen sink has a bad leak which sends him to the "Windmill Feed-n-Seed" to buy plumbing supplies. When he walks in he is startled to find Becky working there, wearing a name badge and apron.

**J.D.**

*"Well hello again. What a sweet surprise. Can you tell me how to go about fixing a plumbing problem?"*

**BECKY**

*"That all depends on how serious your problem is."*

**J.D.**

*"It's a leaking kitchen sink drain."*

**BECKY**

*"Is it galvanized or PVC?"*

**J.D.**

*"I think it's just a regler sink."*

**BECKY**

*"What I mean is what kind of pipe is it?"*

**J.D.**

*"Just regler kitchen sink pipe."*

**BECKY**

*"Looks like I just might have to make a house call on this one."*

**J.D.**

*"That would suit me just fine. When can you come out?"*

**BECKY**

*"I'll stop by after work. Say around six o'clock. Would it be all right if I bring April?"*

**J.D.**

*"Absolutely."*

**BECKY**

*"Good. I'll see you then."*

As he is walking out, he notices a flyer posted on the wall with an aerial view showing that the future home of Smart Mart is on his Grandpa's farmland. Now he understands why his brother and sister want to sell out. The buyer is ready and waiting. J.D. looks down and rubs his neck.

That evening Becky pulls up the gravel drive in a classic open air Jeep with April strapped in riding shotgun.

**J.D. YELLS**

*"Howdy! Glad you made it."*

Becky speedily pulls up the jeep right in front of J.D. and hits the brakes, bringing a cloud of dust that covers him and makes him rub his eyes.

**J.D.**

*"You don't waste any time, do ya."*

**BECKY**

*"Carpe Diem"*

**J.D.**

*"How's that?"*

**BECKY**

*"Seize the day"*

Becky jumps out of the Jeep, grabs her tool bag from the back, and comes around to unbuckle April from the shoulder harness. They walk inside and head for the kitchen sink.

**BECKY**

*"I brought some dinner in the ice chest in the Jeep. Would you please bring it in while I get started? April needs to eat somethin' pretty soon."*

**J.D.**

*"You bet."*

As J.D. goes out to the Jeep, Becky lines out her tools on the floor, tells April she can play outside, and opens up the base cabinet to survey the damage. It appears to be a slow leak that has been leaking for quite a while, so there is noticeable rotting damage and mold on the hardwood floor. There is a mineral stained saucepan to catch the drip that looks like it's been there for years.

**BECKY**

*"Your Grandpa was a wonderful man and one of the best farmers I have ever known, but I guess he wasn't much of a plumber."*

**J.D.**

*"Can I take a look?"*

**BECKY**

*"Sure, climb on in."*

He takes off his feed store hat, squeezes in his head and shoulders and she points out the leak in the "p" trap. Just then he turns and kisses her on the cheek. She is startled.

**BECKY**

*"You don't waste any time, do ya."*



**J.D.**

*"Carpe Diem"*

She smiles. As they both try to get out at the same time, they get stuck. Becky kisses J.D. on the cheek. Then he collapses inside the cabinet and she backs out.

Becky gets a piece of galvanized pipe out of the jeep and a hacksaw, while J.D. starts pulling out dinner from the ice chest. It just happens to be chicken and dumplings. His favorite meal.

**J.D.**

*"I'm in Hillbilly Heaven."*

**BECKY**

*"What do you mean?"*

**J.D.**

*"Chicken and Dumplings is my all time favorite meal. Plus the fact that I have a beautiful lady plumber to fix all my problems."*

**BECKY**

*"All your problems?"*

**J.D.**

*"Could be"*

**BECKY**

*"What about her problems?"*

**J.D.**

*"All she has to do is tell me what needs fixin'."*

After dinner on the kitchen table, with Becky and J.D. drinking longneck beers, and J.D. doing his best to clown around and get April laughing, they jump in Becky's Jeep and drive across the fallow fields talking about how he'd like to stay and put down roots, but has no idea about how to farm, and might be better off selling out, taking the money and putting it into his fledgling songwriting career. They wind up sitting on a hilltop called "Inspiration Rock", where the sunset inspires Becky to tell him about being raised on a horse and cattle ranch and that he could turn the farm into a ranch. Maybe Longhorns, a hearty Texas breed, whose meat is prized for its health benefits. He looks down and rubs the back of his neck.

**J.D.**

*"Yeah, maybe. I don't know."*

Becky lets April sit on her lap and steer the Jeep as they drive back to the farmhouse, where J.D. and Becky part with a warm and lingering handshake, since April is watching.

