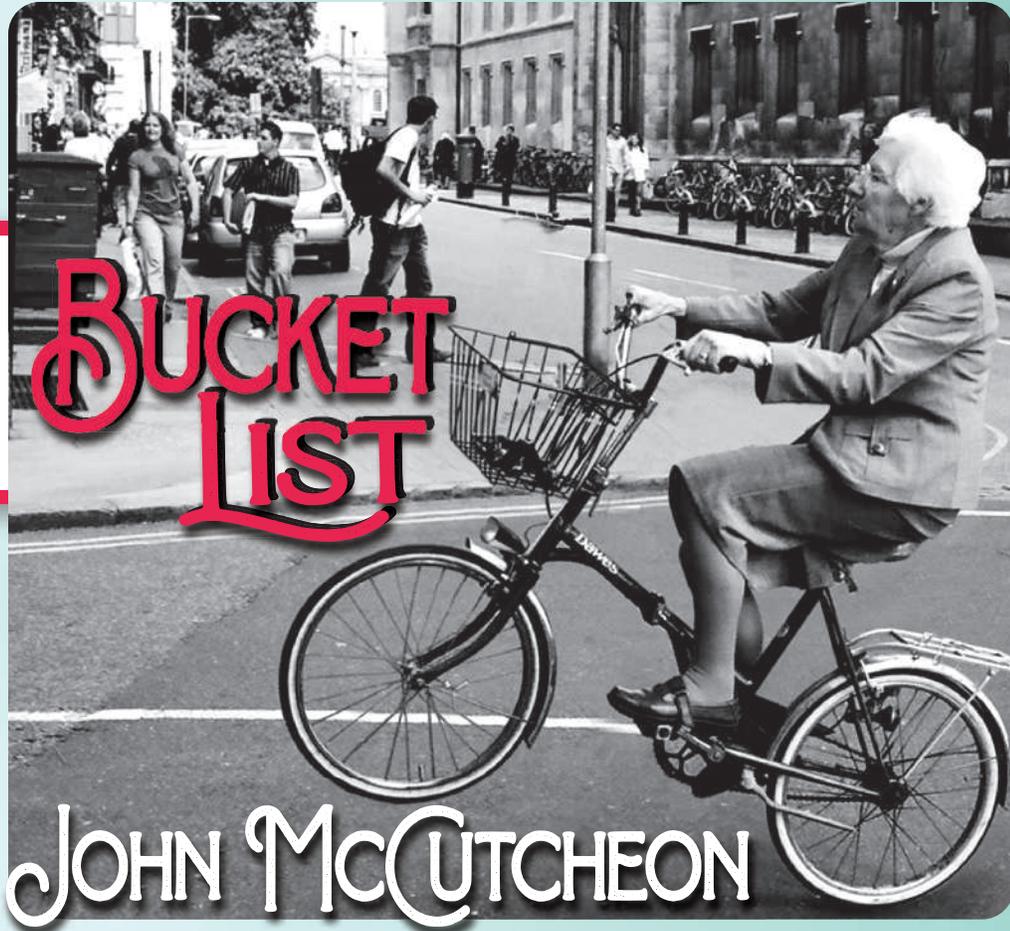


# LYRIC BOOK



# BUCKET LIST

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano, organ, percussion, & vocals

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

## For my wife, Carmen.

In my younger days I compiled a laundry list  
All the mighty dreams and daring deeds  
My heart could not resist  
The places I must visit  
The feats that must be done  
A bucket list to check off one by one  
A bucket list

Stonehenge at the solstice  
Grand Canyon's rim at dawn  
The Opera House in Sydney  
With the New Year coming on  
Tierra del Fuego  
With the salt sea in my face  
The aurora in Alaska  
Where you feel the press of space

A festival in Senegal  
With the kora in the air  
December in Michoacan  
And monarchs everywhere  
The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral  
The hush of vesper song  
Dusk at Machu Pichu  
When every soul is gone

Early morning on the Bitterroot  
A rainbow on my line  
The ancient plains of Tuva  
Their throat-singing lost in time  
A campfire at Clifftop  
Fiddle music through the night  
The Wailing Wall, Jerusalem  
In early evening's light

To sit with honored elders  
And hear their tales and songs  
To find a place of peace at least  
I know that I belong  
Of everywhere I've ventured  
Wherever I did roam  
I never found a place  
As sweet as home

