

Sincerity is a value that I learned growing up in southwest Virginia. These songs speak my truth. There are moments of tenderness, joy, gratitude, and grief woven into the lyrics. There are a few sassy numbers where I tried to be funny. We'll see how those land.

Many of my beloved people and places are woven into these songs. "Beautiful" is for my Mom, Deanna Bradberry. "Walnut Tree" is for my Dad, Eric Gleaves. "Queer Cowboy" and "Fear" are for my partner, Holden Dillman. I thank every member of my blood family and my chosen family for their love and support.

Josh Goforth and Hasee Ciaccio were the core team in the studio. They shaped each arrangement beautifully and made the songs shine with their singing and playing. Josh is an ace producer. I'm proud of every second of the music we made together. The songs inspired us to dip into different genres: folk, old-time, country, and western swing. A list of guest artists brought even more richness to the songs, including Carla Gover, Chris Rosser, Linda Jean Stokley, Jeff Taylor, and Jared Tyler. I am grateful to all of the brilliant artists and dear friends who contributed to this album.

-Sam Gleaves
August, 2024

CREDITS

All songs written by Samuel R. Gleaves, Fabulachian Music, ASCAP.

1. **Beautiful**

Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass, harmony vocal

Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal

Josh Goforth: guitar, harmony vocal

2. **Honest Men**

Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass, harmony vocal

Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal

Josh Goforth: mandolin

3. **Fear**

Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass

Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal

Josh Goforth: guitar

Carla Gover: harmony vocal

Jeff Taylor: accordion

4. **Queer Cowboy**
Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass
Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal
Josh Goforth: guitar, fiddle, harmony vocal

5. **Amite River**
Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass, harmony vocal
Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal
Josh Goforth: guitar, harmony vocal

6. **No Life Is a Crime**
Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass
Sam Gleaves: banjo, vocal
Jared Tyler: dobro

7. **Safe Home**
Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass
Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal
Josh Goforth: mandolin, guitar
Carla Gover: harmony vocal

8. **Fais Do-Do**
Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass, harmony vocal
Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal
Josh Goforth: guitar, fiddle

9. **Down Home Diva**
Hasee Ciaccio: upright bass
Sam Gleaves: guitar, vocal
Josh Goforth: guitar, fiddle
Chris Rosser: piano
Linda Jean Stokley: harmony vocal

10. **Walnut Tree**
Sam Gleaves: vocal
Josh Goforth: piano, harmony vocal

Produced by Josh Goforth. | Arrangements by Josh Goforth, Hasee Ciaccio, and Sam Gleaves.
Recording and mixing by Chris Rosser at Sound Temple Recording Studios and Hollow Reed
Studio. Assistant engineering by Robert George. Track 9 harmony vocal recorded by J. Tom
Hnatow at Small Blue. Mastered by Mike Monseur, Axis Audio.
Graphic design by Saro Lynch-Thomason. Cover photo by Dot Gleaves, circa 1999.
Liner notes and lyrics at SamGleaves.com | © Sam Gleaves, Reid Creek Records, 2024

1. Beautiful

My first plane ride, Mom and I, Pacific bound
To see her best friend, to see a hippie town

We searched the window from our tin can in the sky
then she whispered to the desert rolling by

Isn't this beautiful? This is the way to live
Isn't this beautiful? You're gonna remember this

We rode to Napa, the wind was whipping all the way
In a ragtop back seat on a California day

They went to Oakland just to hear the Rolling Stones
I jumped bed to bed in a room of my own

I was happy as a boy could ever be
I remember what my Mama said to me

Isn't this beautiful? This is the way to live
Isn't this beautiful? You're gonna remember this

On a street in Frisco we saw two men holding hands
I came to know, I was that kind of man
Sting of shame, all alone in my own skin
Mom just looked at me and then she looked at them

Aren't they beautiful? This is the way to live
Aren't they beautiful? You're gonna remember this

Aren't you beautiful?
Aren't we beautiful?
Remember this

2. Honest Men

I study your lines, trace them with my fingers
In your half lit room, we were on fire

Before this night, we were perfect strangers
I could say the prayer written inside your arm

You said "Being who I am makes me divine"
I am an honest man, we are honest men tonight

Who are your kin? Have they stood beside you?
You were born again, and again and again
Just for their sake

We take our rest, a channel of that peace
On your lean, warm chest I lay my head

Before the day broke I dressed in the dark
Flew a thousand miles, still you linger near
Like the old crooked roads we ran on our own
The same green hillsides led us here

You said "Being who I am makes me divine"
I am an honest man
We are honest men tonight

I am an honest man

3. Fear

My darlin, we're children. Here in our hearts
are secrets that no tongue can tell.
How did we become men, playing our parts?
Still how we long to be held.

I know so surely when you are near
That love is stronger than fear.

Each cycle, each spiral whirls us around,
Stinging and clouding our sight.
Just when I feel lonesome, your voice will sound.
You keep me safe through the night.

I know so surely when you are near
That love is stronger than fear.

