



the best of **carrie newcomer**



Betty's Diner

Carrie Newcomer 2003

Miranda words the late night counter
In a joint called Betty's Diner
Chrome and checkered tablecloths
one steamy windowpane
She got the job that shaky fall
And after hours she'll write til dawn
With a nod and smile she serves them all

Chorus: here we are all in one place
The wants and wounds of the human race
Despair and hope sit face to face
When you come in from the cold
Let her fill your cup with something kind
Eggs and toast like bread and wine
She's heard it all so she don't mind

Arthur lets his earl grey steep
Since April it's been hard to sleep
You know they tried most everything
Yet it took her in the end
Kevin tests new saxophones
But swears he's leaving quality control
For the Chicago scene, or New Orleans
Where they still play righteous horns

Jack studies here after work
To get past high school he's the first
And his large hands seem just as comfortable
With a hammer or a pen
Emma leaned and kissed his cheek
And when she did his knees got weak
Miranda smiles at Em and winks

Chorus

Bridge: You never know who'll be your witness
You never know who grants forgiveness
Look to heaven or sit with us

Deidra bites her lip and frowns
She works the Stop and Go downtown
She's pretty good at the crossword page
She paints her eyes blue black
Tristan come along sometimes
Small for his age and barely five
But she loves him like a mamma lion

Veda used to drink a lot
Almost lost it all before she stopped
Comes in at night with her friend Mike
Who runs the crisis line
Michael toured Saigon and back
Hair the color of smoke and ash
Heads are bowed and hands are clasped
One more storm has passed

Toward the Horizon

Carrie Newcomer 2001

Stretched as thin as paper, hollow as the sky
Empty as my pockets, hungry as my eyes
Wells fill from the bottom, and it's gonna take some time
It's gonna take a little doing, to gather my insides
Such a wide-open space. such a wide and open ache
With answers to these hard and silent whys

Look as far as you can toward the horizon
Hear the low sound of the glory train
Chances are I'll live to see the new moon risin'
But I believe the likes of you
I'll never see again

On the wings of hope and angels, in the sounds of solitude
I've circled ever closer to the heart of something true
Most courage is an answer, a firm or shaky "yes"
When you cannot see the outcome, but still giving it your best
Such a wide-open space. such a wide and open ache
With answers to these hard and silent whys

I saw you walk away, I saw you waving
I know your leaving here, always to stay
Is this a bad hand or just a slow horse
Is it alright in time and due course

In the normal course of walking over roads of light and storm

With grief as a companion I have already come
Some days it's hard to take a step and avoid another fall
Still believing in the dark horse, when it's way to close to call.
Such a wide-open space. such a wide and open ache
With answers to these hard and silent whys

My Bowling Baby

Carrie Newcomer 2002

Workin' Friday night down at the Alley
We're open late twelve lanes, no wait, you tally
She walked right in, said with a grin
"I'll take lane 11, and shoe size 10,"
"let's set um' up and we'll roll 'em again,
uh huh."

She's a fine fine fine bowling baby
She's my my my bowling alley queen
She don't seem to see or even notice me
But she's all the woman a boy like me could need

She's got a pink bowling ball and oh man can she throw it
It makes my knees get weak just see the way that she hold it
When she follows through with that killer hook
She strides on back and don't even look
That's bowling cool and she wrote the book
Uh huh

She drinks diet Coke and she don't ever tease her hair
I like those black stretch pants
and v-neck sweaters she always wears
And she never jumps or shouts or screams
She has an almost perfect swing
Her roll is hard and usually mean
Uh huh

Last night I wore my new blue jeans
combed back my hair with water
Trying hard to look cool and cas'
just leanin' on the counter

Both hands in my pockets
I watched her take off her bowling gloves
I don't know what this is, but I think it must be love
Maybe some day she'll turn around,
smile and put her ball bag down
And say "Hey, buddy let's bowl a round. . .uh huh"

Threads

© Carrie Newcomer 2000

I have hands like my grandma
Rough and wide
A smile like my father
Kinda crooked at one side
And the thread of our union
Pulls through the years
Through burdens and rejoicing
Through the courage and fear

Chorus: Let the wind blow like horses
Running wild across the sky
Let the doors close and open
Pull us in or pass us by
We have followed the fabric
Where ever it led
Joined to one an other by
Invisible thread

We were mean mama lions
With babies on our hips
Two were workin' at the grocery,
One was livin' on tips
Two fell sick and one recovered,
Three divorced and one went clean
One lost a child last April
One's still chasin' a dream

Chorus:

If I live to be 100
I won't forget your eyes
Or the feel of your body
Lying next to mine
No one loves you like I do
No one knows you so well
All the ghost that still haunt you
Or the secrets you won't tell

Chorus:

I'll Go Too

Carrie Newcomer 2000

When I was small I often said
There were ugly things beneath my bed
I'd slip downstairs when I got scared
Into the safety of Dad's easy chair
That chair was like a long deep sigh
And I'd stay until he'd say, "It's time"
But he always smile and put his hand in mine
And say "I'll go too."