So, turn the bucket over  
I am done  
I have traveled this earth over  
And I've had a world of fun  
The wonders I have witnessed  
All the victories I've won  
Of all life's great adventures  
You're the one  
Of all life's great adventures  
You're the one  
So, turn the bucket over  
I am done

August 29, 2020  
Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon  
Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON



BUCKET LIST

# BE STILL

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano, organ, & vocals

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

**Written for my lifelong friend, Rich Berquist, and my "spirit pal," Carrie Newcomer.**

Midst the roiling of the world all around you

Be still

When everything conspires to confound you

Be still

When they offer one more lie

And you know you've had your fill

Be still

When you realize the fools will go to any length

Be still

And you need to find a way to gather up your strength

Be still

They don't understand true power

And you know they never will

Be still

When you feel your heart despairing

And you don't know where to turn

When you're looking for your bearing

As the waves upheave and churn

Nothing is more daring

Than the willingness to learn

Be still

Be still

Thomas Merton and the Buddha came before you

Be still

Offering examples to explore you

Be still

Emptiness to overflowing

If you only will

Be still

It is defense against the madness

That roars on every side

Relief against the sadness

That rolls in like a tide

If you seek a gladness

(That is) A sure and steady guide

Be still

Be still

If you need to rally the power of your force

Be still

You first must seek the center of your source

Be still

At the fringes of the fight

It might work against your will

Accepting that the battle

Will forever be uphill

It takes belief and patience

To muster all your skill

Be still

Be still

October 12, 2020

Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# It's Not

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano & Rhodes

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

*A small tribute to some of my many mentors and seminal moments. The names in the song are*

*Musicalia: annual old time music campout on the Maury River near Charlottesville, VA, held every year on "the third rainy weekend in May."*

*Roscoe: Roscoe Holcomb of Daisy, KY. Banjo player and ethereal singer.*

*Nimrod: Nimrod Workman of Chattaroy, WV. A primary mentor, singer, storyteller, union man, wild man.*

*Janette: Janette Carter of Hilton, VA. Daughter of AP and Sara Carter of the Carter Family. Amazing woman, musician, second mother.*

*I.D.: I.D. Stamper of Ison, KY. Wonderful old friend and the most amazing mountain dulcimer player I've ever heard.*

*Sunset Gap: community center in east Tennessee where I played fiddle for the monthly dance.*

*Van Arsdale: Paul Van Arsdale of North Tonawanda, NY. Dear friend and my hammer dulcimer "Yoda"*

*Brookside Mine: site of the famous Brookside Strike of 1973-74. I played on the picket lines many times, met Si Kahn on Thanksgiving Day 1973.*

*P9: Local P9, meatpackers union in Austin, MN. They struck in 1985-86. Some of the finest people I ever met.*

*Lefty's was the pro-union bar in town where we'd repair after events at the union hall.*

*Singing at the church house: site of many a shape-note singing, courtesy of the Knox County Old Harp Singers.*

*Dinner on the grounds: see above "singing at the church house"*

It's not the way the mountain laurel  
Blossoms here in June  
It's not the way the song is sweeter  
'Neath the Musicalia moon  
It's not the rain upon a tin roof  
(The) smell of biscuits in the morn  
Home is more than just where you were born

It's not the memory of Roscoe  
Singing old hymns in my car  
Or the stories Nimrod wove  
As we rose the morning star  
Not the sweet voice of Janette  
Thick as honey on the vine  
That makes me take account this life of mine

## Chorus

It's each and all  
That I recall  
And hold here in my heart  
What they'd share  
Was rich and rare  
I knew it from the start  
All these women  
All these men  
I'm older now than they were then  
But every day they live again  
If I but do my part

It's not the deep drone of the dulcimer  
That comes from I.D.'s lap  
Not the sugar on the dance floor  
Every month at Sunset Gap  
Or the joy there on Van Arsdale's face  
The last dog at the jam  
That makes me understand just who I am

It's not Thanksgiving with the men and women  
At the Brookside mine  
Or the cold beer down at Lefty's  
With the heroes of P9  
It not the singing at the church house  
The dinner on the grounds  
That recollect the wonders that I found **Chorus**

