

Sent: Friday, June 22, 2018, 9:36:30 AM MDT

Subject: I've got a story to tell

Hey all hiking buds,

You remember all those cracker-jack songs I sang (barked) on the hike?

--Here is a little bit about the backstory to where those songs came from, how they got to me, and how they got to you.

(For reference, to trigger your memory about the **John Prine** song titles listed in the letter below:

Spanish Pipedream = "blow up your TV's"

Paradise = "daddy won't you take me back to Muhlenberg County / Mr Peabody's coal train"

Donald and Lydia = a beautifully insightful song about a couple's demise. To me, it is a full-length movie delivered in 3 minutes

Hello in There = a song about living, aging, and dying)

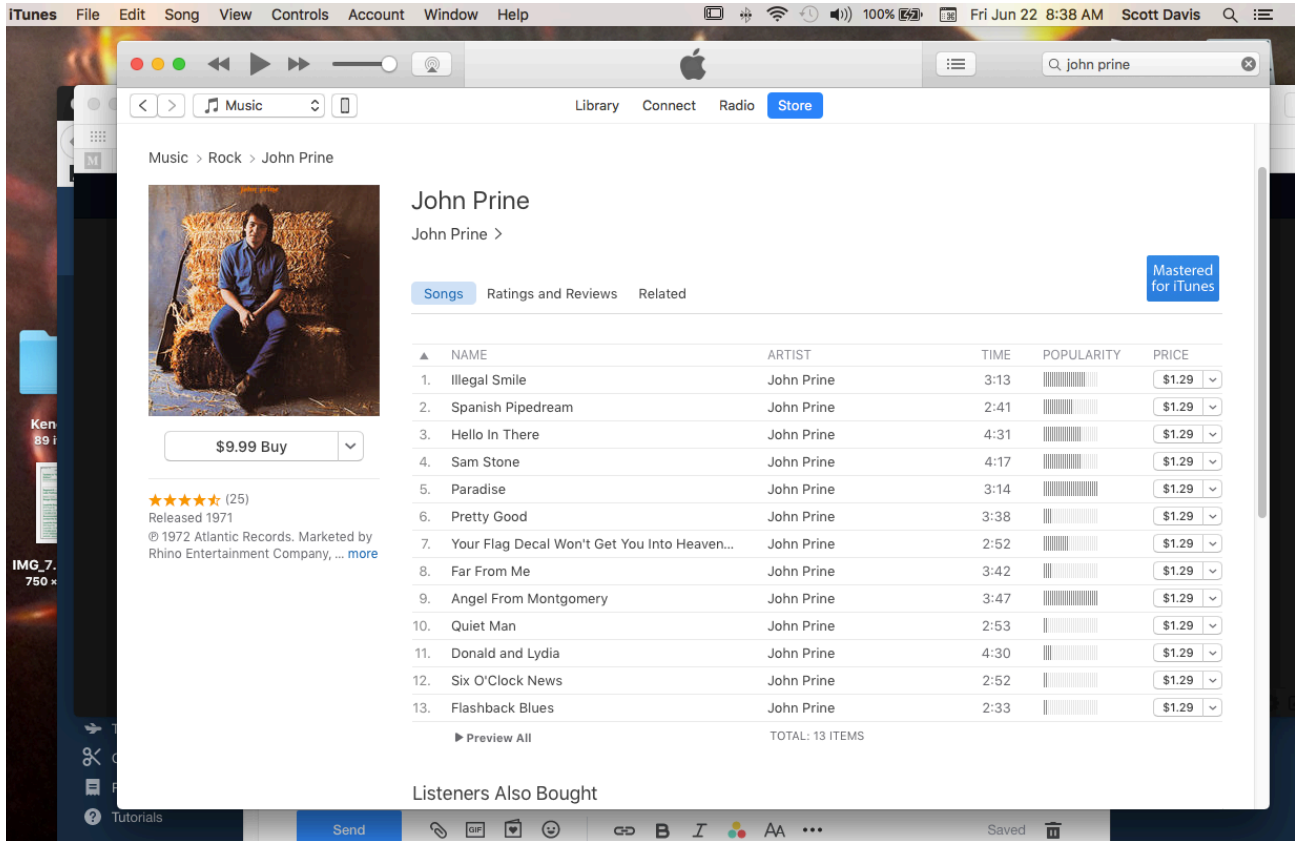
--There is an NPR radio show called **Fresh Air** hosted by Terry Gross. She is the absolute best interviewer. Her guests are artists, scientists, authors, singers, comedians, songwriters, etc

She recently interviewed John Prine (who wrote all those songs) and I was so moved by the interview that I went home that night and wrote John Prine an email and sent it at bedtime to his Management company. At 5:52am the next morning, I got a response from his manager. The email chain and original letter is copied below. Those songs are in my blood, and in many ways they are an integral part of our hike across the USA...which means they are part of your blood. This tells the story of those songs entering my life:

