

1. "Jalopy" was written as I was developing the book for an original ballad opera set in Thurmond, West Virginia at the end of Prohibition. In Meanest County, conflict is precipitated by the onslaught of modernization, a gestalt shift symbolized by the advent of the motor car, awkwardly sputtering over mountain passes cleared by mule hooves and wagon wheels. I find it interesting that people ask me what the word means. I suppose it's something of a regionalism. Its origins, however, seem to be uncertain, with "jalopy" showing up in etymologies as simply an Americanism of the 1920's meaning an old, dilapidated automobile. While the early motor cars were certainly brand new, they were delicate and took quite a beating on the primitive roadways of the early 20th century. In Appalachia, they would not have lasted long at all. Here the narrator is feeling upstaged by "that old junk heap" and unable to compete for her lover's attention.

2. "Motherlode" is an ode to rejection from a baffled heroine, cool before the Frigidaire, hot before the tamale, in before the crowd got there, pleading her case before God: There's something wrong with this picture, and it isn't ME!

3. Mining is a spooky profession and a big part of my heritage. Some of the history is so dark that I have to censor the stories as I tell them to my daughter as the cruelty suffered by miners and their families is often incomprehensible. Though I would never encourage anyone to pursue it as a livelihood and I believe, as most folks do now, that it's a dead-end technology, as long as there are miners, I will always respect them, fear for their safety, and feel tremendous empathy and compassion for them and those they love. Personally, I've never wanted to be a miner, but there's always been something admirable to me about women who do. Most of them do it for the money, of course. The narrator in this song, however, goes underground for another reason --- to save her husband from what has become a life-threatening addiction. The phenomenon of mining addiction is well documented. Not only do miners get addicted to the ever-present sense of danger, but there's also a biological high that recurs as a result of oxygen deprivation, with hallucination a common side-effect. Here the husband lives to see "them fairies dance again" and the wife vows to "come to you there, if I can't get you back from 'Way Down.'"

4. "Banjo Moon" was inspired by a Ricky Skaggs concert, during which the round-faced Jim Mills looked to me like the man in the moon as he played his 5-string banjo so beautifully. I had his notes in my head as I went to sleep that night which explains why this piece came to me over my 'dream radio.' I have great confidence in songs that come to me over this channel because they come straight from the Muse, unspoiled by intellect or ambition. It's only after I wake up that I realize what I've been listening to in my dream is an original piece of music.

5. At a film festival years ago, I saw a short in which a bartender says to a customer who's had enough already, "Alright Beethoven, that's your fifth," as he pours him one last drink. I thought that was such a clever line, though it's probably a common one in bartender vernacular. The "two rough and tumbleweeds" in this song are a dime a dozen on lower Broad in Nashville on any given Saturday night. What's heartbreaking here, however, is that Ludwig could have been a real contender as a pianist, much like his namesake, had his talent not been consumed by alcoholism.

6. I grew up in West Virginia during the '60s and while bluegrass and old-time string music are in my DNA, I was very enamored of pop radio as a young girl and no song so captured my imagination as "The Girl From Ipanema" by Astrud Gilberto. I would stand in front of the jukebox on the patio at the swimming pool where I LIVED during the summer months, staring down at her name and wondering what sort of exotic land Ipanema was. I thought it must be magical there because she sounded like a magical child telling the story of one of her tribe, who, whenever she walked by, elicited the unanimous response of "Ahhh" from her observers, as if they were spellbound. "Little Samba Queen" captures this moment in my life, one which marked the beginning of a lifelong fascination with Brazilian music, leading me to have bands with names like "The Girl from Ipanema Goes Hollywood" and the "Bossa Nova Babies" at different points in the

past.

7. "Dream of a Miner's Child" has long been a part of my repertoire but oddly enough didn't enter into it until I was living in L.A. in the '80s. There I went through a rather painful growth period during which I explored a variety of music genres, everything from world music to punk rock. At a retreat in the Joshua Tree desert hosted by novelist Michael Blake, with John Doe and Tony Gilkyson of X, and poet Doug Knot in attendance, I played this song as a litmus test. Their reaction made one thing very clear: This is what I should be singing. Within six months I moved to Nashville in order to be closer to home as I pursued songwriting in this new direction which, of course, was not new at all but one that took me back to the beginning --- my roots.

8. "A Ways to Go" is a prayer ever on my lips that simultaneously confirms my vision of arrival while documenting the trials and tribulations of the journey. Of course, the journey loops and loops and loops and I'm never quite there but always there --- a zen thing, I suppose. I hear my mother's warning to me, now as I think about it, to rest and enjoy the fruits of my labors, to allow myself some happiness. Ah, but the play's the thing, Ma; Baby Girl's in love with the struggle.

9. "Misty Juniper" was penned by my husband, Larry Jefferies, and Texan Doak Snead long before Larry and I dated and our daughter Juniper was ever thought about. We named her, in fact, after the Donovan song "Jennifer, Juniper," which we enjoyed singing during our courtship after discovering we were both Donovan fans. Larry already had a daughter named Jennifer, so when I learned I was pregnant we decided to name our child Juniper. It was much later that I discovered "Misty Juniper" in Larry's catalog and couldn't believe how perfectly it addresses the relationship we share with our budding woodland fairy.

10. "Elijah's Chariot" confirms that I still have 'some of that old-time religion in my soul.' I was steeped in the Old Testament stories and gospel quartets as a child. The spirit was really working through me in this one.

11. "The Hills Will Cradle Thee" stems from something I heard an Appalachian woman say about her feeling so at home in the mountains. 'It's like the hills just cradle you,' she said. I never intended for this song to have the plaintive, elegiac quality that it assumed as I was writing it, but sometimes songs have minds of their own.