It's not the way the sunlight plays  
Here in the maple, in the pine  
That lingers in my memory  
And takes me back in time  
It's not a picture of the past  
Or the boy I used to be  
Just pieces of what made a man of me

It's not the way the mountain laurel  
Blossoms here in June  
It's not the way the song is sweeter  
'Neath the Musicalia moon  
It's not the rain upon a tin roof  
(The) smell of biscuits in the morn  
That tells me home is more than just where you were born  
Home is more than just where you were born  
Home

August 22, 2020

Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon

Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# FARMER

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano & Rhodes

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

He tucked the small seed in the dirt  
Stood up and wiped his brow  
Looked back on the short row  
As the light was fading now  
He'd labored in the hot sun  
As long as day allowed  
But now it's done  
With his hoe upon his shoulder  
He heads again for home  
Retracing the worn path  
Past the promises he's sown  
Surrounded by the future  
Never felt so all alone  
As anyone

He thinks back on the winter wheat  
As far as eye could see  
Born in to this Kansas dirt  
Where he was meant to be  
He never felt so captive  
He never felt so free  
Ain't no denying  
He worked those hungry acres  
As long he as he could  
He hoped the kids might love it  
But he knew they never would  
Now it's a backyard and a garden  
In a Winfield neighborhood  
But he's still trying

## Chorus

He'll be a farmer  
Till his dying day  
Can't think of himself  
In any other way  
On the far side of this bridge  
Between his first cry and the clay  
He stands thinking

Standing at the sink  
He scrubs the land's dregs down the drain  
Hoping there is some small part  
Of life that might remain  
Still he worries 'bout the market price  
He worries 'bout the rain  
Every day  
But he's got no regrets and he's not the kind to mourn  
Struggling at the stove  
He opens up a can of corn  
That was grown 5000 miles  
From the place where he was born  
And starts to pray    **Chorus**

He tucked the small seed in the dirt  
Stood up and wiped his brow  
Looked back on the short row  
As the light was fading now  
He'd labored in the hot sun  
As long as life allowed  
But now it's done

November 1, 2020

Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST





words & music by John McCutcheon  
John: guitar & vocal  
JT Brown: bass

**A sequel to "She Just Dances" from my album Ghost Light.**

Magic marker on the cookbooks  
Crayon on the wall  
A 30-inch reminder  
Of when she was just this tall  
Each day I find a new one  
In one place or another  
On the walnut chest of drawers  
From my mother's mother  
Didn't even try to blame it on her brother

Across five generations  
These two will finally meet  
No photograph, no story  
Could ever be so sweet  
One lovingly preserved  
A memory held so dear  
Then a mighty declaration  
"I am here!"

And I stubbornly refuse  
To remove a single one  
A kid and a Crayola  
It just had to be done  
As bold as a Picasso, as lovely as Monet  
Sure, it's messy, but I simply have to say  
I wouldn't have it any other way  
It's an urge as old as time  
It was right there from the start

Take the calm and ordered  
And muck it up with art  
The bison on the cave wall  
The David in the stone  
The song inside the silence  
The scrimshaw in the bone  
We wrestle with our angels  
Emerging with a prayer  
The scars from that battle then  
We litter everywhere  
We will leave it to the ages  
To decide what's false, what's true  
But what else is a human being to do  
Especially with a magic marker when you're only two?

September 15, 2020  
Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# ATONEMENT

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano & Rhodes

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

Tires crackle on the gravel  
As I pull up to the place  
Take a breath and step out  
To meet history face-to-face  
Stone chimney's all that's standing  
The rest has gone to ground  
Ain't been back here since the night  
I burned the damn thing down

Oh, I was young and stupid  
Sure and hard back then  
The only lens I looked through  
Was the color of my skin  
Everything they taught me  
Everything I heard  
Led me on a one-way track  
To what at last occurred

I didn't know no better  
I was jobless and unschooled  
Found a place to put my anger  
I was ready to be fooled  
Guided by my grievance  
Force-fed my demands  
They put hatred in my heart  
And a gun into my hands

Now, twenty-five years later  
I'm standing midst the truth  
Paying for the crimes  
That I committed in my youth  
Prison would not be enough  
To wash my sins away  
The ashes of my actions  
Surround me here today  
The gravel crackles one again  
A truck stops next to mine  
The face behind the wheel is etched  
By the patient hand of time  
I haven't seen him since that night  
I set his world aflame  
And ran his family from this place  
Didn't even know his name

