

Lyrics for *Tongues in Trees*

This album marks my 40th year as a songwriter and performer. I'm happy to share these words so that you might sing them with others. Comments and questions are always welcome at dan@berggrenfolk.com.

*All songs © Dan Berggren, BerggrenMusic (BMI)
Tongues in Trees SG-1301 released April 2013*

1 - **Occupy This Moment** © 2011

With each word that I speak
Every answer that I seek
Whether I am strong or weak
When I occupy this moment,
I occupy this world
 Every stumble toward the goal
 Builds the body, mind and soul
 I am part of the whole
 When I occupy this moment
 I occupy this world

With each step that you take
Every second you're awake
Lessons learned from mistakes
When you occupy this moment,
You occupy this world
 Every journey, short or long
 With each right that trumps a wrong
 You can feel you belong
 When you occupy this moment
 You occupy this world

With each breath until we die
Every question asking why
And each challenge that we try
When we occupy this moment,
We occupy this world

Every gift that we bring
Each idea that takes wing
Every song that we sing
When we occupy this moment
We occupy this world

2 - **Kuleana*** © 1996

The sun shines bright on Mwanza Bay
But rain clouds are coming at mid-day
There's a boat in the water
With a husband and wife,
They're fishing for supper
They're fishing for life.
 Kuleana, Kuleana, Kuleana, Kuleana

She checks the net while he bails the boat
They're humming the same song note for note
Sometimes they decide where the boat will go
And sometimes they go with the water's flow

They've had their share of joy and pain
They know that nothing grows without rain
So they don't mind the stormy weather
Their umbrella is being together

These two love each other but don't say so
They care for each other and they both know
As they row home, the sun's going down
A rainbow greets them in Mwanza town

*kuleana: caring for each other [Swahili]

3 - The Attic © 2008

Wouldn't Grandma laugh
Wouldn't Grandpa shake his head
And make a face
And wonder: what kind of fool
Wouldn't recognize a tool like this
It was up there with the ghosts,
A reminder of the folks who used to live here
At the top of the stair
Hidden away up there in the attic
*The attic's full of memories
That's where they go to rest
Until someone searches through them
And rescues from the best
Their former glory, and tells a story from
The attic.*

Documents of life
Telling tales of the way things used to be
Essential in the shanty
Or in the kitchen pantry, but no more
From the workbench in the barn
And every room in the house you can imagine
If you look past the rust
Under cobwebs and dust is buried treasure

Pieces of time
Well-preserved or victims of neglect
Secrets from the past
Revealed at last with respect
They were up there with the ghosts,
Reminders of the folks who used to live here
At the top of the stair
Hidden away up there in the attic
*The attic's full of stories,
That's where they go to dwell
Some are lost or forgotten
But there are many more to tell from
The attic, from the attic, from the attic*

4 - Black River Canal © 2010

*Black River Canal
From Lyons Falls to Boonville
Black River Canal
From Boonville down to Rome
One-hundred-nine locks
More than blocks of limestone
Made the Black River Canal*

Flowing north and west to Lake Ontario
Black River helped the region to grow
Fed by the Deer, the Otter and the Moose
The Beaver and Independence, too

Ten years of politics got it off the ground
Then another twenty to build it strong and sound
Sawmills, gristmills, and the tanneries
Saw fifty years of prosperity

Pine for the lumber and hemlock for the bark
Spars made of spruce for the ships of New York
Deliver the load, turn around, pay your toll
Return with dry goods and coal

Breaks in the feeder, greed in the woods
Low water in summer,
mills couldn't make their goods
The canal was costing more
than it was bringing in
Letting the railroad win

5 - Capitalist without a Soul © 2012

(tune based on Cotton Eyed Joe, trad.)

Hand in your pocket, thumb on the scale
Make me an offer, it's all for sale
Where conscience was, now there's a hole
I'm a capitalist without a soul

When savings all go down the drain
Then your loss becomes my gain
So what? I say. That's my goal
I'm a capitalist without a soul

When I was born I had a soul
Sold it for a big bankroll
Scheming all around the rules
Stealing dreams from poor fools

It's not Robin Hood at your door
I steal from both the rich and poor
But that's just me - playing my role
I'm a capitalist without a soul

I've always done just what I please
Brought the economy to it's knees
When no one looked, I took control
I'm a capitalist without a soul

I sold my soul now I'm guilt free
My commerce lacks morality
Gandhi said that was a sin
But I'll do anything to win

Laissez faire, hands off my pile
It'll trickle down after a while
That's if oversight takes its toll
I'm a capitalist without a soul

If my fortune's ever lost
I wonder what a soul would cost
Maybe there's a small loophole
For a capitalist without a soul

6 - Old Dirt Road © 2012

On the outskirts of town, sun's going down
Back on this old dirt road
Just over the hill time's standing still
Back on this old dirt road
Evening primrose is out
Deer flies all about
Take a walk with me
We'll see what we can see
On this old dirt road

Going 'round the bend, remembering friends
Back on this old dirt road
Neighbors lend a hand, respect for the land
Back on this old dirt road
Dusty from summer till fall
Horses hauled it all
Turning wagon wheels 'round
Distant long-lost sounds
On this old dirt road

