

Floodsongs, by Jennifer Mansfield Peal

**Fifteen Songs from her second recorded album of original songs: Flood
(p) Scatterbranch Music Publishing
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Everyone is Equal at the Laundromat

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

Everyone is equal at the Laundromat
Everyone is equal at the Laundromat
Everyone has stinky socks and mismatched towels;
Underwear reflects the fruit of everyone's bowels
This is not the year we'll take a Princess Cruise
We won't buy designer gowns with dyed to match shoes
If there is no dryer free you wait in line
If you do not talk to people they won't mind

Everyone is equal at the Laundromat
Everyone is equal at the Laundromat
Little kids who run around are everyone's pain
Vintage wine or grape juice, it's the same old stain
Everyone is equal at the Laundromat
Everyone is equal at the Laundromat
Once you pull your linens out you can't renege
You can't hide your panties 'cause they look too big

Dryers don't dry faster if you get real sore
Washers don't wash better if you pay them more
No one's an aristocrat, everyone's aware of that
Everybody's equal at the Laundromat

Pearl (Jane, alias Pearl)

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

When I first came to this room, I told you my name was Pearl
I told you my name was Pearl, but it isn't, it's Jane.

What a strange mistake to make, I must be getting old.
I think I know better than to not do what I'm told.
I don't know why I'm here, the officer did not say.
If this is about those tickets I swear I was going to take care of that today.
Did you say you know me? I don't think that I know you.
When I leave this office, sir, that's the first thing that I'm going to do ...

When I first came to this room, I told you my name was Pearl
I told you my name was Pearl, but it isn't, it's Jane.

No, I do not own a knife. I don't even have a kitchen.
You can ask the people where I live there are no knives missing there.
Now, maybe I've been inside there once or twice.
There was a bartender there who was pretty nice.
But that was long ago, how long I cannot say.
Must I see more pictures of more men I do not know?
It's not that I live there – it's just a place I sometimes go ...

When I first came to this room, I told you my name was Pearl
I told you my name was Pearl, but it isn't, it's Jane.

I do not know him
I'd have no motive
You cannot hold me
So please, let me go ...

Now we've had our chat and I can see you're through with me.
If I find more information I'll contact you happily.
Good luck with your problem. Good luck with your search.
I see today is Sunday – I was just going off to church.
How bizarre to lose one's life in some ungodly tryst.
And now that we're finished, could you please take the cuffs off my wrists?

When I first came to this room, I told you my name was Pearl
I told you my name was Pearl, but it isn't, it's Jane.

Bad for Business

© Jennifer Mansfield Peal 2004

Idea from Jenny Nazak

The light is green but the cars stop anyway
To see the girl in the thigh-high boots
Her boots are green, shiny green vinyl
And she stops the traffic as she waits for the bus

And the girls of the street as they smoke their cigarettes
Cut their eyes
She's bad for business

Because she never says yes when they offer her a ride
Never gets inside, never takes the money
When the third man yells with the third tires screeching
She looks him in the eye, and she says, "Trust me -

If I sold this I wouldn't be waiting
For the bus"
She's bad for business

And the girls of the street as they smoke their cigarettes
Cut their eyes as they stand waiting for a man
And they think, "Butt-faced bitch, with her stuff in the street
And her thigh-high boots, why does she look like that
What does she do with that?
She's bad for business, she's bad for business..."

Well, the men who think she sells are not the men she wants to meet
They watch her legs from the street, watch her get on the bus
And the girls who think she sells, and the men who think she's meat
They watch her legs from the street, watch her get on the bus

And the girls of the street as they smoke their cigarettes
Cut their eyes
She's bad for business

Green Streak (Let me tell yall about my baby...)

