

VISIONS

Songwriters

an anthology of original songs

with
Artists-in-Residence:
Allison Moorer & Dave Johnson

VISIONS at Selis Manor
Teachers & Writers Collaborative

Spring 2017

TEACHERS & WRITERS COLLABORATIVE (T&W) partners with New York City schools and community-based organizations to offer dynamic creative writing programs led by professional writers. Since 1967, T&W has worked with more than 750,000 K-12 students and more than 25,000 teachers at schools throughout New York City; published more than 80 books and a magazine (www.teachersandwritersmagazine.org) about creative writing education; and provided free resources for students, teachers, and writers on our website (www.twc.org).

T&W was pleased to partner with VISIONS at Selis Manor to present Storytelling: Song, a workshop series in which adults explored classic and contemporary songs and wrote their own songs in response.

**This residency was made possible by generous support
from Aroha Philanthropies.**

Introduction

Visions: Songwriters is an anthology of original songs from workshops held in the winter/spring of 2017 at VISIONS at Selis Manor, a nonprofit adapted learning environment and meeting place for visually impaired seniors in New York. The participants listened to and sang classic and contemporary songs from a variety of lyrical forms. We wrote original songs inspired by the listening selections. The workshop was led by Artists-in-Residence Allison Moorer and Dave Johnson.

The songwriters are grateful to Aroha Philanthropies for making this workshop possible. We would also like to send a special thanks to the entire staff at VISIONS, especially Ms. Lee, Ms. Lewy, Ms. DeShazo, and Mr. Thompson (for printing all our songs every week in Braille). And a special thanks to Peter Spagnuolo for recording all our sessions and our CD.

We enjoyed every minute! We hope you will enjoy our songs, read on!

Allison Moorer & Dave Johnson

THE SONGS

by

VISION Songwriters

Thursday

Miriam Martinez & Her Collaborators

Thursday

Things happened to me that day

I tried to go away

Driver had something bad to say

Thursday

He left me in the street

And I fell off my feet it wasn't so neat

He's such a creep didn't care about me

On Thursday

And I didn't even know

I cut my hands in the snow

Then my sister said to me

Don't worry

That driver will be sorry

Angry

I was so angry

He knew I couldn't see

He disregarded me

Thursday

I called up to complain

That driver should be ashamed for causing me pain

And one last thing I'll take the train

On Thursday, On Thursday, On Thursday, On Thursday,

Don't take access-a-ride on Thursday

Or Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, or Thursday, or

Friday, or any day

Don't take access-a-ride on Thursday

Oh, Sunshine
Debbie Haynes

Oh, sunshine, shine on my love
Who's dear to me
Shine on my love
Who's near to me
Bless him with the glow of your gentle kiss
Always this, always this.

Make his life shine
His love for me is mine
Always this will be
Blessed by god for eternity
Our everlasting love

Oh, sunshine, hear my plea
Always shine on my love, who's dear to me

To Andy

Debbie Zanca

Andy, you captured my heart and now I'm in love with you

And I realize that if we should part I don't know what I

would do

Oh, oh, I love you so

Oh, Andy, I never knew that you fell in love with me first

When you told me this, I felt something new it came like a

lightning burst

Oh, oh I love you so

Oh, Andy

when I first met you, you were so tough

But now you're so sweet and so kind

I know you must've had it pretty rough

But I think you've got a really, good find (in me)

Oh, Andy, just look at me now I'm totally devoted to you

Don't you ever leave because if you do you'll break my
heart in two

Oh, oh I love you so

Oh, Andy

Raindrop

Debbie Zanca

Little raindrop on my window pane

Tell me can you help me ease this pain

Broken-hearted is my middle name

Raindrop I will never be the same

Since he told me he no longer cared

I remembered everything we shared

Raindrop I don't know what I will do

Raindrop I'm so lonely and so blue

Bridge:

