

# Van Wagner Songbook

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# Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 1: Campfire Classics and Deep Cuts

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Photo Credit: Steve Patterson  
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# Bridges Burned (Tioga County)

## Lost in the Mountains

Van Wagner

Sept. 2010

### Verse 1:

G C  
 When I think back to the bridges I've burned  
 D G  
 I try to count the lessons learned.  
 C  
 I drop the count at 34  
 D G  
 Old mistakes, won't you come no more.

### Chorus:

C G  
 I'm standing alone in Tioga County  
 C G  
 No one on my left  
 C D  
 No one on my right  
 G-----Em C G  
 And I've paved every mile of this road that I'm on  
 D G  
 With bridges burned 12,000 nights.

### Verse 2:

Have you been there, have you felt like this?  
 No one but the wind to kiss.  
 Just you, and the hills.  
 All alone standing still.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

You choose your path, you dig your ditch.  
 You make your bed, you sleep in it.  
 You baton down, boots straps up.  
 You forge ahead and bid good luck.

# Churches and Bars

## If Time Could Stand Alone

Tom Flannery and Van Wagner

March 2002

### Chorus:

C G  
Churches and bars  
C G  
Churches and bars  
C D G  
All I need is churches and bars  
C G C G  
Won't find me in a dry old town  
C D G  
Not a drop of religion to be found

### Verse 1:

G Em  
Folks round here don't need many things  
C D  
just the shirt on their backs and a song to sing  
G Em  
Reverend Billy likes his wine  
C D  
turns a feast day into a good old time  
Em D C D  
12 different languages, all speaking his praises  
Em D  
some kneel at church doors  
C D  
some lay on barroom floors

### Chorus

### Verse 2:

Used to be that coal was king  
Round here it could buy anything  
That was yesterday my friend  
So set 'em up till I reach the end  
Communion 7 days a week  
Yuengling to drink, Mrs. T's eat  
Old time religion and lager beer  
That's what keeps me living here

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

Good Lord watches over me  
especially when I'm too blind to see  
Lays my head down oh so slow  
when my stomach does the do-si-do  
So grab your partner swing her round  
to that Pennsylvania sound  
Sing with me just 1 more time  
Before I head down in this mine.

# Crosscut Saw

## Only Passing Through

Van Wagner  
August 20, 2004

### Verse 1:

Am  
The war was over, Mr. Lincoln had won  
G Am  
I drew my navy wages and returned to my home.

Sullivan County where my grandfather came  
C G  
Soil was rocky, the sky always rain.

I remember grandpa's stories of when he was a kid  
Bison in the valleys elk on the ridge.  
Now it's all gone, a new hunt has begun  
To find the Tiadoghton that make the sawmills hum.

### Chorus:

Am  
All I need is a crosscut saw.  
G Am  
A double bit ax and 80 trees to fall.  
C Am  
The spring is coming I can smell it all around.  
C G Am  
My soul's being tempted by that high water sound.

### Verse 2:

Up on the Loyalsock it's straight and it's tall.  
There's Pine up there like you never saw.  
Only brave loggers bare the winter cold.  
Snow falls heavy on the Appalachian fold.

Up in the morning at 5 am  
Thrown down some biscuits, coffee, and ham.  
12 hour shift on the teamster crew  
skiddin' logs to the river in the ice and snow.

### Chorus

**Capo:** 5th fret (live); 3rd fret (album)

### Verse 3:

We lash the logs together with hickory and oak  
No rope nor iron just pins and bows.  
A sweep at the front and back, a shack for the crew  
20,000 board feet ready to tie loose.

When the ice finally breaks and the water's good  
and high.  
We'll head down the Loyalsock our crew of 5.  
3 Days on the raft down to Montoursville  
we hit the Susquehanna waters smooth and still

### Chorus

### Verse 4:

Once we get to Marietta we sell off the logs  
\$100 split by the river hogs.  
We head back north , Walking all the way.  
One hand on your knife, the other on your pay.  
  
If it's a good season we'll have 2 or 3 more runs  
Then the year is over and the summer has begun.  
I'll watch as rust builds on my tools  
And long for the day I'm back with my logging crew.

### Chorus



# In a Song

## A Mountain Man's Dream

Van Wagner

Oct 25, 2015

F                    C  
 When another day is done  
 G                    Am  
 You're asking what went on  
 F                    C            G  
 A song comes on comes on.

Change is the only norm  
 You keep on keeping on  
 In a song keeping on keeping on.

The fog of the morning rolls  
 The night takes it's toll  
 A song moves it on moves it on.

A friend tells you of the news  
 But what else is new  
 A song keeps it true keeps it true.

You hit your lowest low  
 How much lower can it go  
 A song let's you know let's you know.

You soar your highest soar  
 Higher than you've been before.  
 A song lifts you more lifts you more.

Love will take you in  
 If you're wise you'll let it win  
 Love song in the wind in the wind.



# Rattlesnake

## The Fringe

Van Wagner  
August 24, 2013

**Capo:** 2nd or 4th fret depending on  
size of snake (live); None (album)

### Verse 1:

Am F  
There's all kinds of snakes that live in these  
mountains  
Am F  
They slither by rivers they fall into fountains  
C G Am E  
They do it all without arms and legs  
Am E Am  
Truth much stranger than fiction..

I've heard that Saint Patrick Cast them away  
He drove the serpents right into the Bay  
There's just one flaw with the Saint Patrick Tale  
There were never no snakes in Ireland.

### Chorus:

C G  
Oh Rattlesnake I've seen you before  
Am F  
I'm gonna see you again  
C G  
I go back and forth from fear to respect  
Am F  
But it's fear in the end.

### Verse 2:

Of all my rattlers only one tried to bite me  
I think deep down he didn't want to fight me  
Just passed my leg then he made me aware  
Some timbers not for cutting.

I've moved quite a few off of route 44  
Between route 6 and old Jersey Shore  
A snake in one hand and a motorcycle band  
Reminds you that you're still with the living.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

So to all who travel throughout Penn's  
Woods  
If you're lucky to see one respect it  
you should.  
Please don't harm it just let it be  
The only good snake is a live one.

### Chorus



# Where the Bears Dance

## Woolrich Coat

Ollie and Van Wagner  
January 13, 2009

**Capo:** 5th fret (album)

### Verse 1:

G C G  
Up on the mountain you can see it from the road  
D C G  
A field a rocks where nothing seems to grow.  
G C G  
Dad told me that's the spot on the hill  
D C G  
Where the bears come to dance when the moon is filled.