© Jennifer Mansfield Peal 2004

You know, my baby's got a green streak
Don't get me wrong, it's not a mean streak
Truth of the matter is, I don't know why
But he's a jealous guy

We fell in love in the meantime, back in those worrisome and lean times
When we shared our trailer condo down in the rice fields near Hondo
We had some happy moments, I'll tell you; what with making hay and pitching woo
But now those carefree, single days are through...
Since I met my man, he makes me who I am
And all I want on earth is just to prove my worth
As his one and only loving baby girl

But my baby's got a green streak...

There was this banker down in Houston I let my fantasies run loose on
Every night we'd romp and rampage through the currency and coinage
What we got up to on his big oak desk a handsome man like you shouldn't need to ask
But now my man has taken me to task...
And I see today the error of my ways
Still every now and then I call my banker friend
To catch up, though I have to keep it quiet

Because my baby's got a green streak...

I see you're finished with your whisky now; I've had a lovely time, I must allow
You are so sweet to sit and listen to talk of men and how I miss them
Maybe some other time I'll see you here and we could play some pool or maybe drink a
beer
Or at my loft, you know it's really near....
You could meet my cat and we could have some laughs
I know I won't be wrong about what turns you on
But it'll have to be on a weekday after ten...

Because my baby's got a green streak...

Ponytail Boys

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

Ponytail boys drive me nuts
With the way they walk and their long hair-cuts
Greedy gimme girlie with a birthday full of toys
Is the way I feel about the ponytail boys
The ponytail boys ...

Ponytail boys go riding by in cars
Go flying by on skates, go hanging out in bars
Packing it in leather on their Harley's in a crew
Or making skateboards look like BMW's
The ponytail boys ...

I can see these boys are crazy I can see these boys are poor
But my vision becomes hazy when they walk through the door
My brain turns into batter for my heart to bake a cake
How I slice it does not matter 'cause I'm always on the make
For the ponytail boys...

Curly brown ponytails flashing in the sun
Or packing up their tools when the working day is done
Silver white ponytails checking out the view
As they saunter down the sidewalk on Greenville Avenue
The ponytail boys

And they drive me nuts, with their long hair cuts
And they've got a lot of guts, and some of them have great big beer guts
And I get a bad crush
On the ponytail boys ...

If I Were My Boyfriend

© Jennifer Mansfield Peal 2004

If I were my boyfriend I'd take me out dancing
I'd take me to movies and buy me cologne
If I were my boyfriend, the time spent with others
Would not be as sweet as the time spent alone
I'd have laughter and secrets in intimacy
If I were the boyfriend of me

If I were my boyfriend...

If I were my husband I'd plan for my future
I'd plan for the time that we're no longer young
If I were my husband I'd care for my health
And work side by side for our life and our home
I'd expect me to be my friend permanently
If I were the husband of me

If I were my husband...

If I were my teacher I'd take myself places
I'd give myself time to learn things that are hard
If I were my teacher I'd keep myself laughing
Remind myself learning is life's great reward
I would never take failure too seriously
If I were the teacher of me

If I were my teacher

If I were my husband

If I were my boyfriend, my wife
'Cause this is my life and I'm free

The Ballad of Susanna Dickinson

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

I come from the Alamo mission
General Houston, I saw the men fall
Four thousand Mexican soldiers
To one hundred ninety defenders in all
For thirteen days they could not take her
This Santa Anna called "some small affair"
From where I was standing his soldiers fell dead
Six to one of the Texans, I swear

I am a messenger, I am a messenger
I and my baby, we are the survivors
With each step the pony takes
Through stone and cedar break
I pray
For the souls
Of the brave, fallen men
And lay curse on the head of Santa Anna

The general brought me before him
I with Angelina stood there in his tent
He offered his camp for a refuge,
A place with his whores was what the fool meant
Thus glittered the great Santa Anna
Puffed with his victories, fat with largesse
Proud of his English, the sleek well-bred criminal
Found me no challenge at chess

(Chorus)

The Alamo, General Houston,
Now says its mass for coyotes and snakes
If I'd had a bayonet I'd be there with them
For all of the difference it'd make
No prisoners there, no surrender
By San Antonio's river they rot
Travis and Bowie and all Crockett's volunteers
Lie by the walls where they fought