4. Queer Cowboy

From the broad cactus desert to the high mountain pines
I searched for a fellow, one I could call mine
Down in ole Kentucky in a swingin' door saloon
I saw his eyes a sparkling and boys I had to swoon

He's my queer cowboy from his hat on down
Yipee kye yay-ee, I'm lasso bound

He don't twirl a pistol, he don't ride the range
But he makes my spurs jingle, that will never change
Under his belt buckle, his hips are wild and free
When his pearls are snapping off, it's happy trails for me

He's my queer cowboy from his hat on down
Yipee kye yay-ee, I'm lasso bound

Way out on the prairie the coyotes howl and whine
When his pony trots away, I sit alone and pine
I know he's a nomad, bound to ramble and roam
But after that fall roundup, I know he's coming home

He's my queer cowboy from his hat on down
Yipee kye yay-ee, I'm lasso bound

He's my queer cowboy with country roots
Yipee kye yay-ee, we're knockin' boots

5. Amite River

I long to be in the Amite River
Waist deep with the one I love
Southern sun on his strong shoulders
He's the one I'm dreaming of

He paints his chest with red clay crimson
Waist deep with the one I love
I draw patterns, reach to hold him
He's the one I'm dreaming of

I left spring and flew to summer
Waist deep with the one I love
We picked berries down by his Mother's
He's the one I'm dreaming of

Oh, the bliss that we knew then
How I wish it could come again

I can see the weight he carries
Waist deep with the one I love
Watch for strangers, dark eyes wary
He's the one I'm dreaming of

Way down south in Saint Helena
Waist deep with the one I love
We found shade with naught between us
He's the one I'm dreaming of

Oh, the bliss that we knew then
How I wish it could come again

Still the current pulls me under
Waist deep with the one I love
Still he is one thousand wonders
He's the one I'm dreaming of

6. No Life is a Crime

No life is a crime, no life is a crime
We are one humankind
No life is a crime

She works the job you refuse
Sweats in the July sun
To our government she's no citizen
They take a cut when payday comes

No life is a crime, no life is a crime
We are one humankind
No life is a crime

She puts herself through school
She's in the family way
But they stole her choice, took away her voice
Justice is what she needs today

No life is a crime, no life is a crime
We are one humankind
No life is a crime

He walked to the corner store
Just to get something to eat
That man saw his skin, took one look at him
Shot that child in the street

No life is a crime, no life is a crime
We are one humankind
No life is a crime

I won't be ashamed
I'm out and I'm living free
You might kick me down, you might call me names
You can't take my dignity

No life is a crime
No life is a crime
Show your love humankind
No life is a crime

7. Safe Home

All that stood steady is washing downstream
The creeks and the rivers have busted their seams
Thousands of people ran from their beds
Thousands of prayers were said

No peace in the morning, no holy dove
We wait and we worry for those that we love
Still we are searching 'til all are safe
Making a way from no way

Ancestors' hands, strength of this land
Care for our own
Be with us now as we shovel and plow
Keep us and lead us safe home
Keep us and lead us safe home

Sweat runs together, shoulders pull weight
We're digging and building, changing our fate
Showing the world both near and far
What kind of people we are

Ancestors' hands, strength of this land
Care for our own
Be with us now as we shovel and plow
Keep us and lead us safe home
Keep us and lead us safe home
Keep us and lead us safe home

8. Fais Do-Do

Louisiana man, come dance with me
I'll two-step on two left feet
Just any way you like to move
Honey, that's what we came here to do

You said New Orleans, not New Orleans
We sailed the river on the Creole Queen
In a rowdy bar, on an old church pew
Here I am, right close to you

If I had my way, and I'm telling true
I would go from the holler to the bayou
Just to dance with you at the fais do-do
Dance with you at the fais do-do

"There's a sound I miss." That's what you said
to the gold framed picture beside your bed
There she stood in her Sunday dress
Down in Mississippi where the dirt was red

Now the runway lights are all aglow
I keep thinking about the name you chose
Linking arms on a quiet street
Talking 'bout wild women that we'd like to meet

Throw a clean shirt in the cab of your truck
Show me the country where you come from

If I had my way, and I'm telling true
I would go from the holler to the bayou
Just to dance with you at the fais do-do
Dance with you at the fais do-do

9. Down Home Diva

She drinks Pinot Gris, she cooks with bacon grease
She's been known to dance all night long to Lynyrd Skynyrd and Springsteen
She can stomp out the blues with her high heeled shoes
She's a tried and true Down Home Diva

She's got Southern grace, hair-dyed, sun-tanned for days
She's a Diva sublime, singin' karaoke, "Strawberry Wine"
She takes no shit from small town hypocrites
You best not forget, she's a Down Home Diva

Now I know and you know
She knows and we know
She is a Down Home Diva

She can wine and dine, quote any lit. you choose
She can drink Busch Light on trivia night at the Moose
Her friends all rely on her sage advice
She's been through it twice, she's a Down Home Diva

All her bosom friends tolerate no flack
When her man does her wrong, they roll up like a she-wolf pack
When some fool of a guy steps way over the line
He might wake up to find the Down Home Divas

Now I know and you know
She knows and we know
She is a Down Home Diva

You damn right, she is a down home diva

10. Walnut Tree

Do you remember when I was a child
Piling the leaves and diving in wild
You came to me with an old pillowcase
This is our job for today

Black as tar, pungent as pine
We gathered all the walnuts we could find
Hauling and hulling and stowing away
Plenty left over to trade

Tell me a story here in the leaves
Meet me under the walnut tree
Over blue mountains, down to the sea
Meet me under the walnut tree

Snakes on the bark, branches so high
Bright yellow blaze, best autumn sky
When I lay hands on the rough green fruit
It bears a message from you

Tell me a story here in the leaves
Meet me under the walnut tree
Over blue mountains, down to the sea
Meet me under the walnut tree

Bending and breaking, working with care
Ritual, memory, family, prayer
Season to season, year after year
We come together here

Tell me a story here in the leaves
Meet me under the walnut tree
Over blue mountains, down to the sea
Meet me under the walnut tree