### Chorus:

G D  
Where they Dance. Where they Dance.

### Verse 2:

When the bears dance the world is asleep.  
When the bears dance the stomp out all the trees.  
Paws and claws dust from the pines.  
Bellies full of berries and true moonshine.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

If you're out camping for an overnight stay  
And you wonder from your tent and see the bears play.  
Don't take no photos to prove what you saw  
Just join in the good times and stomp with them all.

### Chorus





# Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 2: Rivers & Trees

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Photo Credit: Steve Patterson  
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# Waterfall

## Ash to Ash

Van Wagner

August 30, 2014

**Intro:** Em G D Em x4

### Chorus:

Em G D Em  
The power of a waterfall  
Em G D Em  
Water runs from the mountains tall.  
Em G D Em  
Take in some, take in all  
Em D Em  
The power of a waterfall.

### Verse 1:

D G Em  
A mystic thing, foggy air  
D G Em  
Between 2 mountains there's nothing there.  
D G Em  
Water waiting to be rain  
D G Em  
Down the valley like a train.

### Chorus

### Verse 2:

These mountains once locked in ice  
Squeezed in a glacial vice.  
When the melt formed new streams  
It bashed through boulders and carved ravines.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

There's famous ones like Niagara Falls  
Quiet ones like the seven tubs  
And though the drive takes awhile  
My favorite is Ohiopyle.

# Ash to Ash

## Ash to Ash

Van Wagner

December 22, 2014

### Chorus:

Am            G        Am  
 Ash to ash and dust to dust.  
 C                            G    Am  
 Wood to splinters and iron to rust.  
 Am            G        Am  
 Ash to ash and dust to dust.  
 Am            G        Am  
 Ash to ash and dust to dust.

### Verse 1:

          F                    G            Am  
 My dad taught me of many trees.  
          F                            G    Am  
 The Oaks, the Pine, and Hickories.  
          C    G    Am  
 He taught me the Ash but I paid little mind.  
 Am    G    Am  
 A common tree with a simple line.

### Chorus

### Verse 2:

Here I live in 2014  
 Not an Ash alive left for spring.  
 A beetle has come, the Ash is no more.  
 They all will fall from the emerald borer.

### Verse 3:

I sit here now on a floor of Ash.  
 Rocking chairs and baseball bats.  
 Hard to believe they'll soon be gone.  
 Just a few years ago they were so common.

### Chorus

### Verse 4:

I tell my boys "take a look at that stand"  
 By the skate park on St. Mary's land.  
 They've painted an X on every tree.  
 They'll all be gone in a matter of weeks.

### Verse 5:

I'm not high and mighty, I've got no horse.  
 Ain't pointing fingers just strumming chords.  
 I'm saying out loud I can't believe.  
 I'm gonna out-live these trees.

### Chorus

### Outro:

Ash to ash and dust to dust  
 Ash to ash and dust to dust

# Started With a Board

## Started With a Board

Van Wagner

July 11, 2012

### Verse 1:

Am  
Some floods come from water  
Some just come from life  
Dm Am  
No matter what kind of flood you face  
E Am  
You need a boat to survive.

Lord Said to Noah  
There's gonna be a flood.  
Go round up all those critters  
Get em' out of the mud.

### Chorus:

Am  
And it started with a board  
Just a piece of Pine  
And it started with a board  
E Am  
And it ended fine.

The biggest things in life  
Gotta start small  
You start with a board  
and you build it tall.

### Verse 2:

Crossing a great ocean  
Coming to America  
Some by choice some by chains  
Building a new world.

Nina Pinta Santa Maria  
Just a few of the thousands that came  
The greatest country there ever was  
Built by every race.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

Iron tracks and wooden ties  
Transcontinental lines.  
The World had never seen a railroad  
Cross a nation wide.  
Promontory Utah  
The day that East met West  
The greatest railroad that ever was  
A golden spike on the crest.

### Chorus

### Verse 4:

Batter up the umpire said  
He dusted off the plate  
Up stepped the great Hank Aaron  
And beat the record set by the Babe.  
Cal Ripken Jr.  
Ernie Banks, Willie Mays.  
Great plays by the greatest players  
Greatest game ever made

### Chorus:

And it started with a board  
Just a piece of Ash  
It started with a board  
The pitches come fast  
The biggest things in life  
Gotta start small  
You start with a board  
And you build it tall

### Verse 5:

The screams of Jimi Hendrix  
The soul of B.B. King  
The acoustic sound of Woody Guthrie  
Frailing on the strings  
All of the great music  
Guitars strumming chords  
From silent night to rock n' roll  
They all started with a board

### Chorus

# Be A Tree

## Be A Tree

Van Wagner

June 8, 2006

### Chorus:

D        A    D            A  
 If I could be anyone but me  
 G    A                    D  
 I wonder who would I be.  
 D            A    D            A  
 If you could be any type of tree  
 G        A                    D  
 Tell me, what would you be?

### Verse 1:

G                            D  
 Maybe the white Pine tall among the rest  
 G                            D    A  
 Been called the king of the forest.  
 G                            D  
 Or a solid Hickory won't bend before a break  
 Bm                            A  
 One thing's for sure trees make no mistakes.

### Chorus

### Verse 2:

Oh the Hemlock yeah I'd take that  
 I'd cool off the trout streams up on Cherry Flats  
 While on the Cherry well that won't be bad  
 Highest dollar in the woods maybe I oughta  
 rethink that

### Chorus

### Bridge:

E----F#-----G  
 Are you solid where you are  
 E----- F#--G  
 Like the spruce in this guitar  
 E-----F#--G----A  
 I bet you've got a tale to tell

### Verse 3:

Oh goodnight Locust adios American Elm  
 A moment of silence for the Chestnut and it's  
 realm  
 Tomorrow's bringing those Shadberry blooms  
 These woods are calling, calling home to you.

# Shagbark Hickory

Shikellamy

Van Wagner

August 2007

**Intro:** Em

**Chorus:**

Em Am  
The Shagbark Hickory is a mighty hard tree  
B7 Em  
And it grows in the lowlands by rivers and streams.  
Am  
When the snow is falling and the wind blows cold  
B7 Em  
Then the Shagbark Hickory holds it's own.

**Verse 1:**

G D  
In the deep dark woods where no one ever goes  
Em  
There's a stand of timber where the Shagbark grows.  
G D  
An open hand in solitude.  
Em  
You'll only be found if you're searching too.

**Chorus**

**Verse 2:**

Hard times hit and they never seem to stop.  
You're back on the bottom just as soon as you reach  
the top.  
You find yourself standing cause it's all you know to  
do.  
Like that old tree with a grain straight and true.