(Chorus)

The Flood

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

Used up soil
Don't hold no rain
Don't stop no flood
It's fertile ground
For the cypress tree
And the prickly pear
And the white tail deer
In the Hill Country

Dried up soil
Makes rivers of mud
When the rain makes flood
In the Hill Country
And washes down
Through the creeks and the draws
And the Colorado
And the Guadalupe

When the Brazos peak
Hits Granbury dam
Over out-farmed land
Rain don't soak it
And the rivers all rise
And they make a great flood
From the hills to the sea
Through the Hill Country

New Braunfels stands
Like San Antone
And Del Rio
On the Rio Grande
And maybe for awhile
The weather will hold
Hold a truce
Between the rain and the land
Between the rain and the land
Between the rain and the land

Trust Me

© Jennifer Mansfield Peal 2004

There's a game we used to play during recess on the blacktop
When the girls would jump in loafers and the boys would jump in high tops
Just to hit a ball around a pole tied to a six-foot string
We would smack each other in the face and hurt and bruise and sting

Trust me, I am not tethered to your heart
You can trust me, I stand in my life apart
I do not have to fight for freedom, for I am already free
In spite of all the ones who hit you from behind, trust me

Then when Christmas comes around; such a gluttony of toys
With lots of soft stuff for the little girls and hard stuff for the boys
Somebody is unhappy, Santa's letter went unread
She did not get the thing she wants so she tears up yours instead

Trust me, I will not crush what you hold dear
You can trust me, I can respect your plans and fears
I do not have to shred your ego, for I have one of my own
In spite of all the ones who left you feeling small, trust me

Ah, the politics of youth that do everybody violence
Shaming out what makes us special in the name of truth or romance
When a secret told in confidence becomes a lunch-room joke
And now there's only silence to replace the parts that broke

Trust me, I do not care to make you known
You can trust me, I've got secrets of my own
How can I treasure privacy if your secrets please me more?
In spite of all the ones who shamed you to the core, trust me

Trust me

Trust me, I will not crucify your dreams
You can trust me, I will not soil the things you love
You can trust me, I will not hang you out to dry
I will not use you for a laugh
You can trust me.

The Ballad of Cyrus Love

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

I left my home in Limestone County
To join the southern rebel cause
I crossed the mighty Mississippi
To fight this bloody Civil War

My uncles fought with General Houston
Our family came from Tennessee
I was a teacher, now I'm a soldier
My kin need think no coward of me

My father's sheep in Limestone County
They dot the prairie's wavin' grass
But now dead soldiers on fields of battle
They dot the hillsides as I pass

My father's mares in Limestone County
They run and gambol on the plain
Now Texas horses lie all around me
Good steeds we'll never ride again

A million songbirds thrill the prairie
But minnie balls now sing to me
Songbirds may sing in Limestone County
But cannon roar in Tennessee

Oh, sisters think not I've forgotten
Oh, brothers fare you well at war
Oh mother, father, do not count on me
Until you see me at your door

Again I'll cross the Mississippi
Again I'll find the home I love
And if this bloody war should kill me
I'll send the ghost of Cyrus Love

And if this bloody war should kill me
I'll send the ghost, the ghost of Cyrus Love

Where's My Baby Now?

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

Where's my baby now?
Where's my baby now?
I've been waiting here
Where's my baby now?

Is your sweetheart in a country that is far across the sea?
No, my sweetheart lives in Dallas and he won't come here to me
If your sweetheart lives in Dallas, is he rich like they all say?
No, my sweetheart's a musician and he struggles every day

Where's my baby now ...?

Did you give him what he needed, did you serve him every way?
All I tried to do was love him and help him as friends may
If you tried so hard to love him, then why aren't you by his side?
I have no more heart for questions, I will call him to my side

Where's my baby now ...?