Scent of wild rose, reaching my nose
Back on this old dirt road
Slows down my pace to savor the grace
Back on this old dirt road
Pause to rest in the shade
Near a meadow once hayed
Golden rod grows tall
White-throated sparrows call
On this old dirt road

See monarchs feed upon the milkweed
Back on this old dirt road
Wild berries on the right, bear and deer delight
Back on this old dirt road
Highways may be fast
But this road knows the past
Drifted in winter, washed out in May
Now, it carries me away
On this old dirt road

7 - **The Balance** © 2010

Dark and light
Day and night
Searching for the balance
Young and old
Weak and bold
We are searching for the balance
*Come rejoice, raise up your voice
Then find comfort in the silence
Whisper, shout, couple faith with doubt
We are searching for the balance*

Sun and shade
Brave, afraid
Searching for the balance
We're born, we die
We give up, we try
We are searching for the balance

Near and far
From sea to star
Searching for the balance
Rich and poor
In peace and war
We are searching for the balance

Fast and slow
Yes and no
Searching for the balance
Laugh and cry
Hello, goodbye
We are searching for the balance

8 - **Swimming in the River** © 2012

*Swimming in the river
Swimming in the sea
Living in the water
I am swimming, I am free*
You know me by gill and fin
No lungs, no legs for me
Cold-blooded, as a rule I travel by school
And when love is lost, you like to say:
There are lots more of me in the sea

You lure me with flies and bait
You've learned all the things I consume
A line, rod and reel can get you a meal
From a river bank or your boat
Or the ice in a small wooden room

You come to my waters for sustenance
But now there's a danger sign
So you come to my waters to measure me
Like a canary - in a mine

You catch me by hook and net
You want me but not on your plate
Instead there's reliance on research and science
Finding chemical compounds in me
Oh Neptune, what is my fate?

9 - **Road to Bethlehem** © 2008

When he asked if she would marry
Her answer it was yes
A voice spoke to her and said
Among women, you are blessed
Dear Joseph, don't you worry
There are plans for us
I am with child, said she
Asking for your trust.
 On the road to Bethlehem
 On the road to Bethlehem
 Asking for your trust
 On the road to Bethlehem

It's ninety miles from Nazareth
By donkey we will go
A census is required by law
And paying the tax we owe
Will my Mary make the journey?
What if there's nowhere to stay?
Will our child be safe and sound?
How will I find my way?
 On the road to Bethlehem
 On the road to Bethlehem
 How will I find my way?
 On the road to Bethlehem

While Joseph he lay sleeping
To him a voice did say
To Bethlehem you'll safely come
If your heart you do obey
The birth was in a manger
As a star shone in the sky
Shepherds came to see the son
With wonder in their eyes
 In the town of Bethlehem
 In the town of Bethlehem
 With wonder in their eyes
 In the town of Bethlehem

Another voice spoke to Joseph
And this time it did say
Your baby's life's in danger
Go home another way
My son, I'm just a carpenter
But I'll teach to you my trade
I'll show you how to trust your heart
And never be afraid
 On the road from Bethlehem
 On the road from Bethlehem
 Never be afraid
 On the road from Bethlehem

10 - **Proud of You** © 2011

There's a picture in my head, an image
 from the past
A child made of fragile flesh and bone
With ears, eyes and mind kept open wide
You learned to make it on your own
 I'm proud of you
 So proud of you
 I may be late in saying it but it's true
 I'm proud of you
 Always been proud of you
 And it's time I said it out loud, I'm proud

Compassion, hard work, self-discipline and love
Defining lines of right and wrong
Respect for every part in the web of life
That's how you became strong

Your compass is true, you steer a steady course
While the sea goes from calm to wild
Companion at your side, new adventures abound
Now you're parent to the child

There's a picture in my head of some distant day
Your baby is grown and on its way
As months become years it won't be very long
Before she hears you say

11 - **Shepherd of the Wilderness** © 2006 (instrumental)

12 - **Birch Are Soprano** © 2013

Birch are soprano
Balsam are alto
Cedar sing tenor
With white pine on bass

Birds take the solos
Duets and trios
Wind is conducting
To vary the pace

Atonal cicada with river polyphony
Woodpecker counterpoint drumming along

Three moons per season
Four movements a year
From morning to evening
A never-ending song

13 - **Where Is My Father** © 2007 (soundpoem)

where is my father
did mother go with him
or are they still here
some days they seem absent
missing in action
like ghosts in the shadows
dreaming of haunting
just waiting to whisper
dusty old stories
before disappearing
into the secret
but they only appear
when you're not ready
that's when you know they're gone.

14 - **May You Live** © 2012

We gather here to honor you
Share laughter and a tear
For every thread of fabric
In a life we hold so dear
*May your love be our memory
And your lessons keep us strong
May you live within our stories
And live on in our songs*

We give thanks for time we've spent
As family and friend
And for the bond between that
Never falters, never ends

Many roads we've traveled on
The journey from our birth
Many blessings knowing you
For time shared on this earth