**Chorus**

**Bridge:** Verse Chords x1

**Verse 3:**

On the forest floor it might turn to rotten  
wood.  
Or carpenters' hands might work it into  
good.  
As the knife is drawn along the grain.  
This piece of Hickory breathes life again.

**Chorus**



# River Rat

## River Rat

Van Wagner  
June 8, 2016

**Capo:** 4th or 5th fret

**Intro:** Chorus Chords x1

**Chorus [Chords x2 Each Time]:**

Em                    G  
Raised up from the river mud  
Am                    C        D  
River rat running in his blood.  
Em                    G  
One thing that was understood  
Am                    C        D  
River rats are up to no good.

**Verse 1:**

Am  
As sure as the river flows  
Em  
It's something everybody knows.  
Am  
The kids from across the tracks  
Bm  
Everyone of them a river rat.

They learn to swim by the river shore  
Cut off jeans and not much more.  
The lucky ones have a boat  
It gets them where they need to go.

**Chorus**

**Verse 2:**

The old men remember times  
When eels were caught on fishing lines.  
Now the fish don't bite so well  
Now they're only catching hell.

Kids down town with nothing to do.  
You can guess what all that leads to.  
Idle hands bring you down  
When there's nothing to do in your town.

**Chorus**

**Verse 3:**

Told more than he can count  
A river rat will never amount.  
Written off before age 10  
But nobody checked with him.

He's got dreams of bigger things.  
A Mind that thinks a heart that sings.  
A river rat, that's for sure  
But this one's gonna change the World.

**Chorus**

# Lightning Tree

## Woolrich Coat

Van Wagner  
August 28, 2008

**Capo:** 2nd fret

**Intro:** Chorus Chords x2

### Verse 1:

G                            C            G  
Let's all agree, there's no time for misery  
C                            G  
Is that a deal for you and me?  
                          D        G  
Let's put the past far behind.  
G                            C            G  
If there's a hatchet, can we go bury it?  
C                            G  
There's no need to carry it.  
                          D        G  
Bury yours and bury mine.

### Chorus:

(F)    (Em)    G  
Let's go up to the lightning tree  
      (F)    (Em)    G  
It's time to reconcile  
(F)        (Em)    G  
Life's too short for enemies  
                          (D)                    G  
When you're only here for a while.

### Verse 2:

What are we proving, holding firmly to that grudge?  
Don't expect it to ever budge  
Carried baggage for far too long.  
Let's try forgiving, let bygones wash away  
History was yesterday  
It's time we move along.

### Chorus:

### Verse 3:

If not for you, then do it for the Lord.  
He was never one for the sword  
He came from the school of peace.  
It ain't easy, To let go of all of it  
To forgive and to forget  
But in peace is victory.

### Chorus

**Outro:** Chorus Chords x2

# Sit by the River and Dream

## Ash to Ash

Van Wagner

August 2014

**Intro:** G D Em x2  
Verse Chords x1

### Verse 1:

G D Em  
Gonna sit by the river and dream  
G D Em  
Let my soul roll on up with the stream.  
C D G C  
The water, the willow, the maples all green.  
Em D G  
Gonna sit by the river and dream.

Gonna go to the mountains and heel.  
For a day maybe longer if I feel  
Where the bridges are wood and the barns are steel  
Gonna go to the mountains and heel.

### Chorus:

D C G  
Why do I worry  
C G D  
It does, no good, at all.  
D C G  
Why do I hurry,  
C G D  
I burn out, then I fall.  
G D Em x2

### Verse 2:

Gonna pick a direction and walk  
All alone there's no need to talk.  
Follow the call of the red tailed hawk.  
Gonna pick a direction and walk.

Gonna finally lay down for some rest.  
As the Sun goes down in the west.  
I'm tired from my head, to my feet, to my chest.  
Gonna finally lay down for some rest.

### Chorus

**Bridge:** Verse Chords x1

### Verse 3:

Gonna sit by the river and dream  
Let my soul roll with the stream.  
The water, the willow, the maples all green.  
Gonna sit by the river and dream.

**Outro:** Verse Chords x1





# Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 3: Among these Mountains, Stones, and Creeks

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Photo Credit: Steve Patterson  
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# Bullet Hole

## Ash to Ash

Van Wagner  
February 8, 2015

**Intro:** Em G (x3)  
C Em D G

### Verse 1:

G C  
There's a stone in Clinton County

G  
Where a rifle left its sign.

C  
When I see it, it reminds me  
D

Of a long forgotten time

C  
When market hunters roamed these mountains

G  
Chasing elk, deer, and bear.

C  
The crack of their Winchester  
D G  
Their missed shot is still here.

### Chorus:

Em  
Bullet hole

G  
Just a mark left behind

Em  
Bullet hole

G  
Just a shadow of that day

Em  
Bullet hole

G  
Just a mark to remind

C Em D  
Life's a close call hey hey.

### Verse 2:

Last night I was pickin'  
With some friends at Ulsch Gap.  
They showed me a Woolrich  
With a hole front to back.

They say this man is still living  
He took a round to the hip.  
Just a hole in a Woolrich  
From a 30.06

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

At the camp where I 1st hunted  
In the kitchen there's spot.  
A man came in from hunting  
And his rifle went off.

The shot went through the ceiling  
Into the bunk room upstairs.  
Just up through the floorboards  
Into a mattress up there.

### Chorus

**Outro:** Em G (x3)

C Em  
Life's a close call hey hey.

# Halo Round the Moon

## River Rat

Van Wagner  
November 15, 2016

**Tuning:** Drop D  
**Capo:** 5th fret

**Intro:** Dm (x2)

**Outro:** Dm

### Verse 1:

Dm

A change in the season, summer to fall

G Dm

The wind takes leaves in, relentless and raw.

The days are shorter, the night so soon.

F A Dm

The frost hangs a halo round the moon.

G F Dm

Halo round the moon.

### Verse 2:

A time of migration, ancient herds.

Time to spread wings, millions of birds.

Passenger pigeons, would take to flight.

Wings turned day, into night.

Halo round the moon.

### Verse 3:

Bring on the winter, time stands still

Every cold breath you take in, every brittle chill.

Like a blanket, on everything.

After dark days, comes spring.

Halo round the moon.

### Verse 4:

The spring comes with water, rain upon rain.

The Sun grows bolder, green comes again.

Humans need it, we need to see green.

It washes our souls until clean.

Halo round the moon.

Halo round the moon.

