

**Leaky Boats and Paper Birds (2012) Lyrics**  
**All lyrics © 2012 by Katie Dahl unless otherwise noted.**

**Ghosts of Sheboygan Town**

How peacefully we pass these ghosts on the road  
Like we never were afraid  
How large they all loom on the new-fallen snow  
We drive right through their barricade  
Not long ago, those shadows laid me so low  
I couldn't find a way to stand  
I chose the pull of the undertow over your outstretched hand

Let's light this morning up, let's drink the day down  
I think we've given enough of this love to Sheboygan town

How sweetly you sing through these ghosts at the bar  
Like I always sang along  
How sleek the notes slide from that shiny guitar  
Like they always knew the song  
There have been days, dear, when all I could hear  
Were worries whispering my name  
Days when I sat alone for fear it was you to blame

Let's light this morning up, let's drink the day down  
I think we've given enough of this love to Sheboygan town

The stars sprawl in the sky tonight, silence has fallen below  
Except our wheels that spin like a sigh tonight toward the light of the moon on the snow

How lovely you lie with these ghosts on my bed  
Like I always loved you back  
How lightly the lamp goes and halos your head,  
Like the night was never black  
There have been nights when it's all I could do  
Just to rock myself to sleep  
Nights when I fell alone into that dark so deep

Let's light this morning up, let's drink the day down  
I think we've given enough of this love  
Let's light this morning up, let's drink the day down  
I think we've given enough of this love to Sheboygan town

## **Kathleen**

*Inspired by the poem "Summer Stock Theater" by Emilie Coulson*

Kathleen comes driving in the springtime up from somewhere by Racine  
Copenhagen in her pocket, a quilt of patches on her jeans  
And we all stop to watch her as she starts to set the scene  
We all feel our walls crumble and fall every time we see Kathleen

We say hammer me a nail, Kathleen  
I think you could hold me together  
Won't you build me a fence, Kathleen  
So I know where I belong  
Your hair is burning like a fire, Kathleen  
You could light these dying embers  
If you paint me the sky, Kathleen  
Before the summer sun is gone

She takes the houses out of hiding, nails the trees into the ground  
She hems our dresses and our heartaches, makes us feel like we've been found  
And if we could write the story, if we lived within our dreams  
We'd take her to town, we'd dance the night down, we would crown her as our queen

And if she feels alone, who could ever know  
Who could ever touch Kathleen

Well, she met him in the summer on the shortest of the nights  
Walking tall along the high wire, she was hanging up the lights  
He started singing in the darkness, just a-hoping for to please  
He opened his mouth and diamonds fell out, it nearly brought her to her knees

He said I'll hammer you a nail, Kathleen  
I will try to hold us together  
And I'll build you a fence, Kathleen  
So we'll know where we belong  
Your hair is burning like a fire, Kathleen  
I could watch it shine forever  
Let me paint you the sky, Kathleen  
Before the summer sun is gone

### Pier 33

I stepped off the streetcar in the night, the Golden Gate was shining bright  
My memory flying like a kite or like an arrow  
Back to that summer sky so young and bold  
Back to clouds that rose like ladders with their rungs of gold  
Shot far from the quiver of this cold Embarcadero

At the bar I started watching for your curls, I started diving for your pearls  
All the boys here look like girls and the girls all look like you  
You behind the silo at the edge of town  
Took my hand in the meadow grass so high and brown  
Started singing as the night came swinging down in shades of blue

From the house on the rock you hear the couples on the dock  
Drop a nickel in the old man's beret  
And from Pier 33 I hear your lonely melody  
I feel the lift of your hips as they sway beside me

When the lovers ask the old man for a picture, he paints smiles upon their lips  
Like they're the captains of a ship that's set to sail  
So that if the wind should blow them off their course  
They'll have a postcard from these California shores  
Like a lighthouse for a ship that's lost its oars unto the gale

From the house on the rock you hear the couples on the dock  
Drop a nickel in the old man's beret  
And from Pier 33 I hear your lonely melody  
I feel the lift of your hips as they sway beside me, beside me

## Across the Sea

My friends across the sea feed me the fruits of the water  
Winter wine and honey from the bee  
When I'm feeling faint they bring me apricots and butter  
I've got another home across the sea

And my friends across the sea come and meet me at the station  
Bring me bon courage and bel esprit  
If I lose my way my friends just find me where I'm waiting  
I know they will treat me kind across the sea

Si je me perds chez moi, on ne me cherche pas  
Si je me perds là-bas, mes amis ne me quittent pas

My friends across the sea take me fishing in the fountains  
Singing with flamingos in the trees  
And if my friends should catch me when I'm climbing up my mountains  
They say you can take your time across the sea

