



Mountain Prayer

I

*Sometimes I just have to find a mountain
Take some time to walk there along a mountain stream
It's twists and turns are too many for counting
As the stream becomes a river and the river finds the sea (sung)*

This journey that we're making around a life and a career and sharing in songs and stories around these campfires will take us through seven stages with each stage containing seven campfires and each campfire a song, a story told in the oral tradition, and some written thoughts about the journey. It took a lot of imagining and searching and kind of squinting to find the contour of a life and create that kind of order and symmetry because while it was happening a lot of life felt and feels pretty haphazard and filled with lots of random choices and chances and circumstances.

It's satisfying to discover a shape and a way to contain this life and so maybe have a chance to discover more of what this life contains and maybe shape it a little while spinning some often tangled and sometimes knotted strands of that life into some interesting yarns, and in the sharing to see some things differently, to see some different things.

There are lots of reasons to choose to do this around a campfire. Human beings have been sitting around campfires telling stories since shortly after fire was discovered and while these days nighttime stories are often a way to get kids to go to sleep those first stories might have been told more as a way of keeping each other awake while keeping that fires burnings and somehow together sharing and facing the night.

II

*Life is changing and as constant as the season
It holds tears and laughter it knows joy and despair
As things happen I don't always know the reason
I tremble and I'm thankful as I say my mountain prayer*

There is something magical about firelight, something mysterious and powerful about the circle we form when we sit around a campfire together, connections we make to something beyond the moment and ourselves, moments enhanced by stories, heightened by songs.

While a few songs of these campfire songs will be familiar many are one's I've written over the course of a lifetime, threads now part of a greater yarn, yarns now part of bigger tapestry, the songs together creating the soundtrack of a journey. This journey that we're making around a life and a career and sharing in songs and stories around these campfires will take us through seven stages with each stage containing seven campfires and each campfire a song, a story told in the oral tradition, and some written thoughts about the journey. It took a lot of

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imagining and searching and kind of squinting to find the contour of a life and create that kind of order and symmetry because while it was happening a lot of life felt and feels pretty haphazard and filled with lots of random choices and chances and circumstances.

III

*Some things appear clearer at a distance
Each sunrise is different while everyone's the same
Life is timeless and it's over in an instant
There are things I understand that I cannot explain*

The summer before going into the 8th grade I was given the assignment of reading The Iliad and The Odyssey stories dating back nearly 3000 years. While the authorship generally is attributed to someone known as Homer there is speculation that those stories and others like it were told around campfires for centuries before Homer ever got a hold of them.

Although I feel as a 13-year-old kid I didn't really understand them I believe those stories will forever be read and studied...for lots of reasons...mostly because they are good stories that ring true and leave us feeling we are part of something bigger than ourselves and bigger than the time we are living in and also because together those stories speak to two great human impulses. The first impulse is to leave home and go out and do something and the second is to somehow against all odds and whatever the cost to find our way back home.

Assuming, like Odysseus, we do get home, those impulses are often followed by another human desire and that is to tell somebody about where we've been and what we've done and while nobody, not even my mother, would compare these stories to Homer's that also is part of what I am trying to do here.

As you can see or more correctly hear the stories are being shared in the oral tradition, the way it's been done since those first campfires. I am calling these stories the Campfire Chronicles.

IV

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The idea is to make One of Those Times in a Life a journey around a life filled with adventures and discoveries shared around campfires, and there's a long tradition of people keeping journals of journeys including the likes of Lewis and Clark and Captain Kirk from Star Trek. In that spirit on a much smaller scale besides songs and stories at each campfire there will be a written paragraph or a page to share that will be called the Campfire Logs.

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Staying true to the times we are living in between campfires there will be additional blog posts and Facebook conversations and soon there will be a downloadable Trail Map available so you can have a better sense of where we are and where we're going.

V

*Sometimes it feels we've come so far we've still so far to go
Sometimes it seems we know so much there are things we'll never know
Once upon a mountain top where everything is clear
I don't know all the reasons why but I'm so glad I'm here*

There might not be any way of saying this that doesn't sound corny yet somehow I need to explain that one of the most important things at any of these campfires is you. It is the connection that you make to the stories or that the stories make to you, the spirit you give to the songs or that the songs give to you, that will truly breathe life into them.

Because of that I'll do my best to make the songs and stories and Campfire Logs entertaining, informative, and sometimes amusing. Most important I hope you'll find them inspiring. Not simply inspiring in ways that have you say "How did he do that?" or that perhaps leave you touched by the yarns spun here but also inspired in ways that make you want to gather the threads of your own life, to spin your own yarns and to build and share your own campfires because the more campfires we build and the more nights we share can surely make the world a brighter, warmer place.

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That's about it for this stage. The next stage, the next campfires, will be introduce The Brothers Four with songs from the campfires being from the group sitting around singing together and the Campfires Chronicles consisting of stories of my first years singing and traveling with the guys.

Thank you for being part of the journey and for spending time at the campfire.



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