# Sassafras Tea

## A Mountain Man's Dream

Van Wagner

September 6, 2015

### Chorus:

F C F C  
Sassafras Tea, Sassafras Tea

G C  
From the roots or the leaves

F C F C  
Sassafras Tea, Sassafras Tea

G C  
The nectar of the mountains to me.

### Verse 1:

G C F C  
They say it's bad for you if you drink too much.

G C F C  
Gallons and gallons a whole bathtub.

G C F C  
If you drink that whole bathtub they say it's bad for you

G C F C  
If you drink that much I'd say you have issues.

### Chorus

### Verse 2:

I've always loved, good sweet birch.  
A twig in my mouth when I'm working on work.  
No matter how I boil, no matter how I steep  
I can't make birch into tea.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

Indian Spice Bush, I love that smell.  
The leaves, the berries, they do me well.  
My neighbor Keith made some into brew  
Compared to Sassafras it just won't do.

### Chorus

**Bridge:** F C F C

### Verse 4:

I suppose you could spike it and give it  
some kick

I prefer it plain just as is.

When my days are over if you raise a  
glass to me

I hope that your glass is filled with  
Sassafras Tea

### Chorus

# Ghosts are Real

## Be a Tree

Van Wagner

April, 2006

**Intro:** Em

**Verse 1:**

Em

There's ice in the night air there's rapture in the wind.

C

You can see it in the window glare or aching in your hand.

D

I never said corruption, no mention of deceit

Em

Just acknowledging something I can't hear or see.

C

Em

Ghosts are real boys, ghosts are real.

**Chorus:**

G

Ghosts are real boys, ghosts are real.

D

Am

Em

Make no mistake about it ghosts are real.

G

D

You can call them apparitions call them spirits if you feel

Am

C

Em

Make no mistake about it them ghosts they are real.

**Verse 2:**

So many times I've traveled highways day and night

Both interstates and byways shotgun on my

right

I've learned to accept them when they make their

presence known

What choice do I have when they come rattling

bones.

Ghosts are real boys, ghosts are real

**Chorus**

**Bridge:** Verse (x1)

**Verse 3:**

I know she is here, right now with me.

She's a guardian spirit over my family.

Although her time on Earth was fast as can  
be

I think she's found her quiet and peace.

Ghosts are real boys, ghosts are real

**Chorus**

**Outro:** Em

# Thankful for the Land

## Recluse

Van Wagner  
August 31, 2017

**Intro:** G C G D

### Verse 1:

G C  
I'm thankful for the land that I have, it gives so much to me.  
G D  
Clean water in the well I drink, clean food to eat.  
G C  
The trees heat my home from cold, 7 months of fire.  
G D  
The trees give me lumber to build, higher and higher.

### Verse 2:

I'm thankful for the woods I share, they give so much to me.  
Venison, the deer I chase berries and seeds.  
The grouse and turkey too, feed my family.  
Squirrel when times are tough, has been a gift to me.

**Intro** (x1)

### Verse 3:

I'm thankful for the streams I have, they give so much to me.  
The bass in summer trout in the spring.  
Crayfish now and then, just right when steamed.  
So much life provided all from the streams.

### Verse 4:

I'm thankful for the sounds I hear music to my life  
Crickets and Cicadas, a katydid choir.  
Coyotes last night right about sundown  
I would not trade an orchestra for nature's sounds.

**Intro** (x1)

### Verse 5:

I'm thankful for the colors I see vivid and clean.  
Shale with it's iron red, trees of forest green.  
The innocence of winters white, everything so still  
Painted with the masters brush, a perfect pastel.

**Capo:** 2nd fret

### Verse 6:

I'm thankful for all my friends they  
mean so much to me.  
They're there for me when I need them  
most and also in between.  
Love from the start of life love at the  
end  
I'm thankful for the love I feel that  
comes from good friends.

### Verse 7:

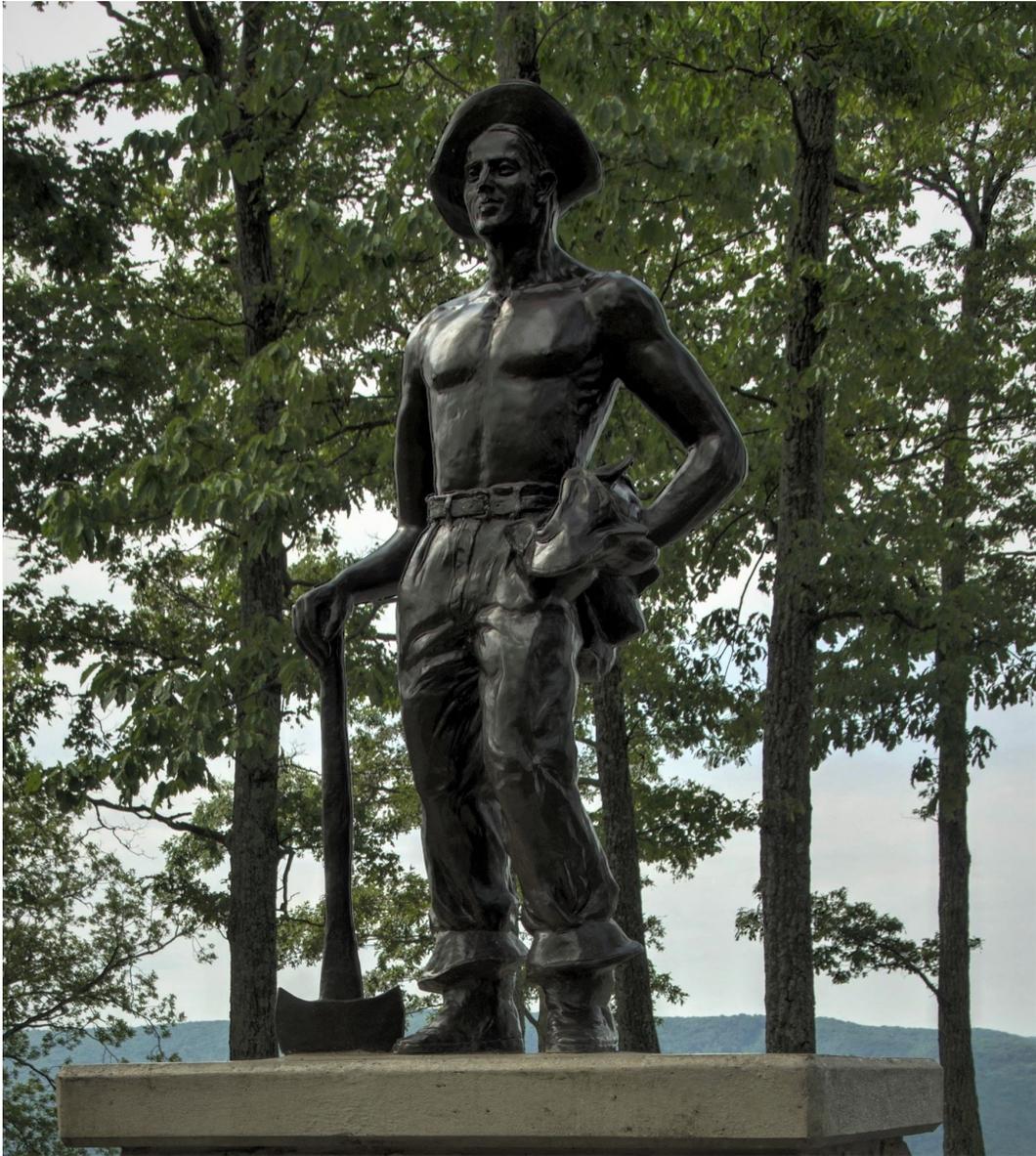
I'm thankful for all these things, they  
give so much to me.











# Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 4: Coal, Wood, Ore, & Lore

Assembled with permission of Van Wagner by fans of Van Wagner

Photo Credit: Steve Patterson  
Last Updated: 11/25/2020



# Hard Coal Navy

Woolrich Coat

Van Wagner  
August 23, 2008

**Capo:** 2nd fret (album)

**Intro:** Am C D F Am

**Verse 1:**

Am C  
On the banks of the river, rusting away.  
D F  
A barn red coal barge is all that remains.  
Am C  
It hasn't touched the water except for a few floods.  
D F Am  
It's loaded with river coal and Susquehanna mud.

Up in Wyoming Valley Nanticoke and East  
The collieries washed anthracite in the rivers and the  
creeks.  
Some coal was lost to the river, washed downstream  
and west.  
It settled in drifts like snow behind a fence.

**Chorus:**

G Am  
The hard coal navy hasn't sailed for years.  
F Am  
Quiet are the engines and the old paddlewheels.  
G Am  
They know it's still down there they feel it in their souls  
F Am  
The captains still longing to go dredging for coal.

**Verse 2:**

There were hundreds of barges when dredging was at  
its peak  
Harvesting coal that would have washed out to sea.  
Loaded on conveyer and rounded like a beet.  
Sold up and down the river for cookstoves and heat.

They've all left the river now, the regulations strict.  
The pages of paperwork have just grown too thick.  
Perhaps it's for the best, for the health of the stream.  
But I must admit I miss that old paddlewheel fleet.

**Chorus**

**Bridge:** Intro (x1)

**Verse 3:**

Sometimes with my family we head out in  
the waves.  
A 5 horsepower Johnson on the river for the  
day.  
Galvanized buckets are waiting in the haul.  
We pick the banks by hand that same river  
coal.

**Chorus**

**Outro:** F Am

# Shortleaf Pine

## Shortleaf Pine

Van Wagner

August 27, 2018

**Intro:** Bm A G Bm

Bm A G D

**Verse 1:**

G D  
15 years hunting Ginseng

G D  
All these years not a one

G D  
Then on the trail at Ricketts Glen

Bm A  
I almost stepped on one.

A Hellbender in the mountains  
They're out there hiding in these streams  
Believe me these things are out there  
It's my fault if they go unseen.

**Chorus:**

Bm A G  
Some things are scarce

Bm  
And hard to find

Bm A G  
Sometimes right before your eyes

D  
There's a Shortleaf Pine

**Bridge:** Bm A G D

**Verse 2:**

Oh the Pennsylvania Bobcat  
They've seen you with eyes and ears  
If you're lucky you'll spot one  
Just as quick they'll disappear

Rattlesnakes in Montour County  
40 years to just see one  
Some people fear what they don't understand  
And they kill them with their guns

**Chorus**

**Bridge** (x1)

**Verse 3:**

From here to Alabama  
The land of the Shortleaf Pine  
Like the period of a sentence  
Pennsylvania is the end of the line.

So I rambled over these mountains  
I had to find one on my own.  
When I finally found one  
It was 100 feet from my home.

**Chorus**

**Outro:** Bridge (x1)

# Dunnawetter

## Walking the Streets

Van Wagner and Matt Harrison  
June 2004

**Capo:** 2nd fret

**Intro:** G (x4)

### Verse 1:

G  
Every time I'm in Sunbury the rain's a coming down.  
D  
Winds pick up, thunder rolls around.  
Em C  
The air gets cool as day turns to night  
G  
Lightning crashes what a powerful sight.

### Chorus:

Em C G D  
Oh Dunnawetter, the fields are turning green.  
Em  
It's the life of the land  
C  
From God's own hand  
G D  
Making it pure and clean.

**Bridge:** Intro (x1)

### Verse 2:

Miles of water coming down today  
Miles more headed towards the Bay.  
The Old Chesapeake up to the brim  
Back in the North is where it begins.

### Chorus

**Bridge:** Intro (x1)  
Verse (x1)

### Verse 3:

From the top of the mountain on Mile Hill  
Road  
See the storm brewing in the valley below  
The wind picked up, the leaves came  
down  
The storm so close you could touch it  
from the ground

### Chorus

**Outro:** Intro (x1)

# The Winds of Idaho

## The Pickle Barrel

Van Wagner

September 2002

**Intro:** D A D  
G D

**Verse 1:**

D A D  
I woke up to the sound of coyotes  
G D  
And the sight of the Sawtooth range.  
A Bm  
The smell of sage and sawdust  
G A  
Idaho in a morning rain.

D A D  
A logging camp outside of Stanley  
G D  
Salmon River between the plains  
A Bm  
This ground is hard and dusty  
D A D  
The work is just the same.

**Chorus:**

G D  
As fall sets in on the Aspen  
Bm A  
The Lodgepole waiting for a snow.  
G D  
I can almost feel myself changing  
A D  
With the winds of Idaho

**Bridge:** D A D

**Verse 2:**

We're skidding Fir, we're skidding Lodgepole  
We're setting chokers on the bull line.  
Every few hours we hit the coffee  
It's been steepin' on the fire.

That's how it is Pacific logging  
But no 2 days are the same  
Something new in every holler  
This land is far from tamed.

**Chorus**

**Bridge:** D A D  
G D  
A Bm  
G A

**Verse 3:**

Soon the snow will cut our season  
And rust will take our chains.  
Soon we'll be leaving  
Pack up camp, head home again.