I know that you know what it's like

To never be alone

But now I see you're just like me

And here you have a home

Raindrop, raindrop please don't start to cry

Cause you'll start the tears down from my eyes

How am I to know just what to do

Raindrop, raindrop here I am with you

Rainbow

Elsie Mae Smith

Rainbow, your colors always find me

With your gentle mist beside me

Your beauty seems to care

Your magic prism leads me there

Oh, rainbow, how your shadow saves me

How your love is so free

Oh, my heart will show me

Red is the fire that burns

Yellow is the sunshine that churns

Green is the trees that grow

Blue is the night that glows

Purple is the violet rose

Orange is the sunset that goes

Indigo is the morning glory

Oh, rainbow, rainbow

How your shadow saves me

How your love is so free

Oh, rainbow, oh rainbow

Lady Living Long

Janet Seth

Brown sod awry

All my men are gone

Lady living long

Keep singing this song

Grandpa died September 4, 1982

He was sick, age ninety-two

I was eight months pregnant could not go

For a five hour flight my doctor said no

I got the word at work on Mother's Day 1993

My brother died from booze and pills how could it be

I was alone, platters turning normally

Images flicker I could barely see

Brown sod awry

All my men are gone

Lady living long

Keep singing this song

Another late-night telephone call

Ashok collapsed at work that's all

We picked up his brother, drove all night

Seven arrived at the hospital with morning light

Brown sod awry

All my men are gone

Lady living long

Keep singing this song

Two weeks before Ashok's birthday

Two weeks after our twenty-fifth anniversary

Fog bound brain taking care of details, all necessary

Funeral restaurant housing so weary

Dad died on Halloween of 2003

A month after Ashok was lost to me

Flew to Salt Lake City, drove on to Preston

Planning the funeral in chaos lovingly

Winter coming days grow short

An open grave brown sod awry

Leaves color and fall, soon snow will fly

Loneliness loss make my heart cry

Brown sod awry

All my men are gone

Lady living long

Keep singing this song

Rippling River

Janet Seth

River ripple and flow

Sing and whisper low

Rush violently downhill

Explore every valley's rill

Born in mountain summits up 8000 feet

Follow ancient path the snake you almost meet

That course was blocked, volcanic lava flows

Bear River turns south meanders slows

River ripple and flow

Sing and whisper low

Rush violently downhill

Explore every valley's rill

Eemptied into an inland sea Lake Bonneville

Great Salt Lake its living fossil

This river travels three hundred fifty miles

Practices all a river's wiles

The largest tributary of Great Salt Lake

The largest land locked river, I will take

The head is in Utah's Uintahs, goes to Wyoming

Passes into Idaho returns to Utah homing

River ripple and flow

Sing and whisper low

Rush violently downhill

Explore every valley's rill

Grandpa drove a wagon building Black Rock Dam

Onieda station makes electricity for man

River rises or falls on demands for power

Dams allow irrigation make the desert flower

Bear River ripples through time

Shapes land and people, it finds

River ripple and flow

Sing and whisper low

Sun and Stars

Keona Allen

Oh, sun, you give warmth when I'm feeling cold

For I am growing old

You twinkle brighter than any star

You're seen wherever you are

When night falls, children fill the sky

Which brings a gleam to everyone's eye

Sun, you are divine

Your heat is like fine wine

Set the Table Song

Kitty Gormley

for my little sister

When we set the table
For morning noon and night
The fork goes on the left-hand side
Spoon and knife goes on the right
What else do we need for the table
Yes, napkin, glass, and plate
Just put them in the proper place
Now our table looks great

Oh, where oh where does the napkin go
Under the fork is fine
Let's put the glass above the knife
Now we're ready to dine