(Bridge)

Oh, the rivers here bring comfort to some frightened, lonely source
But how many fields go barren when a river changes course?
Oh, oh, oh, oh

Where's my baby now ...?

Ghost Light

Words: T. Daniel Sheppard

Music: Jennifer Mansfield Peal

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When the angels have gone and the main stage is quiet
And a droplet of light is all that remains
Of the brilliance that once filled the stage
You may catch a glimmer of one lonely soul
That sits like a corpse, in the back row

And watched there with envy as the play was performed
Hating the actors who have flesh
Knowing that later, when the lights are brought down
And the scenery is struck, he'll be the only one left
And no one will know the eloquent touch
He'll bestow on the stage in his solo performance that night
As he runs through an act with a chorus of shadows
Cast by the glow of the ghost light

The lip of the stage which tasted the soles
Of a company's hopes now spits out its silence
Which the house echoes back
A dialogue written for ghosts

The stillness is crushing, the silence a fanfare
Each shadow a giant that plays on the stage
Which waits there in patience for the actor who walks
Only through the ghost light

Whore's Breakfast

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

She washed her face, she said her prayers
She put on her shoes when she came downstairs
She hoped he wouldn't wake till she was gone
The morning sun was shining hard
The dew turned to vapor in the yard
She wondered if this time, her luck had run

(Bridge)

Well, she heard a cough behind her
And the dew served to remind her
Of the reason she was leaving before he was through
And she said: "I'd rather be alone in this great big city
Than to eat another whore's breakfast with you".

(Chorus)

A whore's breakfast –
Sit and rest your trembling legs
It takes more than two cups of coffee
To choke down pride with eggs
When a whore's breakfast is all that greets the day
What a joke it seems when the dish of your dreams
Is just another lay

Well, biscuits cold are biscuits hard
It doesn't take very long and you can throw 'em in the yard
Sometimes you oughta bake your biscuits fresh
And gravy's thick or gravy's thin
Just have it on the table when the boys come in
Keep your mind on your cookin' if you know what's best

(Chorus)

Texas Onions

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

Texas onions, they're the pride of the lone star state!

As I was driving down the highway and the bluebonnets were in bloom
A big truck passed me in the fast lane – I moved on over, gave him lots of
room

I checked his load as he passed by – a blaze of glory struck my eyes
There were golden globes almost twenty feet high and an angel sat on the
top

Texas onions, they're the pride of the lone star state
Texas onions, this load's for God, you're going to have to wait
Onions best in the U.S.A.; the Lord and the Aggies made them taste
that way
Start now and you'll eat them when you're ninety-eight
Texas onions from the lone star state

Down in Greenville Mississippi where the cotton grows
On a blanket by the bayou you can warm your toes
But the onions that they're serving with their boudin and beer
Are grown right here

Texas onions, they're the pride of the lone star state
Texas onions, this load's for God, you're going to have to wait
Onions best in the U.S.A.; the Lord and the Aggies made them taste
that way
Start now and you'll eat them when you're ninety-eight
Texas onions from the lone star state

Mudflap Bob

© Jennifer Mansfield 1999

Don't leave me now, Mudflap Bob
To go off to San Antonio – you don't even have a job
I'll have to find a new truck stop johnnie to get over you, honey
Oh Mudflap Bob don't leave me now

It was at a truck stop in Salado you stopped to fill your truck with gas
I could see right there and then that you were not like other men
You were looking over the highway and I was looking over your passenger
side
All the way through Oklahoma you would not keep me from your side
Through Ogden and Spokane you were my loving man
Now you say this trip is over, but I'm not ready for goodbye

Oh no, don't leave me now, Mudflap Bob ...

The truest hearts are sometimes parted, and truer hearts have broke than
mine
You can drop me where you please, where the boys are pumping diesel fuel
And if I ever see you again, I'll say to you my friend,

Oh no, don't leave me now, Mudflap Bob...