But I'll keep a bag of fresh sawdust  
For cabin fever setting in  
I'll close my eyes and smell the forest  
And breath in the Idaho wind.

**Chorus**

**Outro:** D A G D



# 83lb Hammer

## Recluse

Van Wagner  
February 2017

**Tuning:** Drop D (album) or capo on 2nd  
fret of top 5 strings (A D G B E)

**Intro:** D  
G  
A D

**Chorus:**  
D  
3 pounds of wood, 80 pounds of iron  
G F D  
3 pounds of wood, 80 pounds of iron  
A G D  
In a shower of sparks swimming in fire

**Verse 1:**  
A G D  
You may have seen rollers, you may have seen a press  
A G D  
But you never have seen a hammer like this.  
G  
I swing it all day at the rolling mill  
D A D  
It takes a mighty hammer to straighten a rail.

## Chorus

**Bridge:** Intro (x1)

**Verse 2:**  
It takes 2 of us to lift 1 rail.  
Over 400 pounds we can do it well.  
We know we're being watched, we take pride in our work.  
I can show them all what an iron man is worth.

## Chorus

**Bridge:** Intro (x1)

**Verse 3:**  
There's puddlers there's helpers there's  
others on shears  
There's no such thing as an easy job  
here.  
I've found my place in this rolling mill  
Swinging my hammer on these t-rails.

## Chorus

**Outro:** Intro (x1)

# Leatherman

## Going Back to Bald Top

Van Wagner, Matt Harrison, and Karl Shellenberger  
August 2000

**Capo:** 2nd fret (album)

**Intro:** C

**Chorus**

**Verse 1:**

C G  
The Leatherman is your best friend on your journey through life,  
C  
With it's trusty pliers and its razor sharp knife.  
G  
The handle won't fall apart like the generic brands  
C  
There's only one true American Leatherman.

**Outro:** Chorus (x1)

**Chorus:**

F C  
All the ladies know that this tool's for real  
G C  
Made of the finest steel, just see how it feels  
F C  
When you break a string while you are out performing  
G C  
To pull out the peg, reach down to the top of your leg.

**Bridge:** F C  
G C

**Verse 2:**

Have you ever been stuck in your harmonica holder?  
And you couldn't get it loose with a 2-ton boulder.  
Just take that trusty tool to that stubborn bolt,  
And you'll bust out of that holder like a wild colt.

**Chorus**

**Bridge** (x1)

**Verse 3:**

When you're on a date and the night is to its end.  
And she walks you to the door and she invites you in.  
Don't hesitate, procrastinate just go on in,  
When your stomach gets queasy pull out your Leatherman.

# Chickens Lament

## Be A Tree

Van Wagner  
June 16, 2006

**Note:** Song played in G on album

### Verse 1:

C

It's hard to be a chicken especially on my farm  
The chickens that live here, aren't living very long

Some in the evening some the morning fog  
Some from the weasels and some my brothers dog.

### Verse 2:

Scratching in the gravel picking in the mash  
Turn over a rotten log and treat them to the stash

Get them in the morning dodging chicken legs  
Boys you haven't lived until you've had my scrambled eggs

### Verse 3:

We must have lost a dozen to the weasel and the fox  
But I never saw her coming that old Red Tailed Hawk

Take pity on these chickens raise your glasses high  
A toast to my feathered friends before they up and die

### Verse 4:

It's hard to be a chicken especially on my farm  
The chickens that live here, aren't living very long

# Women, Words, and Wine

## Living In Myself

Van Wagner  
Winter 1997/1998

**Intro:** C G Am G C

### Verse 1:

C G  
Folks ain't the same, down this way  
Am G  
Wish I was back home Susquehanna way.  
C G  
Grinning like a jukebox and spending the whole day,  
Am G  
Trying to remember what I did with yesterday.

### Chorus:

F C  
Seems like I always forget  
Am G  
Something from my past I should regret.  
F C-----Am  
I don't know why but I feel so fine  
F-G C  
Thank God for women, words, and wine

**Bridge:** Intro (x1)

### Verse 2:

What I'd give to be standing in July  
Dancing in a rainstorm with my dad outside.  
As a kid we'd watch the creek rise  
and set sail down the mountainside.

### Chorus

**Capo:** 2nd fret (album)

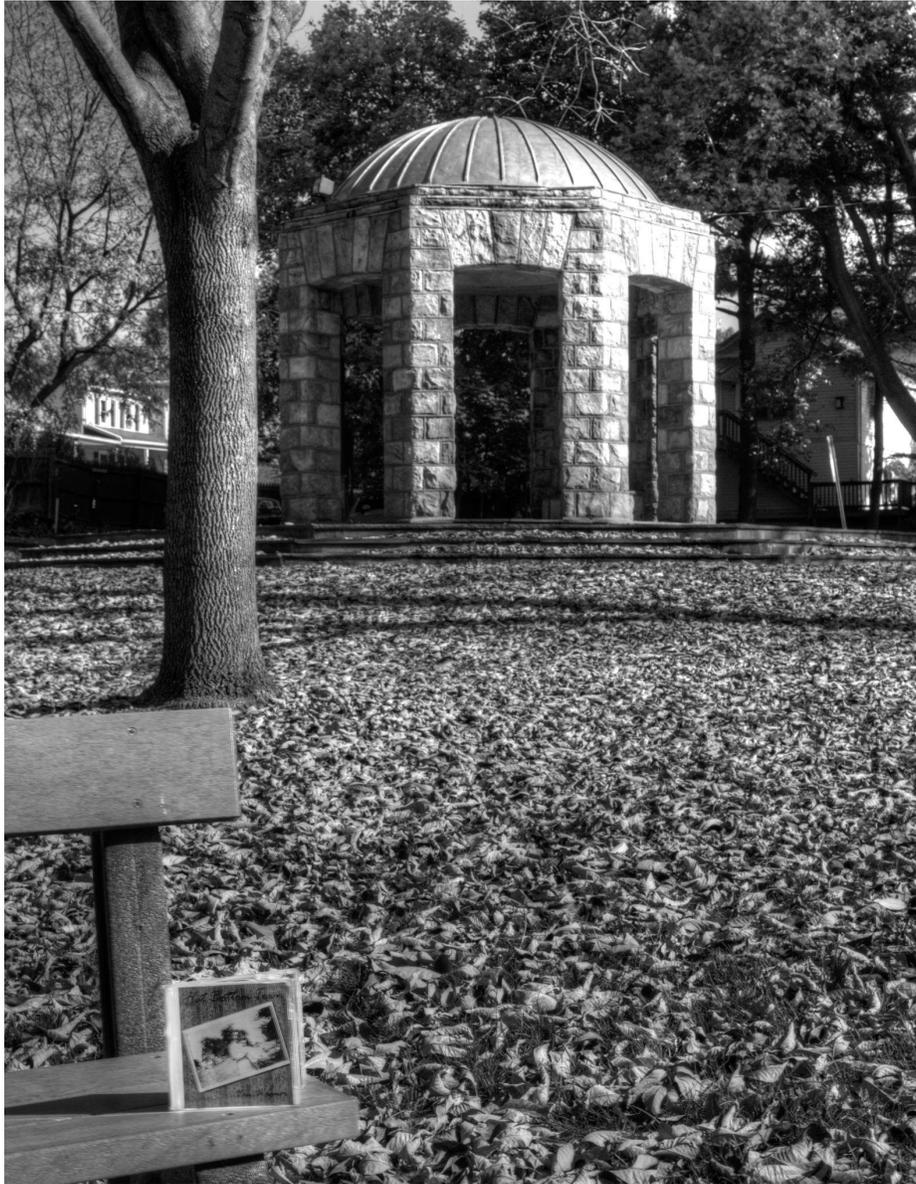
**Bridge:** Intro (x1)