The next day J.D. walks into the "Lone Star Bar", hoping to find Jimmy and talk with him about what it takes to start a ranch. Jimmy directs his attention to Jake, a middle aged Cowhand sitting at the bar.

### ***"Hired Hands"***

**THE OLD COWBOY SAT ON A BARSTOOL  
DRINKING A COLD LONE STAR  
CNN WAS ON IN THE CORNER  
OF THAT SMALL TOWN TEXAS BAR  
I SAT DOWN AND SAID "HOWDY  
IT'S SURE BEEN A HOT ONE TODAY"  
HE SAID, "I KNOW I'VE BEEN OUT IN IT  
ON THE BACK OF A DAPPLE GRAY."**

**HE WORE A FADED WORKSHIRT  
SOAKED WITH A WORKINGMAN' SWEAT  
HIS HANDS WERE HARD BUT HIS FINGERS WERE NIMBLE  
ROLLING A CIGARRETTE  
HIS NECK WAS RED AND WRINKLED  
WITH DIAMONDS I'D ONCE HEARD  
ARE THE MARK OF A MAN WHO'S LIVED A GOOD LIFE  
SO WHEN HE SPOKE I CAUGHT EVERY WORD**

**HE SAID, "I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ONE TO SPEND MY DAYS IN THE  
SUN  
WORKING FOR THE BRAND.  
IT'S A HARD LIFE BUT IT'S THE ONE I CHOSE  
SO I COULD BE A FREE MAN  
I LIKE RIDING OUT IN GOD'S OPEN COUNTRY  
I LIKE LIVING ON THE LAND  
DOING A GOOD DAY'S WORK FOR A GOOD DAY'S PAY  
USING THESE HIRED HANDS"**

**HE SAID, "THESE HIRED HANDS BUILT A RANCH  
WITH STONE AND STEEL AND WOOD  
THESE HIRED HANDS MAKE THINGS RIGHT  
AND MAKE A PROMISE GOOD.  
THEY STILL COOK ON CAMPFIRES  
THEY STILL DRINK FROM STREAMS  
THEY'RE STILL MAKING MY LIVING  
I'M STILL LIVING MY DREAM**

**AND I'LL ALWAYS BE ONE TO SPEND MY DAYS IN THE SUN  
WORKING FOR THE BRAND.  
IT'S A HARD LIFE BUT IT'S THE ONE I CHOOSE  
SO I CAN BE A FREE MAN  
I'LL BE RIDING OUT IN GOD'S OPEN COUNTRY  
IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS MASTER PLAN  
DOING A GOOD DAY'S WORK FOR A GOOD DAY'S PAY  
USING THESE HIRED HANDS"**

J.D. asks Jake how you go about starting a ranch, and he offers him all the help he'll need, including being his hired hand. J.D. feels settled on his plan to stay but doesn't know how to come up with the money to buy out his siblings and have seed money for a longhorn ranch.

The next morning, J.D. goes to the bank to get a loan on the farm, and is sent by the cashier over to the cubicle where he is

greeted by his maternal grandfather, Charles Rankin, an overweight, leather-vested character, wearing several gold rings, and is the one who raised his brother and sister, spawning a history of confrontations with J.D.

He bluntly tells J.D. that even though the property probably qualifies for a loan, due to the inflated value of the land that Smart Mart is offering, he can't lend him anything, as the farm is facing foreclosure, the farm is not being worked, J.D. has no collateral, and he is a high risk since he has a bad credit rating and knows nothing about farming.

J.D. tries to explain that he wants to sell off the farm implements and start a Longhorn ranch, but Charles just laughs.

Some harsh words are exchanged and J.D. kicks the trashcan across the cubicle on his way out.

That afternoon at the feed n seed, J.D. asks Becky out to the Saturday Night dance at the VFW hall. When she accepts, he is elated, washes the Chevy inside and out, and drives to the downtown barber shop for a straight razor shave and boot shine.

Saturday night, when she opens her door, Becky looks provocative, in a pearl snap cowgirl shirt, lace-trimmed denim skirt, and studded cowboy boots, and after goodbyes to April and the babysitter, they are on their first date.

When they walk into the dancehall, he immediately remembers being a kid at the dances grandma and grandpa took him to. There were several rites of passage associated with those times at this place, including his first cigarette, his first taste of whiskey, and his first kiss.

He recognizes some of the boys in the band, who he played and sang with in his teenage years. When they take their first break and the hall is nearly full, they invite him to do a song to open their next set.