I let him speak his peace  
'Cause I knew he had the right  
All we both had carried  
Since that hateful night  
The house he'd built with his own hands  
Gone without a thought  
It brought no satisfaction  
When he learned that I'd been caught

I know what I had taken  
Was more than just a home  
I've been struggling for years  
Finding some way to atone  
I hope that maybe something good  
Somehow had survived  
I finished just about the time  
The building crew arrived

September 22, 2020

Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon

Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON



BUCKET LIST

# OUT HERE

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: guitar

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle & mandolin

Out here you can see things coming  
Out here the air is clear  
Out here you've gotta know your neighbor  
And you lend a hand  
Seems everybody can out here

Out here the sky is endless  
Out here all the stars feel near  
Out here we know the pride of hard work  
And a little dirt and sweat  
Ain't killed nobody yet out here

Out here is where you fly over  
Out here is where you just pass through  
Stop for gas or beer  
It's the most that you might do out here

Out here we are not a destination  
Out here we've got no souvenirs  
Out here we are never breaking news  
And we like it just that way  
Living day to day out here

Out here it is a different country  
Out here it's a different year  
We still don't lock our doors  
Ain't got no need to fear out here

Out here it ain't a place, really  
Out here it's an atmosphere  
Out here it's that small town deep inside  
That we've wanted or have known  
Where you feel welcomed home out here

September 26, 2020

Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON



BUCKET LIST

# THE OTHER

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

I am the other  
I am the neighbor you don't know  
The quiet kid in high school  
Who sat in the last row  
The old woman with the pushcart  
The stranger on the bus  
The ones out at the edges  
Who are never one of us

I am the other  
I root for a different team  
I pray in a different language  
I wear clothes you've never seen  
I tune to different stations  
On TV and radio  
I hear things that you don't hear  
I know things you'll never know

I am the other  
Returning home from work at dawn  
I am the guy who drives a Prius  
With a Trump sign in my lawn  
I'm the one who sees the world  
A little different than you  
Still, I'll come if you're in trouble  
I mean, what you gonna do?

I am the other  
Waiting patiently in line  
Watching others cut in front of me  
And you think that's it's just fine  
I am detained at the border  
I am stopped by the police  
I am wondering when all  
This special treatment's gonna cease

I am the other  
Every day just getting by  
The one who got in Harvard  
And never wondered why  
I am Brooklyn in Topeka  
Harlan in LA  
I am seventh generation  
I have just arrived today

I am the other  
I am no great mystery  
If wonder is the watchword  
And compassion is the key  
When we sit down at the banquet  
This well no longer dry  
We'll bow our heads in thanks  
And eat our humble pie

October 10, 2020

Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON



BUCKET LIST

# GHOST TOWN

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: guitar

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

I walk these streets that all my life I have known  
This place that I have long thought as my own  
Shops and buildings I can clearly name  
But this morning nothing is the same

## Chorus

It is a ghost town  
Empty, dark, deserted  
Overnight  
Entirely converted  
All the ties that bind  
Lie frayed and tattered on the ground  
In this ghost town

In and of and by this place, the marrow of my bone  
The placid, sheltered harbor that has always drawn me home  
Now the lighthouse stands deserted, the fields are all picked clean  
Nothing is forgotten, but nothing is foreseen Chorus

## Bridge

He walked this place his whole life  
'Cept the years of World War II  
Now his ghost retraces  
What he used to do  
Born of this place, he loved this place  
Until his final breath  
Something died inside me  
At his death

A photo on the mantel, a space upon the form  
The answer to the question, "where were you born?"  
The house, the room, the bed that I remember well  
These days when I return, I sleep in a motel Chorus

October 1, 2020

Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheonAppalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON



BUCKET LIST

# USED TO

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: vocal

Jon Carroll: piano

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

I used to run a marathon  
Now I don't  
I used to take all sorts of chances  
Now I won't  
I used to work on my own  
car  
Until I couldn't  
I used to push my body hard  
Until it wouldn't

I used to worry all the time  
'Bout wasting time  
I used to worry  
If I wasn't next in line  
I used to wonder  
Why change was so damn slow  
I used to doubt  
Everything I used to know