### Verse 3:

The 16th of May found its way into my life  
the days roll past quicker every night.  
In a year I'll be looking back at here,  
Hope her reflection is still shining clear.

### Chorus

**Outro:** C-----Am F-G C



# Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 5: Legends from a Flat Bottom Town

Assembled with permission of Van Wagner by fans of Van Wagner

Photo Credit: Steve Patterson  
Last Updated: 11/25/2020





# The Cowboy and the Hippy

## Flat Bottom Town

Van Wagner  
1998

**Intro:** D G A

**Verse 1:**

D  
Now the cowboy and the hippy are sitting and  
G-----A  
talking of life.

D  
And the Cowboy looks up to catch the sun  
G-----A  
sinking to the night.

D  
He says "that's how it goes...you're up then  
G-----A  
you're down for a while."

D  
Then the hippy looks up from his drink to agree  
G-----A  
with a smile.

**Chorus:**

G D  
It's fountains of dreams and puddles of luck,  
(walk down to C)  
How they stumble through life and never get stuck.  
G D  
Just a cowboy and a hippy too scared to wake up,  
C D  
All they ask of tomorrow is to see the sun come up.

**Verse 2:**

The hippy keeps talking about a band he's trying to  
find.  
A bunch of good songs, and guys that can keep  
good time.  
He says "I hear this music in my head every time I  
sleep..  
And it's just a matter of time, before that band finds  
me."

**Chorus**

**Instrumental:** Verse chords

**Chorus**

**Verse 3:**

Now the night has set in, and the place is  
ready to close.  
So they gather their things and head outside  
by the road.  
The cowboy tips his hat, and the hippy just  
smiled a goodbye.  
Then both of their eyes were caught by a  
diesel streaming by.

**Chorus**

All they ask of tomorrow is to see the sun  
come up

# I'll Take Love

## Started With a Board

Van Wagner

December 12, 2012

**Intro:** First ½ of verse chords

### Verse 1:

D

How many kids never see the stars  
Or their only green is some city park

Em G D

Oh it's not the same

Em G D

Oh what a shame.

To see the sword in Orion's belt  
To share the sky ah how it felt.  
Cold and cool the grass below  
A sky's so clear before the snow.

### Chorus:

A

What a shame

D

What a shame.

G walk down to Em D

To never know a thing of simple things.

If I had the choice to love and lose

G walk down to Em

Or never to have loved

D

I'll take love.

(play intro chords after each chorus)

### Verse 2:

A picnic perch at Lover's Leap  
A mile from the nearest street  
Oh me and you  
On a bed of moss and roots.

A frozen night at the canyon rim  
Black bear saying come join him.  
Oh Tioga wild  
Ah just a child.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

Now we walk to meet our kids  
We hike them home just like I did.  
Oh same woods as these.  
Ah same creeks and trees.

I wish for you these things and more  
A smaller life in a bigger World.  
Oh it's been good to me.  
The sky above and hills of green.

### Chorus (x2)

# Mountain Lion

## Lost in the Mountains

Van Wagner (with help from Luke and Calvin)  
December 30, 2010

**Intro:** Em C D Em (x2)

### Verse 1:

Em

In the time of the Minguas the Andastes

D

There were wolves, there were bears among rocks  
and trees.

C

B7

It was just a fact of life in this land.

But the thing that put fear in the hearts of men was  
the scream of the cat said William Penn  
As he slept in the wilderness as a young man.

### Chorus:

Em

Call them Panthers or call them Catamount

C

Mountain Lions all been hunted out.

D

Em

The stories stay to this day.

C

D

Em

Mountain Lions were never gone some say.

### Verse 2:

Officials say the last was killed

In the 1870's Berks County Hills

Always struck me they ended so far south.

You would think that a place like the northern tier  
Where the forest goes for miles, a true frontier  
Might provide refuge for panthers still around.

### Chorus

**Instrumental:** Verse chords

### Verse 3:

I've met folks who swear they're here

They've seen their tracks or a hanging deer.

Stashed up on a tree like the lions of Africa.

People who with their very own eyes

Have seen the long tail and heard the cries

Don't try to tell them the cougar's gone from  
Pennsylvania.

### Chorus

**Instrumental:** verse chords

**Outro:** Em

# Smokeless Joe

## Flat Bottom Town

Van Wagner

November 1998

### Verse 1:

D  
 Old Smokeless Joe never found the time,  
 G                    D  
 To cross over the county line.  
 G                    D  
 He wasn't one of the ramblin' kind.  
 A                    G        D  
 Oh, Old Smokeless Joe.

### Verse 2:

78 years on fertile land,  
 Lost 2 sons back in Vietnam,  
 Now the years run through the hands,  
 Oh, of Smokeless Joe.

### Verse 3:

Then came the banks with their moneybags,  
 Them in suits and Joe in rags.  
 Forced to salute a green back flag,  
 Oh, Old Smokeless Joe.

### Verse 4:

Now he bought a place down in the town,  
 Half an acre of old factory ground.  
 The water from his spigot runs rusty brown,  
 Oh, for Smokeless Joe.

### Verse 5:

Sits at night on his front porch swing,  
 And tries to remember how the wood cocks would sing.  
 The sounds of Danville just ain't the same  
 Oh, to Smokeless Joe.