## **"It's a Texas Thang"**

**WE WAVE "HOWDY" TO STRANGERS  
TIP OUR HATS AND SAY, "YES MAAM"  
WE TRY TO BE EXTRA NEIGHBORLY  
EVERY CHANCE WE CAN  
SO I'LL SHARE THE WEALTH AND BEAUTY  
THAT YOU MAY PARTAKE  
OF THE MAY WONDERMENTS  
HERE IN THE LONE STAR STATE**

**NOW WHEN GOD BLESSED TEXAS  
HE GAVE US A CLEAR BLUE SKY  
WITH CLOUDS JUST MADE FOR DAYDREAMING  
SLOWLY FLOATING BY  
HE LIT OUR NIGHTS WITH STARS BIG AND BRIGHT  
JUST MADE FOR WISHIN' ON  
IT'S A STATE OF MIND THAT YOU CAN'T FIND  
'TIL YOU GO TO OLD SAN ANTONE**

**'CAUSE IT'S A TEXAS THANG  
I WANT Y'ALL TO KNOW  
WHAT IT'S LIKE LIVIN' IN PARADISE  
AND HOW WE COME BY OUR BRAGGIN' RIGHTS  
IT'S A TEXAS THANG'  
IT'S AS GOOD AS IT GETS  
EVER WONDER WHY  
YOU AIN'T A TEXAN YET?**

**WE'VE GOT OUR OWN DOWNHOME COOKIN'  
GOT YOUR GREAT STEAKS CHICKEN FRIED  
A TEX-MEX PLATE THAT'LL SET YOU STRAIGHT  
WITH THAT BLUE BELL ON THE SIDE  
AND WE'VE GOT OUR OWN BRAND OF MUSIC  
MADE FOR HOLDIN' YOUR BABY TIGHT  
IN AN OLD-TIME SAWDUST DANCEHALL  
BATHED IN LUCKENBACH MOONLIGHT**

**WELL IT'S A WHOLE 'NOTHER COUNTRY  
ONE THING I NEVER DID GET CLEAR  
WHY DID WE JOIN THE UNION?  
WE GOT ALL'S WE NEED RIGHT 'CHERE**

**YEA IT'S A TEXAS THANG  
I COULD GO ON AND ON  
ABOUT THEM PAINTED SUNSETS ON THE PANHANDLE PLAINS**

**AND THAT SWEET HILL COUNTRY RAIN  
THE WIND IN BIG THICKET TREES  
AND PADRE ISLAND IN A GULF COAST BREEZE  
IT'S NEW LUCCHESSES AND OLD STRAW HATS  
IT'S KING RANCH PICKUPS AND OLD CADILLACS  
IT'S A COWGIRL ON A CUTTIN' HORSE  
IN A FIELD OF BLUEBONNETS AND O'COURSE  
LONGHORNS AND JACKALOPES  
MAN EVERYTHING'S BIGGER  
ONCE YOU GO YOU'LL KNOW**

**IT'S A TEXAS THANG  
THEN I'LL BE WILLIN' TO BET  
YOU'LL WONDER WHY YOU AINT A TEXAN YET**

When the song ends with “The Eyes of Texas” as a tag, the audience cheers and whistles. J.D. steps off stage a bit proud as he takes Becky’s hand to dance a waltz to the next song coming from the band.

**J.D. TO BECKY**

*“About all I can do is Waltz, and do a clumsy two-step.”*

**BECKY**

*“Don’t worry about it. Just follow my lead.”*

**J.D.**

*“I think I’d like that just fine. I’ll follow your lead, in all ways.”*

As the night progresses, they sit in a booth across from one another, drinking longnecks and sharing the stories of their lives. They obviously like one another, and with each dance she holds him a little bit closer while she leads.

When he pulls up to her house, before she gets out of the car, she leans over and kisses him, not wanting April to see.

J.D.

*"Like I said, 'I'll follow your lead, in all ways'"*

The next night, people are packing into the high school gym grabbing seats in folding chairs in preparation for the Smart Mart presentation for development permits to the town council, which consists of two women, one of whom is his Aunt Sally, and four men, one of whom is banker Rankin. The Mayor who presides over the meeting, and can also vote in the proceedings, is an easy going cowboy hatted character who wants to keep the peace in his feuding little town.

There is a long standing conflict that has plagued Windmill since it was first settled in the 1850's. The small but formidable Cypress Springs River divides the town into Northern and Southern settlements, the Northern side having been settled by the Thompson clan, and the Southern by the Ferguson's.