## Chorus

Now I'm used to  
Taking time to get things right  
I'm used to  
Sitting on the porch most every night  
I'm used to  
Stopping much more often than I used to  
And being thankful for the things that I got used to

I used to think that  
Only outlaws broke the rules  
I used to think that  
Ignorance was cured in schools  
I used to think  
That hard work always saw reward  
I used to think  
That there was justice 'cross the board **Chorus**

## Bridge

I used to follow  
Every law down to the letter  
I used to think good would prevail  
Now I know better  
I used to think  
That we all made it on our own  
I used to think  
I would be better off alone

I used to think my life  
Was just around the bend  
I used to think about  
When all of this would end  
I used to feel the moment  
As it slipped away  
I used to wonder if there was a better way **Chorus**

October 25, 2020

Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# MOONSHINER

words & music by John McCutcheon  
John: banjo & vocal

*In the mid-1970's I was hired to be an artist-in-residence for a week at Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, KY. I spent a day in their oral history archive where I came upon an interview with a third-generation moonshiner who spoke eloquently about how to make 'shine, how it was used in his community, how that community and his trade changed with increasing outside influences. Recalling that interview many years later, I found this song lurking in the recollection.*

I am a moonshiner  
I learned it from my Pa  
How to make a good mash  
How to hide out from the law  
I'll go up some holler  
And I'll set up my still  
Sell you a gallon  
For a \$20 bill

Now, you can't rush good whiskey  
The mash it takes its time  
Ferment it and distill it  
With a good, clean copper line  
Now the foeshot, and the head and tail  
You've got to throw away  
The heart is what you're waiting on  
It's how you make your pay

Then the timber and coal men  
They came in from outside  
Show up at our play parties  
No manners they'd abide  
They'd get drunk and start fighting  
Not pay our elders any mind  
Pa served 'em up some foeshot  
And run 'em off plumb blind

But then the government came  
With the goddam government men  
Trying to change all the ways  
We'd been living up 'til then  
Had to add the sugar  
To hurry the mash  
Made the men all mean as hell  
Made the liquor turn to trash

So, I'll go up this mountain  
Where the whippoorwill does sings  
Draw me out some water  
From a pure and bubbling spring  
With corn and with the barley malt  
Make a mighty brew  
And pick on this here banjer  
Just like we used to do

September 21, 2020  
Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# PEEKABOO

words & music by John McCutcheon  
John: guitar & vocal  
Jon Carroll: piano and Wurlitzer piano  
JT Brown: bass  
Stuart Duncan: fiddle

I vaguely can remember  
When everything was new  
Sitting on my mother's lap  
Playing Peekaboo  
She'd pull my blanket to her face  
Completely disappear  
A confusing moment later  
Why, she's right here

What did I think? Where had she gone?  
She was the world I knew  
It all was back to normal then  
In just a breath or two  
And I'd laugh each time she'd reappear  
In pure relief and joy  
This simplest of games  
Played with her boy

## Chorus

I'm right here  
No, I'm gone again  
I'm right here  
Peekaboo  
Trusting that you will return again  
Peekaboo

I remember being 12 years old  
Lying in my bed  
I would pull the covers up  
Over my own head  
Believing, like my Mom's old game,  
That I would disappear  
In hopes I would go anywhere  
But here

## Chorus

These days with babies on my lap  
I play this ancient game  
I disappear and then return  
It's still the same  
Now thirty five long years are past  
Since her last game is through  
I long to see her face again  
Peekaboo! Chorus

After all the things I've learned  
All these many years I've yearned  
Trusting that you will return again  
Peekaboo

September 23, 2020  
Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# MEDICINE GAME

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: mandolin

Bill Miller: flute & chanting

*I grew up in Wisconsin seeing Native kids playing pickup games of lacrosse. It was fascinating... and brutal. My youngest son, Peter, fell in love with the game in middle school and turned into a fantastic high school and college club player, and I fell in love with the game all over again.*

*So, this story on NPR caught my ear...*

In '22, Alabama hosts the games  
World Lacrosse today released the names  
But among the eight teams there upon the list  
It was clear to all that one group had been missed

Haudenosaunee, Iroquois to the French  
The number 3 team in the world left on the bench  
World Lacrosse explained the situation  
To compete you must be a sovereign nation