### Verse 6:

Old Joe died on the first of May,  
 Only thing he owned was a jar of clay,  
 And a beat up bible to show the way,  
 Oh, for Smokeless Joe.

### Verse 7:

Well that old man was a friend of mine,  
 I think about him when I cross the county  
                   line.  
 Montour soil was as sweet as wine,  
 Oh, to Smokeless Joe.

**Instrumental:** Verse chords



# Must've Been My Guitar

## Flat Bottom Town

Van Wagner

August 1998

### Verse 1:

G  
Well it all started back in high school I was playing my  
D  
guitar in class

When the teacher came back to my desk, and this  
G  
question she did ask

"Mr. Wagner what makes you think, that you can get  
D  
away with that?"

I said "your class is boring your voice is annoying and  
G  
you smell like a dead cat!"

Then she sent me down to the principal and told him he  
D  
was a freak

All I know is I ended up with detention for a week... G

### Chorus:

Well it must've been my guitar, yea it must've been my  
D  
guitar  
Em C  
Whatever the song it must've been wrong,  
D G  
Yea it must've been my guitar.

### Verse 2:

Then came my senior prom and I went to pick up my  
date,  
But I was busy playing my guitar and I got there three  
days late.  
But I didn't want to hurt her feelings so I took her out to  
Burger King  
But I could only afford a water cause my guitar needed  
new strings.

Well then she had the nerve to dump me,  
and she gave me back the ring  
She never even gave me a reason I guess  
she wasn't ready for the dating thing.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

Then one day I stumbled into college and I  
was playing my guitar in a frat,  
I met one guy named Puker and another  
guy named Rat.  
Well we all had a good time drinking there  
till I asked them what was on tap  
"It's imported triple stout lager bock ale"  
proclaimed my pal Rat  
I said "well I only drink Yuengling, it's what  
you call the working man's beer  
But I suppose that word 'working' ain't  
spoke much around here.  
Well, then they took my cup away from me  
my imported triple stout lager bock ale.  
I suppose Penn State ain't ready for me,  
maybe I ought to try Yale.

### Chorus

**Instrumental:** D G D

### Verse 4:

Now I'm driving down the highway with my  
guitar in my hands,  
Just put the car in cruise control and sit  
back and jam.  
I just ran over a Penn dot worker and into a  
Catholic Church,  
I grabbed some bread off the communion  
table and flew out the back porch.  
Now the cops are on my tail and they'll  
catch me if they can,  
You know it just ain't easy being a  
Presbyterian guitar man.

### Chorus







# Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 6: Alone

**Assembled with permission of Van Wagner by fans of Van Wagner**

**Photo Credit: Ryan Patterson  
Last Updated: 6/14/2021**

# Alone

## Alone

Van Wagner  
February 17, 2004

**Capo:** 2nd fret

### Intro: C

### Verse 1:

C  
Hey Mr. Mason cut me some stone

I'm gonna build me a wall so I can be alone.

F C  
Keep the world on the outside and keep me in.

Dm F C  
I want no one to see the shape I'm in.

### Chorus:

F C  
On my own, to moan and groan, hard as stone, in my tone, alone

F C  
You can call me a grouch 'cause I am in and you are out of my walls.

G C  
But that's how it's gonna be nobody here but me, alone.

### Verse 2:

Take your chisel and hammer in your hand  
Cut me a block as quick as you can  
There's plenty of sandstone on the edge of the field.  
Just grab some river mud to point and seal.

### Chorus

### Verse 3:

Don't try to understand there's no one that can,  
except for one lady with a ring on her hand.  
She must have meant it when she said "thick and thin"  
Cause it seems that thin is all it's been.

### Chorus

# I'm from the Mountains and I'm Going to the Sea

## Family Guitar

Van Wagner

July 1, 2020

**Intro:** G D G

### Verse 1:

G                    D                    G  
 This year's been a hard one in the mountains.  
 C                    G  
 It's been a hard one for all.

D  
 I'm thankful I can roam, in my forest home  
 G                    C                    G  
 Just hidden in the mountains so tall.

But I find myself thinking of the ocean  
 I guess there's a salty dog in me.  
 It's good to mix it up so I've loaded my truck  
 And I'm headed down to the sea.

### Chorus:

G  
 I'm from the mountains  
 D                    G  
 And I'm going to the Sea

**Interlude:** Intro chords

### Verse 2:

My family left the highlands of Scotland  
 They settled in Caroline  
 Did the best they could making tar from wood  
 In those Carolina pines.

They settled not far from the ocean.  
 They traded highlands for the sea  
 I'd take that trade but for just a few days  
 Then it's back to the mountains for me.

### Chorus

**Interlude:** Intro chords

### Verse 3:

Oh highway 95  
 From Richmond down the Southern line  
 Just what the doctor ordered "south of the  
 border"  
 Pedro, waving me by.

To the land of the palm tree,  
 and trees with Spanish moss.  
 It's foreign to the bone from my Pennsylvania  
 home  
 If I didn't know I'd swear I was lost.

### Chorus

**Interlude:** Intro chords

### Verse 4:

I think it's the essence of nature  
 Both the mountains and also the sea  
 Both of them, feel untouched by men  
 When I'm there it's just nature and me.

I feel it in South Carolina  
 When I see those beautiful pines  
 Amazed every time by Loblolly and Slash Pine  
 I see them and I just feel fine.

### Chorus

**Outro:** Intro chords



# Confidential Blues

## Family Guitar

Van Wagner  
July 3, 2020

**Capo:** 5th fret

**Intro:** Am E Am (x2)

**Chorus**

**Chorus:**

Am

Got the confidential blues now, feeling pretty low

Dm

Am

I'll keep it to myself now, not much you can know.

E

Am

Not much else to do, got the confidential blues.

**Outro:** Chorus chords

**Verse 1:**

E

Am

Some things aren't for telling, just for you to know.

E

Am

No sense in yelling, you're hurting and it shows.

Dm

Am

You don't need all the details, just keep it to yourself.

E

Am

I can see how you're feeling, your heart is on the shelf.

**Chorus**

**Interlude:** Intro chords

**Verse 2:**

I spent the morning broken, feeling so alone.

The way the day was going, there was no going home.

So I strummed a little guitar, and plucked a string or 2.

Guitars keep secrets, they're confidential too.

**Chorus**

**Verse 3:**

I look out in the woods, I see different shades of green.

I look into the mirror, I see different shades of me.

I carry this burden, in a bundle on my back.

And I play this guitar, confidential and black.