Hatley Thompson was a disenchanted moonshiner, who set out from Kentucky for the California gold rush of 1849, only to find that after a series of attempts to get rich quick from either trying to find gold or selling goods at inflated prices to boomers, he was not able to do either profitably. So he set out for the new State of Texas. When he arrived, he discovered after talking with the indigenous Indians, there was a strange hill where the Buffalo licked the ground. When they took him to the spot he could see it was a salt dome that could be easily mined just north of the river.

At the same time, Jacob Ferguson, a native Texan, whose Father had come from Tennessee to fight in the Texas Revolution, began to farm his fathers war bounty, which amounted to three sections of prime rolling Hill Country farmland, including one of the highest points in the area, which he named "Inspiration Rock," where the wind blows constantly.

The feud began when the two men, who had well established enterprises, one farming and one mining, decided it was time to build a courthouse, and name Windmill as the county seat. Thompson wanted to build it on the North side of the River and Ferguson on the South side. Since there was no bridge, and any traffic had to ford the river, which could be difficult during the rainy season, the location of the courthouse was crucial for fostering future development.

On the south side of the river there was an East-West road that was beginning to be used by the stagecoach line, and a new way station was being built, which fostered a small café, and a small Inn for travelers staying overnight. This plus the fact that Ferguson used windmills to create a sawmill, shaping the lumber he cleared off his land for the courthouse framing, began to tip the scales toward building the courthouse on the South side, which they did. So the feud was on, and the South side was settled by farmers and blue collar workers, while the North side was settled by investors, big ranchers and bankers.

Now, at the town council meeting, both sides argue, the Northerners wanting the progress and tax revenue Smart Mart will generate, while the Southern folks know their small stores and businesses and their small town heritage and character is at risk of being lost forever. The climax of the meeting comes when a representative from Smart Mart speaks, and is rebutted by an old farmer.

### **REPRESENTATIVE**

*"I don't think you folks realize how building this store will save you money, not only with the low prices, but also saving you the gas to drive to the nearest Smart Mart, 40 miles from here. You are living in the middle of nowhere, and this store would make life so much more convenient".*



## OLD FARMER

*"Mister, what you are calling "the middle of nowhere" happens to be the "center of everywhere" for the folks that live here. I don't know that there are all that many things that your store has that we can't find here, but if I need it bad enough I'll drive the distance to get it. When it comes to price, I'd just as soon pay a little more for somethin' here at a friend's Mom and Pop store, because I know whose pocket my money is goin' into, and it might come back around sometime to pay me for my goods and services. And sometimes when one of us doesn't have the almighty dollar, we use somethin' called barter, or an IOU. You might remember that that's how this country got started. We all need somethin' someone else has. Sometimes its goods and services, sometimes its shelter from the storm. We all need each other to survive. We're like a jigsaw puzzle, and if you take out one piece, the whole thing falls apart".*

He gets a standing ovation from about half the audience, whistling and shouting in approval.

After a long and heated debate from the townsfolk that winds up in a shouting match, the meeting disintegrates.

As they are pulling out of the parking lot a truckload of kids from the North end of town tailgates, honks, and passes too close, a carload of Southern kids running them off the road into a bar ditch, putting one of the passengers, a ten year old girl, into the hospital in a coma. The whole town is in a state of shock, knowing the reason for the incident is the feud between the north and south factions. The little girl, Christie Chambers, needs an emergency blood transfusion, and the only blood type in that small town that matches hers is from the driver that is responsible for running the truck she was in off the

road. The teenage boy is sorry and scared and gladly agrees to donate his blood, feeling remorse for what he has done to her.

A prayer vigil is started at the Church, and people from both sides of the river come together for Christie's sake.

The next day, J.D. decides to sell off the farm implements and tools, which were willed to him alone, and walks through the barn, taking inventory of the equipment. He also washes the Allis Chalmers antique tractor, which Becky puts up for sale on the internet. He moves the tractor and Jeep, mowers and cultivators out to the highway frontage, puts up an "Estate Sale" sign and fills the yard with tables displaying farm tools. The next morning J.D. greets the local family farmers, some of whom buy items they need, some just wanting to help out the family, and some wanting a souvenir to remember his Grandpa by.

As they talk, he can tell they are divided about wanting the Smart Mart, as they are on hard times, with the four year drought, the economy bringing down market grain prices, and the price of gas and diesel nearly doubling. They could use a cheap local place to shop. And they could use the added tax revenue and job opportunities to help support struggling farmers. More that one of the overalled farmers and their wives asks J.D. if he's planning to sell the farm. He tells them all, "Not unless I have no other choice."

