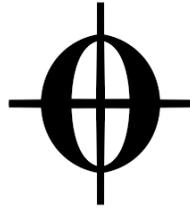


Excerpts from

With & Without

Lyrics, Prose, Stories, and Songs



Imre Vitez



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Rock Your Halo

Ooh, c'mon baby grab hold somehow,
to hear the music play way too loud,
we're rocking tonight at the Midtown Ritz,
or down at the shore Pony to hear the beach bands' hits.

Now listen baby, I think it's time,
for us to get close, let me ring your chimes,
I know you feelin' scared, never bared your soul,
I'm just the one, baby, so just let go.

Chorus C'mon baby climb on board, let's go for a ride,
and I'll show you things, to make you feel alive,
so hold on tight, we're going rocking tonight,
I'm gonna rock your halo.
So grab my hand, baby let's take flight,
head to the City and see the sights,
catch a train to hell or a carriage to heaven,
I'm gonna rock your halo.

Walk to the porch, can I walk like a man?
gonna ask your dad for just one hand,
take a stride or two in those white painted boots,
to see my little bride, hope she'll say I do.

It's been some time and you the baby's on cue,
a week from now, they'll be more than two,
baby I don't know what to say,
but maybe thinkin' of names may be okay.

Chorus & Bridge

I see the gray a comin', I lost my curl,
bought some gas today and some kid called me Sir.
Wanna quit my job and redeem my soul,
buy a red Corvette and a redhead to go.

My niece graduated from college today,
I looked at the clock and it said "You're late."
All I've come to learn is just a word or three,
and Paul said it right, when he said "Let it be."

Chorus

So c'mon baby, let's look back at the ride,
had a hell of a time, even though I may whine,
thanks for holdin' me tight and pullin' me through,
Thanks for rockin' my halo.
So grab my hand, baby let's take flight,
head to the City and see the sights,
catch a train to hell or a carriage to heaven,
thanks for rockin' my halo!

Thanks for rockin' my hey,
thanks for rockin' my hey,
thanks for rockin' my halo!

19Jan2003

Concept Written: Martha's Vineyard, Aug2002.

4AM Last Call

Chorus: So now the time has come my friends,
 so raise your glasses high.
The night's been long, we're singing our songs,
 it's time to part and say goodnight.
 So before we go, step high on the bar,
 and put your dancing shoes on.
Let your spirit soar, let your souls rise tall,
hear the bell ring, my friends, it's 4AM last call.

Verse 1: So let's rock it tonight,
 no reason to wait.
 The die have been cast
 and we're all winners at last.
 Our voices sound too hoarse to yell,
 so we must've done our job well.
Let's sing the last chorus and head out the door.
 So now the time has come, my friends,
 it's 4AM last call.

Verse 2: I've heard you say it all before, baby,
 I'm too tired to hear it again.
 There are far too many words to understand,
 in the silent phrases you speak.
Your voice is different from what it used to be,
 you speak nicer to that dog of yours
 than you ever spoke to me.
 Let's call it even, let's call it a day.
 I hear the bell, my friend,
 it's 4AM last call.

Verse 3: The days have gotten long,
 and the nights have become way too cold.
 My steps have become frail
 and I can't see three feet past the door.
 The house is so quiet now,
 no pitter-patter or stomping of feet on the floor.
All I have left are too many photographs on the wall,
 I think I hear the bell, my friend,
 it's 4AM last call.

15Feb2008

Sermonette: we should all raise our glasses high each and every day, for you never know when it's last call.



Limelight

From upon the stage I attempt to gaze out into the crowd,
but all I can see past the glare of the spots,
are the shadows of your raised fists, arms and heads.

From upon this stage,
I have thousands of images that appear to me
while I sit on this piano bench
in the midst of a myriad of scents, smells and fragrances:
- the smell of the hot spots melting the colored gels;
- the dry, sweet smell of the smoke machine that sets the atmosphere each night;
- the seductive scent of a fragrance
captured from a lover's breast;
- the hint of an aromatic cigar or cigarette, legal or not;
- the stench of wet leather and denim mixed
with sweat, beer and whiskey.

From upon this stage, I peer out and see all the tour buses
upon which I've traveled from hometown bar, club and dive.
I see all the plane rides I've taken to the furthest reaches
of the country, the continental divide and around the globe.

I've played before you and for you,
on stages small and flimsy,
and on those larger than some people's homes.
With duct tape holding down pedal boards and guitar jacks,
cabling systems supporting lifetimes worth of speakers,
and enough lights to illuminate a country,
I've played on for you.
I've traveled these miles on the road
looking for something and written these songs
in hopes of finding something beyond my grasp.

I've traveled these roads by land and sea and air,
but at this moment, while the chords resound so loudly
on this electrified grand piano,
I feel around me what perhaps I was always searching for,
a place to be.
There is nothing to look for, for what I seek is where I am.