They said, everything we understand conflicts  
For we are not one sovereign nation, we are six  
Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Tuscarora  
Long before your lands were in the mix

Eeowenta and Peacemaker brought to be  
Our Nations and the first democracy  
People of the Longhouse is our name  
It is we who were given Medicine Game

It's not the first time, nor will it be the last  
That we are so disconnected from our past  
All those lessons that we learned are long forgotten  
And leave us in a place so misbegotten

The team from Ireland knew just what to do  
"None of us would play this game, if not for you  
"A true champion must compete with all the best  
"Take our spot and take your place among the rest"

So, next year when the tournament comes 'round  
Eight teams will gather on Muscogee ground  
To play what's long been called Medicine Game  
And prove that they are worthy of the name

October 6, 2020  
Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# LE CHAMBON-SUR-LIGNON

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal    JT Brown: bass  
Jon Carroll: piano    Stuart Duncan: fiddle

**Le Chambon-sur-Lignon is a small village in southeastern France that has been a sanctuary for refugees for centuries. That kind of "culture of resistance" is a model and worthy of at least one song. Check out Pierre Sauvage's film "Weapons of the Spirit" <https://weaponsofthespirit.com/>**

Without thinking I stood up  
And said, "I'll take them"  
Like so many of my neighbors  
Had before  
I had no money, had to plan  
But I had room and I had land  
And I just could not do  
Nothing anymore

In Le Chambon-sur-Lignon  
It's what we do  
And for four hundred years  
It's been the same  
From the violence and fear  
We Huguenots came here  
Seeking refuge on this  
Isolated plain

The first came from  
The Spanish Civil War  
And when the Nazis and the Vichy  
Came to power  
Not a moment left to lose  
We took in France's Jews  
And hid them in  
Our nation's darkest hour

We took them in our homes  
And in our farms  
The children sat in classrooms  
Side by side  
Despite all the threats and danger  
No one was a stranger  
And for five years  
We resisted and defied

And when asked "why did you do it?"  
How can we answer  
Not so long ago  
We sought refuge too  
I guess it's easy to decide  
With the gospel as your guide  
To our history and our faith  
We must be true  
In Le Chambon-sur-Lignon  
It's what we do

September 19, 2020  
Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# THE SINS OF THE FATHER

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: vocal   Jon Carroll: piano

I was twelve-years-old  
When I saw the first small cracks  
The fissures in the fortress  
That had always been intact  
By sixteen my father  
Had completely lost his sway  
I could see him get more ignorant each day

In my whole life I was never smarter  
Than at age nineteen  
An entire year of freedom  
All the wonders I had seen  
Away from home and family  
The decisions were all mine  
And all of them were brilliant all the time

But at Christmas and Thanksgiving  
I was just a kid once more  
Stripped of all experience  
When I walked through that door  
I hated it, I loved it  
It was all I used to know  
And I couldn't wait 'til it was time to go

And I never once considered  
The example that I set  
How easy to be leaving  
How easy to forget  
How the eldest and the elder  
Had to battle tooth and claw  
'Til the Lion King in rags was all I saw

They say we soften as we age  
Now the father and the son  
Have forgiven one another  
For the damage each had done  
Somehow, he started to get smarter  
With every passing year  
'Til he was wise when my own sons did appear

All the sins of the father  
Are they passed down to the son?  
Do we spend a lifetime paying  
For the deeds that each have done?  
And we pray that we remember  
How to undo all we've known  
And that the sins of the father  
Are not our own  
No, the sins of the father  
Aren't our own

September 12, 2020  
Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# THE HINGE

words & music by John McCutcheon  
John: guitar & vocal

I reach for the handle and open the door  
The old hinge cries out in the dark  
Just like it has for the last year or more  
A protest, metallic and stark  
It's wakened the baby, the dog and the wife  
Mocking my lack of attention  
To tackle the countless, small tasks in my life  
I utter words too coarse to mention

I remember my grandfather back in his day  
The paper, the pipe, and the chair  
Up before dawn, 'cause that was his way  
Slowly descending the stair  
He'd enter the room and settle on down  
With sounds that were loud and uncouth  
Completely unconscious of all those around  
It was one of the joys of my youth