During the sale, J.D. gets to remeet some of the folks he grew up with. Colorful, tenacious, salt of the earth characters. Becky and April are there helping him, and when the sale is over, they have not made the money they had hoped for, so J.D., Becky and April all take a drive in her Jeep to "Inspiration Rock." As they sit in silence, a blue butterfly lands on J.D.'s shoulder that remarkably resembles the one that landed on his shoulder at his Grandpa's graveside.

## APRIL

*"You know my Sunday School teacher told us at Easter time that the butterfly is like Jesus."*

**BECKY**

*"What do you mean sweetie?"*

**APRIL**

*"Well, she said that when Jesus was in the tomb for three days and came back to life, that it was like the way a caterpillar goes into a cocoon and then comes back to life as a beautiful butterfly."*

**J.D.**

*"That's right Dumplin'. You know, I never thought about butterflies like that".*

**BECKY**

*"Out of the mouths of babes."*

As they sit in silence, the wind dies down while the sun sets, then it picks back up, but the butterfly remains on his shoulder, clinging despite the force of the wind, blowing its wings almost flat against his shirt.

**J.D.**

*'You know, this hilltop is one of the windiest places I have ever been. I remember as a kid, that the only time the wind ever stopped was just long enough for the sun to set behind those hills'.*

**BECKY**

*"Too bad you can't use the wind to farm with."*

**J.D.**

*"Yeah."*

As the wind picks back up, J.D. looks down as he rubs his neck, then looks at the butterfly clinging onto his shoulder and has an epiphany.

**J.D.**

*"Maybe you **can** farm with the wind. I've heard they're paying folks good money to let them put windmills up on their place. And all you need is a hilltop or two".*

**BECKY**

*"That's a great idea!"*

They jump into the Jeep and bounce back to the farmhouse, where they listen to a message on Becky's cell phone, informing them that Christie has come out of the coma and is recovering with no brain damage. Through her ordeal some of the town folks have set aside their North-South differences, realizing they are a community, and that is what really matters. And if they begin to let commercial interests into their town they will be selling out their futures and their children's futures.

Within weeks, J.D. has met on "Inspiration Rock" with the windmill energy company reps, and is given enough money to buy out his siblings, when he signs a lease for wind generators to be erected. Then, to ice the cake the Allis Chalmers brings in a huge price from a collector on the internet, so J.D. is able to pay the overdue mortgage payments.

Still he needs seed money to buy the longhorn cattle, horses, and equipment for the ranch.

He tells Jake about his money problem, and that he'd like to take him up on his offer to be the ranch foreman, but he can't make it happen just now. Then Jake says the only way he would take on the job is if he could buy a few acres of his own with the money he has

saved from 40 years of day work, to start his own brand and build the cabin of his dreams, since he has lived all his life in someone else's bunkhouse. This is the perfect win win situation.

When the word gets around about J.D.'s windmill income, the other farmers are approached and many decide to partner with the windmill company, which gets them out of their dire financial straits and allows them to keep farming.

J.D. makes the call to the Smart Mart rep letting him know that his land is not for sale, and the town council votes four to three to deny the store any permits.

Becky and J.D. decide to get married at the farm on "Inspiration Rock."

At the wedding, J.D. sings as they overlook the Sunset on the hills beyond.

### ***"Give me my Flowers while I'm Living"***

**GIVE ME MY FLOWERS WHILE I'M LIVING  
DON'T WAIT UNTIL AFTER I'M GONE  
AND I'LL STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES  
THAT YOU PICK AS WE WALK ALONG  
SIDE-BY-SIDE LET'S LOVE IN THE MOMENT  
KNOWING RIGHT HERE IS WHERE WE BELONG  
GIVE ME MY FLOWERS WHILE I'M LIVING  
DON'T WAIT UNTIL AFTER I'M GONE**

**WALTZ WITH ME LIKE A BAND IS PLAYING  
OUR SWEET OLD MELODY  
AND I'LL TRY IN MY OWN WAY  
TO SWEEP YOU OFF OF YOUR FEET  
THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT  
FOR TWO STEPPERS LIKE YOU AND ME  
WALTZ WITH ME LIKE A BAND IS PLAYING  
OUR SWEET OLD MELODY**