Now we're ready to dine, dine, dine
Now we're ready to dine

Take Good Care of Yourself

Liz Hernandez

So long my love and take good care of yourself

Take good care of yourself

For this time our breakup is a sad situation

Someone else stole your love and tore us apart

Please don't start--enough is enough

Let's not have another confrontation

So, take good care of yourself--take good care of yourself

No more tears, no more words of who is right or wrong

My aching heart will be strong

Don't worry about me, I'll get along

So, take good care of yourself--take good care of yourself

Before I go away, I just have one thing to say

I hope tomorrow brings us better dreams by then

So long, my love--and take good care of yourself

Take good care of yourself

A Happiness Song

Lyda Schoenfeld

Some people think I wear my heart on my sleeve

Some people tell me I'm too naïve

But I'm just living by what I believe

I'm singing my happiness song

Happiness springs from deep down inside

Let it flow, it'll makes those old blues run and hide

It's a choice, a philosophy that can't be denied

I'm singing my happiness song

All that drama

Too much trauma will make you old and grey

Screaming, scheming, not enough of the right kind of
dreaming

It's better to live life the happy, right way

So, when the thunderclouds roll and the winds blow too
high

I raise my hopes to a sunnier sky

And then I lift up my heart inside my voice and I
Sing my happiness song

All that drama

Too much trauma will make you old and grey

Screaming, scheming, not enough of the right kind of
dreaming

It's better to live life the happy, right way

So, when the thunderclouds roll and the winds blow too
high

I raise my hopes to a sunnier sky

And then I lift up my heart inside my voice and I
Sing my happiness song

Go on and sing your happiness song

Come on, let's sing a happiness song

Old Oak Tree
Lyda Schoenfeld

I see you, old oak tree

Beautiful, strong, and free

I come to you so tired

But I'm safe in your shade, inspired

As the wind keeps your branches swaying

I hear the birds sing like they're praying

Your leaves clap their hands in a rustling dance

While I embrace your trunk in a joyful trance

Right here I'm rooted to the earth like you

And here you're meant to stay proud and true

Giving shelter, nourishment, comfort, and love

To all forms of life on earth and above

Majestic, you stand, large and tall

I cannot find the words at all

To tell you what I feel today

Sitting here with you this way

Right here I'm rooted to the earth like you

And here you're meant to stay proud and true

Giving shelter, nourishment, comfort, and love

To all forms of life on earth and above

Majestic, you stand, large and tall

I cannot find the words at all

To tell you what I feel today

Sitting here with you this way

Dear old oak tree

My old oak tree

The Sun and the Moon

Mary Conner

The sun and the moon both shine bright

The sun by day the moon by night

I love to feel the heated glow

And the light they give to the world below

Making beauty on all the earth

Glorious nature and its wonderful work

Flowers, grass, leaves, and trees

Streams, rivers, oceans, and seas

This is what makes our beautiful earth

For the time, we're on it

Makes your stay, well-worth

Life

Mary Conner

Life is a wonderful thing

Given to us, all the joy it brings

Love and happiness, it makes our heart sing

Oh, life is a beautiful thing

Life can also make you sad

Angry bitter stressed and mad

Don't hold onto sorrows and fear

Enjoy the best of long lasting years

Life is a wonderful thing

Given to us, all the joy it brings

Love and happiness, it makes our heart sing

Oh, life is a beautiful thing

Although life is not here to stay

Love it, enjoy it, day by day

Be strong whatever you do

Reach your goals to make your dreams come true

Oh, life is a wonderful thing

Given to us, all the joy it brings

Love and happiness, it makes our heart sing

Oh, life is a beautiful thing

Oh, life is a wonderful thing

Life, oh life is a wonderful thing

Life, life is a wonderful thing

What Happened to Me this Morning

Miriam Martinez

What happened to me this morning

I ordered my breakfast

I ordered me a B.L.T.

And I ordered an egg salad for my friend

I gave them quarters and he didn't accept them

He had an attitude toward me

And I yelled back

I had experience buying breakfast outside

I will tell my friends be careful

The Guiding Light

Sharon Joyner

Oh, starlight I feel so sad

Shine on the path to make me feel glad

I lost my way to everlasting peace

Where God can fill me and never cease

Oh, starlight where did you go

Come back to me I miss that constant glow

Bring back your light I need that guiding love

I need that peace from God above

Starlight, starlight

Come guide me through the night

Starlight, starlight

Where angels sing in flight

When I look up and see you there

My heart skips a beat cause I know you care

I'll follow you until the end
To that special place where joy and sorrow blend

Oh, starlight I love you so
Let's meet again when you come down low
Let's find that place that sets me free
I long to see you when God sends you to me

Starlight, starlight
Come guide me through the night
Starlight, starlight
Where God is true and bright

The Autumn Breeze

Valarie Buckner

I like to feel the autumn breeze
That blows around all the leaves
And when I try to step away
Gravity forces me to stay

I feel the cool autumn breeze
Flowing through the trees
The soft crunch of the leaves
Oh, I love this time of year
The world's colorful cheer
Oh, how I love the changing of the seasons

I like to feel the autumn breeze
That blows around all the leaves
And when I try to step away
Gravity forces me to stay

When the Sun Shines Bright

Janet Seth

The sun is high

We go to the beach

Our kites we'll fly

I'll eat a peach

Sand burns my toes

Seas cool the sand

Freckles on my nose

Beside waves I stand

Breeze lifts my hair

Gulls float above

Soft kiss of sea air

Beach day if love

Riding cool waves

Find broken shells

Sand castle we'll save

Goodbye to swells

Goodbye to sun

Our beach day is done

Blossom, My Love

Antoinette Harvey

My Blossom was assigned to me

In the summer of twenty twelve

To give me liberty

We walk in snow, sleet, wind, and rain

We go on buses, subways, and planes

We cross streets that intersect

And use stairs and doors that move, with no regret

She executes her work with love and skill

And keeps us safe from all spills

She's loyal, she's sweet

She knows I love her

Daily I ply her with hugs, food, and pats while I groom her

You make me happy! Blossom, I LOVE YOU!

I make you happy because you love me too!