You can listen to the **Fresh Air** interview here:

<https://www.johnprine.com/news/listen-to-john-prine-on-fresh-air-with-terry-gross>

for those of you interested in the original (eponomously titled) John Prine album from the 70's this it:



John Prine was one of those rare artist who enter the public realm and upon their very introduction it is evident they are already a master at their craft. Every song is a story. Told comically. Poignantly. And in his inimitable style of crafty and witty lyrics that get right to the heart of his message. If you listen to the entire album keep in mind the era is the 1970's...Vietnam, hippie-dippie culture, "smokin' and token", pot illegal. He was a mailman who wrote songs in his head everyday as he delivered the mail, until Roger Ebert put him on the map in Chicago.

Kris Kristofferson (yup, the 70's) tells a story of walking into a pub/club/bar in Nashville and sitting mesmerized as this complete stranger kept an entire room riveted as he sang song after song after story after story. Ten, twelve, fifteen songs...each one better than the last.

He has been out of the limelight for 15 years and the interview tells you why. When I listened to the interview, I felt like I was listening to an old friend.

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HERE IS THE EMAIL:

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Wed, Jun 20, 2018 at 5:52 AM
Subject: Re: Walking through a song
To: Scott Davis

Scott ,

What a fantastic story . I will print it out and give tin John . He might have time to read some stuff when he's back off the road(and a bit of fishing). He roll love this story

All the best
Siobhan Kennedy
Management Team

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 19, 2018, at 11:45 PM, Scott Davis wrote:

Mr. John Prine,

I heard your interview today with Terry Gross on Fresh Air. It got me thinking about a story starring your song "Paradise" from 1980.

In the late 70's, I went to visit my older brother Tom in Marquette, Michigan at the tip of the Upper Peninsula. When I arrived, I discovered that he had taken up playing guitar. The first song he played was Paradise. Top to bottom, he just played the song straight through. From that moment on, I began to play guitar and learn all your songs. I ran that D-chord, G-chord, and A7th right into the ground. All day every day.

In April of 1980, I heard about a group of people who were planning a walk from Coast-to-Coast across America. I was heartbroken to leave my guitar at home, but I loaded my backpack and bought a one-way ticket to San Francisco. We began walking from the Golden Gate Bridge on April 12, 1980, headed towards the Washington Monument.

A few weeks into the walk, Bruce O. said he had a guitar he was willing to donate, but he did not want to carry it every single day and asked if anyone else was interested in carrying a guitar. Five hands went up, one of them mine. In due time, the guitar was at home on my back. I carried it every single day, let others play it anytime, but I wanted it with me all day long as I walked...D G A7...D G A7...

I sang your songs everyday: Paradise, Spanish Pipedream, Hello in There, and every once in a while I literally massacred Donald and Lydia. See, I was a good guitarist, but I sang like a seal in heat. That's on a good day! There were approximately 50 people walking and your songs were a thread through the entire trip. They became a part of everyone's everyday life.

We entered Kentucky at Paducah, headed for the Appalachian Trail, to head north for 500 miles to Harper's Ferry. William E. and I were walking together one day and a green

road-sign caught our eye. Yup, you guessed it, it said Muhlenburg County. A few miles further a sign said Paradise with an arrow pointing left. It was at that moment I realized that you didn't just make up a song. You told a true life story. The song literally came to life before our eyes. I felt like I was walking through a song. The steam shovel, the Green River, Mr. Peabody's . . .

Listening to Terry Gross ask you about that song informed us that it was your Dad's story you painted with lyrics. My brother Tom and I were driving towards Boulder, Colorado that day with plans to climb Green Mountain. As you know, Terry Gross played a snippet of Paradise in the interview. As we hoisted our packs, my brother looked at me and said "Well, I bet that song will be running through our heads all effing day".

He was right. I am certain you made your Dad proud with that song. It has become a constant through my life and even in my nieces and nephews lives.

I am so glad that you survived all your challenges with cancer. I am so glad that you are still writing songs. Tom and I both laughed out loud in the car when you talked about that leftover song "Boundless Love" and how you were determined to "*John Prine it up*" by adding some "*frying pork chops*" and "*a soul coming clean in the washing machine*".

Don't ever change Mr. John Prine. You are like a steak, perfectly rare, cooking on the grill. If you ever come to Boulder, or Denver, on a tour, I will be the guy in the front row, stage left, making a "D" chord by pressing my fingers into the underside of the table, trying to avoid the chewing gum.

Thank you for being a part of my life.

Your fan, your friend,

Scott Davis

PS. I attached my one claim to fame in life. A newspaper article about my hike. My mom sat down one night after dinner and there I was, a picture of me with a full-page spread on the front page of the Leisure section in the Detroit News. 4,211 miles - 411 days

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AESOP:

"After all is said and done . . . more is said than done."