**LET'S FILL EVERY MINUTE WITH LIVING  
LET'S LOVE THE HOURS AWAY  
LET'S FILL OUR LIVES UP WITH GIVING  
OUR ROMANCE A CHANCE EVERY DAY**

**KISS ME LIKE IT'S NOW OR NEVER  
COME PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME  
BABE IT JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER  
WHEN YOU GAZE IN MY EYES I CAN SEE  
TODAY JUST MAY LIVE FOREVER  
AS ONE FINE MEMORY  
SO KISS ME LIKE IT'S NOW OR NEVER  
COME PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME**

**TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE  
SIEZE THE DAY COUNT THE BLESSINGS FIND THE BLISS  
EVERY DAY IS A PRESENT  
UNFOLDING LIKE A ROSE LIKE A WALTZ LIKE A KISS**

**SO GIVE ME MY FLOWERS WHILE I'M LIVING  
DON'T WAIT UNTIL AFTER I'M GONE  
AND I'LL STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES  
YOU PICK AS WE WALK ALONG**

J.D. moves grandma back to her farmhouse. One night he is singing to April in his old bed, while Grandma is listening and smiling, back in her and Grandpa's old bedroom.

### ***"April's Lullaby"***

**MAY YOU ALWAYS SHOW THE WAY  
LIVE BY THE GOLDEN RULE  
AND BE KIND TO OTHERS  
WHO ARE NOT KIND TO YOU  
MAY YOU LIVE WITH NO REGRETS  
AND NEVER MISS A CHANCE  
TO TELL SOMEONE YOU LOVE THEM  
OR ASK SOMEONE TO DANCE**

**MAY YOU GROW UP STRAIGHT AND STRONG  
LIKE A COTTONWOOD TREE  
AND SHINE LIKE A WILDFLOWER  
FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE**

**FEEL THE FREEDOM OF THE WIND  
AND THE WARMTH OF A HOME  
HAVE THE LAUGHTER OF A BEST FRIEND  
AND SACRED TIME ALONE**

**AND NOW YOUR DREAMS ARE WAITING  
SAY YOUR PRAYERS AND CLOSE YOUR EYES  
MAY YOU ONE DAY SEE THEM ALL COME TRUE  
AND ALWAYS KNOW THE WORLD'S A BETTER PLACE  
BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE  
AND THAT THE BEST PART OF ME IS YOU**

**MAY YOU KNOW THE OLD MAN IN THE MOON  
AND WISH UPON THE STARS  
MAY YOUR EYES BE FILLED WITH WONDER  
FROM FIREFLIES IN A JAR  
MAY YOU HEAR THE RED TAIL CRY  
AND HEAR THE WHITE WING SING  
AND KNOW THERE'S A REASON  
WHY WE'RE BLESSED WITH ALL THESE THINGS**

**MAY YOU ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR HEART  
WHEN IT'S TIME TO MAKE A CHOICE  
AND WHEN YOUR PLANS ALL FALL APART  
HEAR HIS STILL SMALL VOICE  
THAT SAYS KEEP BELIEVING  
LOVE WILL FIND A WAY  
AND THAT THE DARKEST NIGHT  
WILL FIND THE LIGHT OF DAY**

Three years later. It's Christmas. There are longhorns grazing under the windmills. Jake is stirring an old cast iron kettle hung in the huge arched stone fireplace in his cabin, with a garland draped on the mantle. April is six years old climbing up on her first horse, that she got for Christmas, with a big red bow on the saddle. Grandma is playing solitaire in the kitchen. Becky is pregnant and pulling sugar cookies out of the oven, wearing grandma's old apron. And J.D. is watching old westerns in grandpa's lazy boy, wearing grandpa's vest.

(The Beginning)





# GEORGE ENSLE

George Ensle (pronounced Enslee) is a veteran Texas Singer/Songwriter who began his career in Houston in the 60's sharing stages with legends Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark and Billy Joe Shaver.

He has been called a "Songpainter", penning his own brand of Country Folk Storysongs, powerfully crafted and delivered with his intricate fingerpicking style on his 41 year old Martin D-35.

He has won numerous songwriting awards, been awarded Government grants to teach songwriting, been nominated Singer-Songwriter of the year by the Academy of Texas Music, had his songs recorded by many other Artists, and released albums and CDs in the US and Europe, including a new Movie-in-Song CD, entitled "Small Town Sundown", based on this original story, set in small town Texas.

In addition to his usual shows, George is currently performing a one man show of the "Small Town Sundown" story, set in a Café, using Cowboy Poetry along with the songs.

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