Moonshine In The White Pines

there is a highway run to the country
there is a gravel road through the hills
there is a small lane
winding through a meadow
there is a footpath into wilderness

there I found a log house made by a settler
and I found a big barn there
built by his sons
I found the orchard
abondoned by their children
all forgotten by everyone

moonshine in the white pines
shadows cross my lane
lampglow through the window there
to welcome me home again

I've been a newsboy I've been a bellman
I've been a farmhand and shoveled my load
I've been a poet and I have been a hermit
I've been a singer out working the road

I've lived in Cumberland
I've lived in Cambridge
I've been to Hollywood
I have been to Maine
somedays I'm content
and some years I'm yearning
one dream returning again and again

moonshine in the white pines
shawdows cross my lane
lampglow through the window there
to welcome me home again

you know that foothpath
you come and meet me
you know the weekdays
that you'll find me there
you've seen those moonshine
shadows cross my meadow
you've seen that lamplight glow in my hair

the snake in the cellar
the mouse in the cupboard
swallows in the sleeploft
the frog at the spring
we'll be waiting have the lamp burning
we'll be yearing for what you will bring

moonshine in the white pines
shadows cross my lane
lampglow throught the window there
to welcome me home again

Around My Barn

when the hound begins to howl
and I've not heard a hooting owl
when the chickens begin to squawk
that's the time I'll take a walk

around my barn
around my barnyard

could be the wind in the trees
could be a rabbit or a groundhog sneeze
eating the peppers in my garden spot
he'd better hope that I am not

around my barn
around my barnyard

could be a cloud across the moon
could be a fox or a sly raccoon
coming down to make a meal
he don't know the way I feel

about my barn
about my barnyard

you ask me what's a dirty trick
skinny old weasel in among the chicks
and when he's done gnawing their legs
an old skunk come and he'll suck the eggs

that are left in my barn
left in my barnyard

down in the cornfield see the deer
each on chewing on a yellow ear
and every squirrel that's ever been born
wants to make a living off the little corn

that I get to my barn
get to my barnyard

all the milk that my milk cow makes
gets drunk up by a long milk snake
you may not believe what I say is true
but he ain't eating mice I'm telling you

out in my barn
out in my barnyard

Lindy tells me treat them like brothers
I told her let them eat each other
it's what they done before I come
what they'll do before I'm done

with my barn
done with my barnyard

well I never expected life to be
simple or easy or completely free
but I did not think that I'd have to fight
to get one drink or a single bite

of food from my barn
food from my barnyard

More Wood

in the fall of the year
when you feel the winter near
and the days are clear
it surely isn't good
to sit by the fire
and want to stroke it higher
when you could be cutting more wood

from November to March
the winter winds are harsh
on the fields and the marsh
they're covered up with snow
when you trudge to the shed
you have to scratch your head
because the dad-blamed pile's getting low on

wood (hardwood)
firewood (dry wood)
there's not a stove in the world
that's going to do you any good
with out wood (stovewood)
we could (you should)
be out cutting more wood

when the kindling is dwindling
the bottom logs get soggy
those ricks of sticks and racks and stacks
it makes you wonder where they go
and barnfuls of armfuls
they only last a week or so
and then you'll be hurting for wood

well the sassafras it burns too fast
it starts the fire but never lasts
and swamp oak likes to smoke
you blow it till you think you'll choke
but hickory its just the tree
to remind you of the ecstasy
of having a pile of good wood I said

wood (hardwood)
firewood (dry wood)
there's not a stove in the world
that's going to do you any good
with out wood (stovewood)
we could (you should)
be out cutting more wood

well the Scandia and the Jotel brands
are made so far across the sea
the Fisher kind and Timberline
are made here in the country
with all the rest put to the test
the one I like the very best
is the one my Uncle Wade he made for me

he took an oil drum and welded some
piping from the septic tank
and fore and aft he cut a draft
and then me hade a damper crank
with an old broom from the back room
he painted it fire engine red
and said now watch her consume your

wood (hardwood)
firewood (dry wood)
there's not a stove in the world
that's going to do you any good
with out wood (stovewood)
we could (you should)
be out cutting more wood

when the spring rolls around
and I spade the muddy ground
I have often found
I lay my saw away
the shed is empty and yet
you can make a bet
that I'll forget to be cutting more wood

the old-timers say
to split a little every day
and stack it away
to season well but
from March to November
I rarely do remember
December will find me in a rut

without wood (hardwood)
firewood (dry wood)
there's not a stove in the world

This Time Of Year

those foses barking at the moon
tell me easy weather
will soon be gone
frost is in the air
change is everywhere darlin'
this time of year
a change comes over me

