



WHERE DO THESE SONGS COME FROM?

My brain is always thinking, drifting off hither and yon. I like leaving it off leash, seeing where it goes...

Song #1 - 10,000 Pancakes - Back in the mid-70's, both me and my roommate were earning our way through college by working as custo-

dians. We'd go to work at 5pm (when everyone else at the University was leaving their jobs) and we'd empty trash, clean toilets and polish floors until 2am. When we woke up in the late morning, we'd be powerfully hungry. I don't know that we ever ate 10,000 pancakes, but our stacks were very, very high! Nothing filled us up so well and so cheaply. These days I'm satisfied with a mere short stack.

Song #2 - Divine Bovine - For years I've been buying fresh milk, direct from the cow (well, direct from the farmer who milks the cow). Some weeks it will be all from dear sweet "Buttercup", the next week from "Bubblegum" or "Frosty". The color of the milk changes with the seasons, the milk varies slightly from cow to cow. When the cows have babies, their milk goes to feed their babies, and I have to go without their milk for a few months. This all somehow got me thinking about all those cartons of milk, from cows we don't know, and how those cows might feel about it. Cows seem content, maybe it really doesn't bother them. But I feel it's worth a shout out to all those cows, and give thanks for their milk.

Song #3 - Diet of Worms - My good friend David Jouris suggested the song title, told me about how Martin Luther (of Lutheran Church fame) argued with the Catholic Church at the Diet of Worms. The 'worms' in this case was the name of the city in which the 'diet' (in this case a meeting of a legislative body) was held. Whatever. To me it suggested something more along the lines of a bowl of gross noodles, and I went to work writing a song based on the title.

Song #4 - What if I? - When I was a kid, there was a guy named Neil Diamond who sang searing emotional songs about what it means to be a man (I Am, I Cried; Solitary Man). Other popular songs in the same vein included "If I Were a Carpenter". These songs were in my mind as I worked on a song idea about a man who loves certain foods, but wonders if his lover will accept him, weird foods and all. The song came into focus when I put the man behind a deli counter - smelling of all things deli. Is he still love-able? Is he worthy?

Song #5 - In My Soup - There's an ancient joke, popular in American Vaudeville but probably dating to the Pharaohs of Egypt, that goes...

DINER: Waiter, what's this fly doing in my soup!

WAITER: The backstroke, sir.

That's basically what this song is all about.

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Song #6 - Egg Salad in the Sun - Driving home one day, I heard the comedy duo Drennon Davis & Karen Kilgariff introduce a song they'd written called "Goths in the Sun". The song title kicked my mind into overdrive, and before I'd opened my front door the idea of Jim Morrison singing about an Egg Salad in the Sun was a completed thought. All I had to do was write the song :)

Song #7- I Am Your Food - "You Are What You Eat" This old phrase is used to admonish us all to think about the food we put in our bodies, to try to eat a healthy diet. But, what if the connection between what we eat and who we are were a little more real? That's the question I endeavor to answer with this song. Why should the voice of food sound like Tom Waits? I don't know, but when I tried it as Lionel Richie, it just wasn't right.

Song #8- Liver - I'm not a fan. It is truly the only food I can't stand. Never could. As a child, when liver was served at our home, I was forced to sit at the table in front of my uneaten liver until bedtime, when I would be served a spanking and then sent to bed. My dad thought that experience might make me change my mind about liver. He was wrong.

Song #9 - Food Too Fast - I was wondering one day: What if food were really fast - I mean, like a car is fast? What if you had to chase it? I suppose that's how it was for early humans, chasing their food (animals, not berries) was a literal concept for them.

Song #10 - Lunch is in a Paper Bag - Inspired by Charlie Brown, sitting on a bench with his lunch, pining for the little red-headed girl. Also inspired by my own memories of all the cool kids with their lunchboxes with all the latest superheroes or cartoon characters on it, while I've got a wrinkled paper bag. They seemed so lucky, like they owned the future and everything in it.



Song #11 - City of Sardines - On a family vacation to Japan, we visited a restaurant that served nothing but sardines. Sardine salad, Sardine soup, Sardine bones (delicious and crunchy!). The restaurant is called "Iwashigumi", which means Gang of Sardines. Back home, the idea of a bountiful harvest of sardines came to me, and the words poured out. For the music, I toyed with various synthesizers in the computer, creating loops, and then cut up the music and pasted it together in different ways until it became what you hear.

Song #12 - Shelf Life - My father ran a garbage company. I worked at a recycling center all through High School. My older sister, who I admired greatly, was a devotee of organic gardening and composting and aphorisms such as "use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without". And so I carry, deep in my consciousness, a sense of frugality and a concept of utility. The music for this song was intended as an instrumental, but when the phrase "Shelf Life" came to me, so did the whole idea of a song about not letting food go to waste.

Song #13 - The Longest Night - I've known Justin Roberts for years - he's hosted me at his home and at some of his Chicago concerts over the years. He's a cool cat. And I love his voice. I really wanted him to sing with me on this album, but the song had to be just right to take advantage of his charms. I sent him many different ideas, but this one, a memory about big family meals at winter holidays, struck home for both of us. I'm so pleased to finally get to sing with Justin on a recording.