



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.

North of 80

North of 80

Van Wagner
Summer 2001

C Intro

Verse 1:

F G C
When Armstrong stepped on the moon
F G C
America stepped with him too.
F G Am F
But the giant leap left some behind,
F G
Buried in the foothills of time.

Not much has changed here today,
Prosperity never seems to stay.
100 miles off the map,
But we all know exactly where we're at.

Chorus:

 F C
North of 80 it ain't the same.
 F G
I don't know how else to put it to explain.
 F G C
There's a different tune in the air
 G
There's a northern feel,
 F C
that makes it real everywhere.

Capo: 2nd fret (album)

Verse 2:

Pennsylvania's hard to call.
Not just one shoe fits us all.
7 worlds all in one
Sharing nothing but the air and the sun.

The truth is most folks don't see
Much more than the southern tier.
Harrisburg to Philly and out to the West
But they forget about the part where I fit best.

Chorus

Verse 3:

So next time you're on the road
And feeling shaky in your soul.
Take your watch and throw it away
Come up North just for a day.

Once your life learns to breathe
You'll find it so hard to leave.
Don't be surprised if your tracks disappear
And you're surrounded by a future up here.

Chorus

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

Something Out In the Dark

Flat Bottom Town

Van Wagner
1999

Capo: None (live); 2nd fret (album)

Verse 1:

C G Am ----- F
I have a friend from the south of the state, he's your everyday Joe.
C G Am ----- F
He lives his life, day by day and he travels a broken road.
C G Am ----- F
All his life, he's never believed in something that he could not see.
C G Am ----- F
He said if God is real, then where is he now, amidst all my (this) misery.

Chorus:

Am---F Am---F
When the world has run you through
 Am---F Am---F
That doesn't mean, he's turned his back on you.
 Am---F Am---F
Can't you believe and trust your heart.
 Am---F Am---F
That there's something, out in the dark.

Verse 2:

I kind of feel for people like that and the lonely paths they've choose.
The only reason they can't see God is because their eyes are closed.
In the breath of a song, or a night gone wrong his presence is through and through.
If you want to see God then just look in the eyes of the person right next to you.

Chorus

Verse 3:

We've got to stop living our lives, just expecting more and more
And start living like miracles, which is exactly what we are.
You've got to build your life on faith if you want to get off the ground,
Because a sea of apathy's a perfect place for any good soul to drown.

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

You Can't Lock up a Good Guitar

The Flood Sessions: Four Days of Rain

Van Wagner
October 12, 2011

Capo: 5th fret (album)

Verse 1:

G C G
There's something about a good guitar
C D
I know other pickers know what I mean.
G C G
When you've got a soul to lay out
C D
There's nothing like a good six string
Em
A good six string

G C G
I think about the one I learned on
C D
Borrowed my brothers Epiphone.
G C G
Years later his church was robbed
C D
They took that guitar, doors unlocked.
Em
Doors unlocked.

Chorus:

C G D Em
No You Can't Lock up a good guitar
C G D G
No You Can't Lock up a good guitar

Verse 2:

Guitars are meant to be played
Strummed and picked every day
It's true the get better with age.
The tone mellows out and finds its way
It finds its way.

I remember Uncle Scott
left a guitar on one of his stops.
Outside cat peed all over it
Mom threw it on the fire pit
On the fire pit.

Chorus

Years from now
when my pickin's through
with all these guitars what'll I do?
I'll give them all too my sons
I hope they play em' or pass them on
Pass them on

Chorus



Van Wagner Songbook Vol. 2: Rivers & Trees

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**Photo Credit: Steve Patterson
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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.

Chorus

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 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.

Chorus

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

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.

Four Days of Rain

The Flood Sessions: Four Days of Rain

Van Wagner
September 8, 2011

Intro: D

Verse 1:

G D
All my life I've heard stories of 72
G D
Hurricane Agnes brought the river up to 32, feet.
C G D
I thought that record would stand for all my life.
C G D
But the river may hit 32 later tonight.

Chorus:

C D
The river looks angry after 4 days of rain
C G D
She's gonna remind us who's in charge again.

Verse 2:

We got word this morning to go sand bag in town.
So we headed over Bald Top road the only road
around.
Had to bag a wall from Mahoning Creek.
By noon a foreman said we built 6 feet.

Chorus

Verse 3:

People come together in a flood from all walks of
life
I saw a banker on my left and county inmates on
my right.
If the levee holds then most of town will stay dry.
But they don't have a levee across the river in
Riverside.

Chorus

Capo: 2nd fret (just top 5 strings; low E un-capoed)

Bridge: Chorus Chords x1

Verse 4:

No one talks about it though it's on all our minds.
The worst will be the clean up next week some
time.
Eventually the mud will dry and town will start
anew.
It will just be a legend like the flood of 72

Chorus

Outro: Chorus Chords x2

Green Bridge

Walking the Streets

Van Wagner and Robb Bomboy

July 2000

Verse 1:

G C D G
 A shimmer on the river draws my eyes to the bridge
 C D G
 Flooded memories as a kid
 Em D C
 Eyes on the left side, faith on the right.

Verse 2:

Countin' pigeons from the pillars below
 Feeling older as they go.
 All my life I heard it, but never like tonight.

Chorus:

 C D G
 And tonight you sing your lullaby
 C C G
 Goodnight my ribbon in the sky
 Bm C D
 96 years in the blink of an eye
 G C D
 Goodnight ribbon in the sky
 G C D G
 Goodnight sweet lullaby, goodnight

Verse 3:

Here I am thinking of the nights gone by
 Climbing arches in the sky
 Holding breath as the diesel dared me.

Verse 4:

Tonight's her song fills the air
 Hardly half the town cares.
 She was as strong, as the century.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Chorus

Outro: Em G D Em x8