I go out walking in the woods
the wold ones
have little food to find
butterflies are dying
wild geese are flying southward
this time of year
all nature shows me signs

my friends they come to visit me
I'll bake them muffins
and pass the honeyed tea around
if the stove is working right
we'll stay up talking for half the night
oh this time of year
my friends don't let me down

and this old farm we'll lay to rest
the crop is in
and we've stored the best away
ice is on the pond
my weary mind is wondering why
this time of year
a change comes over me

those foxes barking at the moon
tell me easy weather
will soon be gone
frost is in the air
change is everywhere darlin'
this time of year
a change comes over me

Awaken To Dreams

driving down Orangeville Road
throught these hills of melting snow
the Lost River she's overflowed
and the fields flood soon

every farmer's said good-night
every farmwife has put out the light
everyfarmhouse is cool and white
in the light of the moon

moonlight is sunlight
daylight is starlight
one man's day is another's night
and nothing is as it seems

this old earth seems bound to turn
that old sun seems bound to burn
those old folks seem bound to learn
to awaken to their dreams

you and I have come so far
all we own is in this car
all I wish upon a star
is for a season of time

time to watch the springtime sprout
time to set the seedlings out
time to sing away your doubts
about these nickles and dimes

my time is your time
these times are our times
old songs and new rhymes
milk and honey on our lives

like the milk cow by the honey locust trees
like the milkweed growing up to her knees

on the milk route of the honeybees
working it back to the hives

I believe we'll find a welcome space
believe we'll build us another place
believe we'll beet a friendly face
before the season is done

somewhere down here in these hills
another on or two who will
want to sit and sing untill
the silent rising of the sun

sunrise is sundown
silence is a musical sound
standing still is turning around
floating on an empty stream

that new sun seems ever to burn
this new earth seems ever to turn
my new friends are we ever to learn
to awaken to our dreams

Gardening

oh my friends it's springtime again
buds are swelling of every limb
the peepers do call small birds do sing
and my thoughts return to gardening

gardening is a very fine art
bear well in mind before you start
lay up your ax your saw blade also
and take down you spade
your rake and your hoe

polish your hoe
till the blade it does shine
likewise your rake and sharpen each tine
dress up your spade
with a light coat of oil
then you are ready to prepare your soil

prepare your soil with a good free will
bear well in mind what you may till
some compost and lime
are all that you need
then you are ready to plant your seed

plant your seed but none too soon
bear well in mind the phase of the moon
set out the fruit the roots and the grain
and hop it all sprouts
in the cool early rain

if the cool early rain don't drown you out
the first hot spell will bring on the drought
the midsummer sun is hotter than hell
mulch down your rows
and you water them well

water them well and then them also
beware of weeds and beetles and crows
if you work every day then little is lost
just hope it all ripens

before the first frost

the first frost will come as sure as sin
then you must hasten to gather it in
by cartloads and bushels
by pecks and quarts
your harvest of fruit
and grain of all sorts

all sorts of peaches and apples and sheat
oats and rye and strawberries sweet
squashes and melons with colorful rinds
your harvest of vegetable
roots of all kinds

all kinds of turnips and carrots and beets
potatoes tomatoes and strong smelling leeks
cabbage and coan the beans and the hay
then you must carefully store it away

away in the cellars and lofts and bins
make cider and kraut pickles and gin
if you do idt all well
then you'll not go wrong
you will have plenty all winter long

all winter long while the cold winds blow
take down your saw and wood cutting go
if you're well fed and warm
be well content then
till warm weather comes
and you say to your friends

oh my friends it's springtime again
buds are swelling on every limb
the peepers do call small birds do sing
and my thoughts return to gardening

Mae Smith

Mae Smith ia s woman with
ringlets of grey hair
and old straw hat with a red ribbon that
hides them back with care
she works all day in her garden of flowers
don't see a soul for hours and hours
she's singing songs
that her sisters use to do

Charlie Smith is a man with
a mind inclined to roam"he loves to ride round the countryside
he leaves poor Mae at home
he don't like her going to town
seeing other folks and fooling around
she can sing at home
like her sisters used to do

Charlie will tell how very well
her sister's band could play
they've all died but Mae still tries
to keep on anyway
he bought her a banjo throught the mail
and a mandolin at an auction sale
he likes to hear those songs
her sisters used to do

once I went to represent
a musical archives
the scholars there astutely care
to keep your songs alive
at the university
there's lots of curiosity
they'd like to have those songs
your sisters used to do

but Mae's too sy to play when I
visit her at home
Charlie don't like her having no friends
and playing out on her own
I see him there on the courthouse square

and wonder how I will ever dare
to get those songs
her sisters used to do

one day when Charlie's away
and it was raining showers
I dropped by and asked if I
could visit for an hour
just in case that I forget
may I turn on my cassette
I"d like to learn those songs
your sisters use to do