TEACHERS, TEACHERS – THE BLUES SONG

Songwriting Workshop Collaboration

CHORUS (first time sing it like a children's rhyme):

TEACHERS, TEACHERS THEY CAN BE SO MEAN
EVEN TODAY THEY CAUSE THE SAME SCENE
PUT THEM ALL IN A RUBBER ROOM
MAKE THEM SING THIS SAME OLD TUNE
SEND THEM AWAY ON A YELLOW CHEESE BUS
LIKE THEY TRIED TO DO TO ALL OF US

Mary:

I had a teacher who was so mean
Meanest old woman I ever seen
She beat us, hit us to make us learn
Boy that woman was really stern
She hit us with the ruler, she hit us with the slate
She threw us against the wall she even hit us with a plate
When my friend started his junior year

She closed the window on his ear!!!

Valerie:

I couldn't see the blackboard

I couldn't read the books

The teacher turned around

And gave me dirty looks

When it was test time

The print was too small

I didn't know what to do

So, I tried to stand tall

But three years later

I made it after all!!!

Debbie Z.:

Ms. Erwine was a witch with a capital B

She wouldn't let anyone help me

To carry my books and my braille machine

I was a skinny kid, long and lean

She said if other people could carry that stuff I could too
Everyone stepped up and helped me through!!!

Kitty:

Benny B. taught history
We all flunked with 63
Doing what comes naturally
Doing what comes naturally
Benny B. just sniffs and snorts
He hasn't got any manners he's such a bore
But we'll teach him wait and see
Doing what comes naturally

A nice young girl named Clara
She married Benny B.
But Benny's not romantic
He just likes history

He punished me for making up this song!

He made me write the reciprocal trade agreement, 50 times!!!

Elsie:

Old ex-husband was forever mean

When my family got together he would holler and scream

He treated me wrong, called me a flaming clone

Made me wish that I was never born

He was a pit bull straight from hell

I'm sorry that we ever wed

I put him out back with a poison bone

So, I don't have to see him anymore, now he's gone!!!

Liz:

When I was in sixth grade

The teacher pulled my hair

I punched her in the mouth

And hit her with a chair

They broke us up and suspended me

For d-e-f-e-n-d i-n-g

I said that I didn't care

Sixth grade teacher can go to hell

Janet:

J. F. Booth, long of tooth

Belt above his belly

Taught my father in a one-room school

Everything about him was smelly

He lingered to inflict the same lit book on me

He read us the whole book just to hear himself read

No homework, we might cheat

All the way through I just wanted to sleep

Debbie H.:

Our chorus teacher Mr. Moore

The meanest man I always swore

His words had a sting, they had a bite

They cut like a razor, cut like a knife

He didn't know how to inspire you

He only insulted or criticized you

I considered him a real stuffed shirt

Always made me feel like dirt

He was pompous and arrogant to boot

Mr. Moore was just a fool

Lyda:

I had a braille teacher who was a pain in the butt

She yelled so much we thought she was a nut

The older kids would laugh but I almost cried

I wanted to run under the desk and hide

She made braille so hard to learn

She gave me so much grief now it's my turn

If I could see I wouldn't stand the sight of her

But now I know even in spite of her

Antoinette:

Frankie raised his hand to go to the bathroom

The teacher said she had to go too
He'd come back crying saying it hurts
I figured out the teacher was a pervert
I was a skinny little kid and could squeeze in any place
So, I followed them one day to see the disgrace
I went down the street and told the cop
They caught her red handed and they made her stop!!!

Sharon:

I had a teacher that was so weird
She spanked us, dug her nails in us, and bit our ears
She had two belts for when we were bad
And a silver belt for our birthday bash
When we would blurt out silly things she'd say stop the
goositude
It was always hard to judge her mood
She had a cat named Angel with patches and would sing
“Angel always scratches” and then she’d turn mean!

Keona:

A nun in high school that was so mean
She'd tap her pen on the desk and she'd always scream
One day I was coming from the other side of the building
I found the hallway was filled with children
She said y'all better get down and pray
You're going to hell on your last day
She made a big fuss but it wasn't a big deal
She was just being shrill about the damn old fire drill!!!

Miriam:

I went to Lavelle school for the blind
Miss Jerlin taught chorus and she was unkind
“Sister and brother” was a song she composed
But she yelled at me ‘cause I had a bad cold
I was out of tone and out of tune
But she didn’t have to be so rude
My mama told her not to disrespect me
Miss Jerlin learned her lesson she let me be!!!

CHORUS: (finale, belt it out!!!)

TEACHERS, TEACHERS THEY CAN BE SO MEAN
EVEN TODAY THEY CAUSE THE SAME SCENE
PUT THEM ALL IN A RUBBER ROOM
MAKE THEM SING THIS SAME OLD TUNE
SEND THEM AWAY ON A YELLOW CHEESE BUS
LIKE THEY TRIED TO DO TO ALL OF US!!!