From upon this stage, I sit here before you,
with guitars standing beside me,
with drums behind me,
with a piano before me,
with speakers and lights above me,
I will play these songs for you,
to perhaps help you find a little something
to carry you along the way.
For we all deserve a moment in the limelight.

26Sep2008

We all seek something, in some fashion or another, at different times of our lives, for different reasons, in different seasons; some warranted, some unjustified, some simple, some elaborate, some profound, some primal, some vital, but all with something in mind to gain. Sent this lyric to Zakk Wylde in Dec2012 as I envisioned him in the video for this song shot in grainy black and white, sitting at the piano on a barren stage with some spots shining towards the camera, singing this song in his hoarse, gravelly, and most thematic and honest voice.

Last Night in Havana

By now the time has long since gone,
we should have packed our bags and parted ways a long time ago.
And just as the espresso now sits still and quiet, far beyond its time,
the coffee is no longer sweet and strong,
only bitter and past its age.

For our last night in Havana,
let's just say we'll agree not to bicker,
the neighbors below and above us
will at last have peace for quiet evenings of dominos.
They won't need to hear our loud debates,
our anger, our frustration.
Perhaps even now, the loud sound of the quietness that returns
will deafen their ears.

It seems almost like yesterday when we first danced
beneath the Havana moon,
drinking dark rum and coffee till dawn, walking barefoot in the sand,
as the warm waters ebbed at our feet.

For all the effort we made to build our lives intertwined,
for as hard as we scraped and saved to build our back porch
on which to share conversations over sunsets,
the back porch was, is, and now will forever, be quiet,
just as the chimes that chime no more.

We should each pack a suitcase of clothes and memories,
and walk away.
Walk till we can walk no more
and ask ourselves whether we kidded each other,
or whether we ever had a chance at all?

When the novelty wears thin and the joy begets regret,
when deception begets frustration,
when partial truths beget partial lives,
it is time to call it a day.

Take your chips and cash out at the casino bank.
Take with you whatever it might be that you've learned,
and pack away the things inside that you have earned.

Before we go, let's go walk to the water's edge,
and take the rose petals that we saved for years
inside a champagne bottle,
let's pack away those sins that drove us apart and seal them away,
and throw the bottle far into the ocean
and let the salt water cleanse our sins.

Once the sun rises on the morn,
perhaps a brighter day will appear after our
last night in Havana.

16Sep2005

Who is to say that all dreams live on in paradise?



Folded Petals

On any given day,
what are the odds of you opening up a book
and finding someone else's dreams and memories?

Months, years, or even decades ago,
someone carefully took a set of rose petals
and laid them inside a book to rest and keep.

With those burgundy petals,
silently residing between pages of prose,
the invisible memories that were once alive,
now reside, silent and still.

On another set of pages a small group of flowers,
each no more than an inch in width,
still yellow at the core and with fragile white petals
and a pale green stem still attached,
were laid to rest,

What thoughts were envisioned,
what words of passion, sorrow, joy,
happiness or pity were said,
when those flowers were first given, and later pressed?

Without a written or spoken record,
there is no way to know what those flowers meant.
Perhaps a secret lies within the pages of prose
that blanket that flora each day and every night.
Perhaps the date if pressed in a calendar,
perhaps a phrase if pressed between a Psalm or a Proverb,
may shed some light on the story left unspoken.

And so now, rather than tossing aside those folded petals,
carefully place them back, and close the book,
and leave those emotions to rest.

It is almost as if one looked into a window
and saw something that you were not intended to see,
or peered into a vignette where your eyes did not belong,
or peeked into someone else's treasured dreams.

Step back, turn silently, and bow in reference.

22Sep2007

Written to describe a scenario in which everyone has a story to tell, every life has to toll a bell, every flower has the right to bloom.



To Touch A Heart

It was surprising to see the events that unfolded, when I watched the news broadcast about the natural gas explosion that leveled an apartment building in the city. The segment showed the surveillance video from shops in the area presenting the responses of the folks going about their day when the explosion occurred. People had the following responses:

- Reaching out with their hands and holding onto the sales counter in front of them as they felt the earth rumble
- Looking around in an attempt to assess what was going on

But the response that several people exhibited is that they took their hand and gently placed it upon their chest as if to touch their heart with the very tips of their fingers. A simple solemn sign acknowledging the pain they saw, the despair they realized that a neighbor was facing, or that a friend or a sister was feeling.

It was a communion with those who they realized were in anguish, pain, and bewilderment. In the spirit of silence, they reached out to those in need.

What greater comfort can you give another than to touch a heart?

14Mar2014

When the simplest of acts can mean so much. The words can probably never capture those thousand words that lie inside a photograph.