She turned away and then did say
when you've reached my age
memories of families
can hold you like a cage
while we're here all alone
you hand me that microphone
now you sing me songs
my sisters never knew

Mae Smith is a woman with
ringlets of grey hair
an old straw hat with a red ribbon that
hides them back with care
she works all day in her garden of flowers
don't see a soul for hours and hours
she's singing songs
her sisters never knew

La Belle Riviere

back in the days the old books describe
back in the days of the Indian tribes
they prayed to the river to forever flow
and the name that they give her was Ohio

they fished her clear waters
they camped on her hills
bathed at the shallows they drank at the rills
some Frenchmen they came scouting for game
gazed at that river and asked of her name

la Belle Riviere the Great Shining Water
Casquinampogamou le Fleuve du Saint Louis
no matter the name the meaning's the same
she's the Beautiful River the Ohio

the next to come in were the Kentuckians
the Buckeyes the Hoosiers
the Suckers and then
they bought off the Indians
they cut down the trees
for their barns and their mills
for their factories

down by the cornfield she ran with the mud
down by the slaughterhouse
she flowed with blood
below the brewers she was covered with suds
in the spring of they year
she could not help but to flood

la Belle Riviere the Great Shining Water
Casquinampogamou le Fleuve du Saint Louis
no matter the name the meaning's the same
she's the Beautiful River the Ohio

the next to come in
were the government men

with their bankers and lawyers
their soldiers and then
they told the shantyfolk well you needn't fear
to let the river by dammed by our engineers

with a lock over here and a dock over there
bridges and trestles spanning the air
we'll build a pumphouse obove every town
bring the fresh water in
and let the sewage float down

la Belle Riviere the Great Shining Water
Casquinampogamou le Fleuve du Saint Louis
no matter the name the meaning's the same
she's the Beautiful River the Ohio

the last to come in
have been the industry men
investing their billions around every bend
reactors they spill refineries stink
yet it's pleasant to swim in
and healthful to drink
and I'm sitting here on the levee
wondering at this long history
I'm wondering at this river of fame
and if she ever again will live up to her name

la Belle Riviere the Great Shining Water
Casquinampogamou le Fleuve du Saint Louis
no matter the name the meaning's the same
she's the Beautiful River the Ohio

Show Me A Sign

my dear old friend
where have you been so long
you're standing here
but you don't hear my song

I see you day after day
you have so little to say to me
you're troubling me
I need to see a sign

give me a sign of your love
show me a sign that you're thinking of me
I need to know before you go
show me a sign

now teachers teach
and preachers preach their views
the poets write
and singers sing their blues

I don't want a lecture of a sermon
discussion confession and no book learning
all in all
I ask is one small sign

give me a sign of your love
show me a sign that you're thinking of me
I need to know before you go
show me a sign

animal
even vegetables all know
the good earth gives
that all may live and frow

like warmth is a sign to the seed
a blossom a sign to the honeybee
that sure I would feel
if you would reveal one sign

give me a sign of your love
show me a sign that you're thinking of me
I need to know before you go
show me a sign

you are a man of few words
much of your mind I have never heard
you're troubling me
I need to see a sign

give me a sign of your love
show me a sign that you're thinking of me
I need to know before you go
show me a sign

Shantyboatin'

what is better than fish in the net
this is better that fish I just et
rolled in corn and fried in a pan
go bait the hoop net I'm hungry again

what's more lazy than the buzzards that fly
we're more lazy my parter and I
lawy on ther top till my bottom is sore
roll me over I will lay here some more

shantyboatin' and ain't it the life
shantyboatin' hand me your knife
cut the line and let us float
clear to Natchez on our shantyboat

what is harder than an iron bell
this is harder a snap turtle shell
bring the pickax and dynamite
the way he's ginning it looks like a fight

what is tougher than a snap turtle stew
this is tougher your old home brew
it knocks me down
makes me lay at full length
you think I'm drunk I'm saving my strength

shantyboatin' drifting all night
shantyboatin' feeling about right
lean back admire the moon
keep a'drifting be in Natchez 'fore noon

what is sweeter that sorghum syrup
this is sweeter my old woman's lips
what I call her is Natchez Sue
what she calls me is Once Won't Do

tomorrow evening I'll be ringing her bell
down in Natchez Under the Hill

scruntch up let me lay at full length
you think I'm sleeping I'm sving my strength

shantyboatin' tomorrow's the day
shantyboatin' I can hear what she'll say
roll me over says Natchez Sue
my old man Once Won't Do

and whit is meaner thatn a coon in a bag
this is meaner the boat on a snag
jump in the water up to your knees
back the boat off of a sycamore tree

shantyboatin' yes and these are the facts
shantyboatin' fetch me your ax
chop her loose and let us float
clear to Natchez on our shantyboat