A veritable symphony right from his chair  
It was gastrointestinal jazz  
As he grunted and snorted with such savoir fair  
As no one before ever has  
My grandma weren't deaf, but I guess made the choice  
And acted like she didn't hear  
I suppose it's how aging gave bodies a voice  
It's a memory that I hold most dear

These days, as I don the mantel of age,  
I have my own offspring as well  
And I take a tip from my grandfather's page  
In hopes they'll have stories to tell  
I creak and I grunt and I snort and I fart  
Not trying to be impolite  
No, I'm leaving a legacy, doing my part  
A memory sure to delight

So, I go to the closet and I get out the can  
Stand at the hinge with relief in my hand  
And, for some reason, suddenly hear the old man  
I smile and step back away

November 5, 2020  
Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON



BUCKET LIST

# FINALLY

words & music by John McCutcheon

John: guitar & vocal

Jon Carroll: piano & accordion

JT Brown: bass

Stuart Duncan: fiddle

Today the weather finally turned  
It feels just right  
I'll have to wear a sweater  
Sitting out at night  
After months of humid heat  
Each year autumn is so sweet  
And these mountains in a month  
Will be a sight

There was a time I'd never noticed  
Nor have seen  
The hundred different, subtle  
Shades of green  
Or the changes in the air  
That I now see everywhere  
It's as though I never knew  
Where I had been

But I was young and so it's  
Really not surprisin'  
That my focus was  
Beyond the far horizon  
The answer to my dreams were clear:  
Had to get away from here  
I was certain and there was  
No compromisin'

## Bridge

But the world was brutal  
In the things she taught  
Denying all the fortune  
That I sought

She said, "Shut up and settle down  
"Take a breath and look around"  
Time was more forgiving  
Than I thought

After all these years  
I've come to be  
Suspicious of  
All forms of certainty  
And I've come to understand  
To make God laugh, say, "Here's my plan"  
There are forces here  
I cannot know or see

So, today the weather finally turned  
It feels just right  
I'll have to wear a sweater  
Sitting out at night  
After months of humid heat  
Each year autumn is so sweet  
And these mountains in a month  
Will be a sight  
Today the finally turned  
It just feels right

September 18, 2020

Ellijay, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon/Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST



# ZILPHIA'S PIANO

words & music by John McCutcheon

Zilphia Horton was the first cultural director of the Highlander Folk School (now known as the Highlander Center), 1935-1956. She was a fierce believer in the power of music to inspire and transform people, employing that belief in her work at Highlander and beyond. In 1947, a group of African American women from Charleston, SC, striking tobacco workers, brought a song they'd adapted from the hymn "I'll Be Alright Someday," and the song "We Shall Overcome" was born.

I first stumbled upon the Highlander Center in 1972, at the invitation of Guy Carawan, Zilphia's successor (along with his wife, Candie) as Cultural Directors. I returned to Highlander many times, inaugurating my Songwriting Camps there in 2013. Zilphia's piano played a central part in our Camps. In 2020 the many alumni of those Camps raised the money to restore and refurbish the piano. I oversaw its delivery back to Highlander 2020 and wrote this song for its installation.

For more about Zilphia, her amazing life and work, see Kim Ruehl's wonderful new biography, *A Singing Army: Zilphia Horton and the Highlander Folk School*.

Zilphia's piano  
Today we celebrate  
Built in Cincinnati  
Back in 1928  
It had to wait a while  
Until it found a home  
But the journey it would finally take  
It never could have known

From the tobacco fields of Charleston  
To the Cumberland Plateau  
The women brought their songs & stories  
All those years ago  
In 1947  
The battle was begun  
And Zilphia's piano  
First played "We Shall Overcome"

Now ninety-two years later  
Its voice renewed once more  
We gather all around her  
As we oft' have done before  
Still steadfast, we shall not be moved  
Yes, we shall overcome  
New voices and new songs will join  
In all the years to come

Zilphia's piano  
Finally did arrive  
In Monteagle, TN  
In 1935  
It found its voice was loud and true  
'Neath fingers sure and strong  
The hymns and anthems shook hearts and hills  
As we all sang along

**Bridge**  
She knew the courage locked inside  
The role that music played  
And a new world waiting to be born  
If we are not afraid

September 8-9, 2020  
New Market, TN & Smoke Rise, GA

©2020 John McCutcheon  
Appalsongs (ASCAP)

JOHN McCUTCHEON

BUCKET LIST