Si je me perds chez moi, on ne me cherche pas  
Si je me perds là-bas, mes amis ne me quittent pas

To my friends across the sea I am a breakdown on the wayside  
A broken boat out drifting fast and free  
So I just ride that rolling tide, I don't have to walk with pride  
When I'm beside my friends across the sea

I just ride that rolling tide, I don't have to walk with pride  
When I'm beside my friends across the sea

## Next Morning Light

I remember last December, sitting in your pickup on a cold midnight  
We laid blessings on the new year with the streetlight burning there like candlelight  
Then the snow made a carpet to the door of your apartment  
Look in your eye pulled me in like the tide  
I left the snow there to fall for the kindness inside

And that next morning light shone like a highway through my lowlands  
Next morning coffee made me glow like wine  
You took me walking on the water and I saw that I could stand  
I saw snow shining bright enough to blind

We drove up north for Sunday suppers in the days before the bridge had fallen down  
Day beginning, truck tires spinning, we went singing our way through the old milltowns  
Iron ore liners and old jukebox diners  
Can't you see how long roads and short love are the same  
Both leave you looking for the place from which you came

But that next morning light shone like a highway through my lowlands  
Next morning coffee made me glow like wine  
You took me walking on the water and I saw that I could stand  
I saw snow shining bright enough to blind  
I saw snow shining bright enough to blind

Now it's Christmas pines and pins and needles, I saw some folks lining up for meals  
tonight  
I hear you're drinking new year's wine, I'm watching snowflakes fly beneath our old  
streetlight  
Cause I'm still hung up on that kiss in your pickup  
I'm trucking that memory along  
Though I know that our carpet of snow is already gone

But that next morning light shone like a highway through my lowlands  
Next morning coffee made me glow like wine  
You took me walking on the water and I saw that I could stand  
I saw snow shining bright enough to blind  
I saw snow shining bright enough to blind  
I saw snow shining bright enough to blind

## **Will I Fly**

*Lyrics by Emilie Coulson and Katie Dahl, music by James Valcq  
From Victory Farm*

Summer's made it home now, after one more year away  
I see July is moving in through the sky above the bay  
Clouds are flying 'cross the water, but I'm standing on the land  
I've got the new sun on my back and summer's first cherry in my hand  
I've learned the music of this land from the cherry trees that bloom every summer  
without fail  
I grew up tall with all these trees, year by year, day by day, pail by pail

This tree holds fast to the earth as it turns, its leaves know when to let go  
Where will I turn when these leaves start to burn, will I fly where those autumn winds  
blow

Two years ago this springtime, a telegram at our door  
Turned our blue star into gold, we'd lost Daddy to the war  
On the day that he was buried, my mother planted me a tree  
And now the years run fast, time rushes on, these branches grow up full and tall and free

And this tree holds fast to the earth as it turns, its leaves know when to let go  
Where will I turn when these leaves start to burn, will I fly where those autumn winds  
blow

I've never left this county, I've barely left this town  
I know my mother needs me, I don't want to let her down  
But this little tree keeps growing, keeps on reaching toward the sky  
And I feel my branches reaching out to a world that's much bigger than I

And this tree holds fast to the earth as it turns, its leaves know when to let go  
Where will I turn when these leaves start to burn, will I fly where those autumn winds  
blow  
Will I fly where those autumn winds blow

## Enough

It's all in a morning, we make love and break love before we get out of bed  
Isn't this how we started, you and me and the light overhead  
I remember that first night, I remember your porch light, Jimmy Stewart and your old  
black dog  
And your bedside candle like the lights of Fish Creek in the fog

Isn't that enough, isn't that enough  
That you have been a friend to me, yes, you have been nothing but kind  
Isn't that enough, isn't that enough  
If I follow your candle, could we leave all this darkness behind

At first it's a slow melt, but lately the rain pelts your windows till we're washed in its  
flood  
Our good backyard garden turned into puddles of mud  
Now the weathervane is spinning and the rain is coming in like an actor ahead of his cue  
And you look at me like I might know what to do

Isn't that enough, isn't that enough  
That you trust me like a bird trusts the morning again to arrive  
Isn't that enough, isn't that enough  
Could we fly like two birds singing bright through these darkening skies

Hey, hey, hey

We go out for coffee and lunch, cause there's not much to do and there's too much to say  
It feels just like old times, we laugh, and I let you pay  
And I keep thinking of your porch lights, they're my beacon on cold nights, shining on  
horse barns and bars  
And the PBR lights on your bed like American stars

Maybe that's enough, maybe that's enough  
That you are like a flame to me, I go like a moth to your side  
Maybe that's enough, maybe that's enough  
Turn around, take me home with you, this darkness is no place to hide

It's all in a morning, we make love and break love before we get out of bed  
Isn't this how we started, you and me and the light overhead

## **The World As I Found It**

*by Frederick Heide, © 2012*

Packed up my old Ford, headed west from Pennsylvania  
I was free from the ivy-covered years  
A backseat packed with books, William James, the poems of Whitman  
Brilliant minds insisting life is not what it appears

Rolled across the prairies like a creaking, horse-drawn wagon  
Up beyond the Rockies to find the golden fields  
Took off my shoes and ran down to where the sun sank in the water  
Till the evening star came shining like a dream the day conceals

Will you take this world as you find it  
A castle crafted by your mother's hand  
I would be a wave up on the ocean  
Tumble down to break upon the sand

The trees in California are still green in late October  
I remember hot clove cider on a frosty autumn morn  
I call home every Sunday, I say there's no ice on the water here  
It just rolls on like summer or the day the world was born

Will you take this world as you find it  
A castle crafted by your mother's hand  
I would be a wave up on the ocean  
Tumble down to break

Will you take this world as you find it  
A castle crafted by your mother's hand  
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Tumble down to break upon the sand

## Hometown Tables

We've got goats up on the rooftop, we've got whitefish in the bay  
We've got Spotted Cows to fill our cups at the end of every day  
A White Gull roosts at the end of Main Street, just a block from Summertime  
Summer days that flow like water, winter nights that glow like wine

We've got singing by the fireside, we've got dancing in the barns  
Sometimes the northern lights go rolling like a sky-high ball of yarn  
Some folks pray for rain on Monday, some just take it as it comes  
Straight from the mighty hand of God to the top of his thumb

And I say keep the door wide open  
I say welcome, come inside  
I don't want to be unfriendly, I'm not trying to be unkind  
But I say some things still are sacred, please don't try to chain me in  
I'll break my bread at hometown tables in the company of friends

My grandma rests up on the hillside, I'll be with her by and by  
But for right now she's just dreaming and I think she's wondering why  
Why we'd give up all this gold for just some flashing in the pan  
Why we'd trade this milk and honey for a supper from a can

So I say keep the door wide open  
I say welcome, come inside  
I don't want to be unfriendly, I'm not trying to be unkind  
But I say some things still are sacred, please don't try to chain me in  
I'll break my bread at hometown tables in the company of friends

I know we are not the center  
I know this is not the end  
I know winds are always changing  
And I know strong trees have some bend

There are wars across the ocean, there is terror in the sky  
Folks are building up their fences, there are bigger fish to fry  
But this is the home I've searched for, and I will not be misled  
Sometimes the place that matters most is where we choose to break our bread

So I say keep the door wide open  
I say welcome, come inside  
I don't want to be unfriendly, I'm not trying to be unkind  
But I say some things still are sacred, and if you try to chain me in  
I'll break my bread at hometown tables in the company of friends

## **Leaky Boats and Paper Birds**

My cousin is a lover of the land  
He picks his tomatoes with a weather-beaten hand  
He's got sweet annie in September and sour cherries in July  
He's got a name for every color in the sky

And I don't know just how he makes ends meet  
Selling sacks of tomatoes for two bucks apiece  
He just turns toward the south when the north wind blows  
Keeps walking slow and straight and steady down the rows

You say this country has been lost to those who see the land just for its profit and its cost  
But I claim it for my cousin cause he's touched it with his hands  
And my cousin is a lover of the land

My mother is a woman of God  
She believes in the comfort of the staff and the rod  
She swears by love, she swears unkindness is a sin  
Sometimes she swears just like a sailor drinking gin

She tells me it is well with my soul  
And she tells me it's the mysteries that one day make us whole  
She says that some bright morning she will fly away from here  
If those damn Republicans win again next year

You say this country's gone to hell with those who think that righteousness is something  
you can sell  
But I claim it for the ones who know what true grace can afford  
Like my mother, who's a woman of the Lord

And I am a believer in these words  
I fold these lines of mine into little paper birds  
And if I make them true and keep them pointing toward the sky  
Then I trust that one day they will fly

I have heard it said that talk is cheap  
That it's like trying to cross the ocean in a tiny boat that leaks  
Well, if you're ever gonna make it to the ocean's farther shore  
You find the leaks, you pay the seams, you grab an oar

You say this country's been betrayed by the huckster's sleight of hand and the  
congressman's charade  
But I claim it for these little leaky boats and paper birds  
For I am a believer in these words, my mother is a woman of God, and my cousin is a  
lover of the land