Chorus: "I'll go too, I'll go too"
That's what he'd say and what he'd do
"Don't go alone I'll walk with you
I'll go too."

When I was learning how to swim
I'd look at the water and back at him
But he took my hand and said
"We'll both jump in" and "I'll go too."

Chorus

So many nights I've wandered
So many things to brave
So many acts of courage
We face each and everyday

It was almost noon in a white lace dress

I had my doubts if I could do the rest
He said "take my hand and just do your best"
"And I'll go too"

Chorus

In a quiet place in the April snow
It was time to finally let her go
So I took his hand and said
"I know." "I'll go too"

Someday we all will understand
And we'll walk right into the Promised Land
But I hope an angel takes me by the hand
And tells me "I'll go too"

Chorus:

The Gathering of Spirits

Carrie Newcomer 2000

Chorus: Let it go my love my truest,
Let it sail on silver wings
Life's a twinkling that's for certain,
But it's such a fine thing
There's a gathering of spirits
There's a festival of friends
And we'll take up where we left off
When we all meet again.

Verse: I can't explain it. I couldn't if I tried
How the only things we carry
Are the things we hold inside
Like a day in out the open,
Like the love we won't forget
Like the laughter that we started
And hasn't died down yet

Chorus

Verse: Oh yah, now didn't we
And don't we make it shine
Aren't we standing in the center of
Something rare and fine
Some glow like embers
Or light through colored glass
Some give it all in one great flame

Throwing kisses as they pass

Chorus

Verse: Just east of Eden
But there's heaven in our midst
And we're never really all that far
From those we love and miss
Wade out in the water
There's a glory all around
The wisest say there's a 1000 ways
The kneel and kiss the ground

Chorus: Let it go my love my truest,
Let it sail on silver wings
Life's a twinkling that's for certain,
But it's such a fine thing
There's a gathering of spirits
There's a festival of friends
And we'll take up where we left off
When we all meet again.
And we'll take up where we left off
When we all meet again.

Straight to the Point

Carrie Newcomer 2001

Verse: Some come in the side door swingin'
Some eat in the kitchen but they don't mind
Some stride in without even knockin'
Some act like they've been here the whole damn time

Chorus: Gonna live my life like it don't get much better
Gonna walk right in like I own this joint
Get right down to the heart of the matter
Live straight to the point
Straight to the point

Verse: I don't need the keys to the kingdom
'Cause I don't measure my life that way
Try as you might to hold on to something
Sooner or later it's all going to change.

Chorus

Bridge: There is no point if the point is not taken
Most of our prisons are of our own makin'

Verse: She'd drop dimes and nickels in the jukebox
And *The Glory of Love* is what she'd always play
She'd say "You gotta be brave, you gotta be fearless
"And when you're afraid just do it anyway"

Chorus

Verse: It's all in the tellin', it's all in the story
It's all in the way that you walk the walk
Let your life speak cause there anit no secrets
Let your head help, but let your heart talk

Chorus

Bare to the Bone

Carrie Newcomer 1998

Here I am without a message
Here I stand with empty hands
Just a spirit tired of wandering like a stranger in this land
Walking wide eyed through this world
is the only way I've known
Wrapped in hope and good intentions and
Bare to the Bone

There is nothing I won't show you
There is nothing I can hide
I've risked it all and dreamt it all
And seldom questioned why.
You took me in when I was hungry
When my spirit ached and groaned
Laid wide open and defenseless
And Bare to the Bone

Chorus

When I rise I rise in Glory
If I do I do by grace
Time will wash away our footprints
And we'll leave without a trace
Between here and now and forever
is such precious little time
What we do in love and kindness
is all we ever leave behind

When my eyes are slowly fading
When the light is softly waning
When the evening sun is setting
and the world is barely breathing
Then your voice will gently call me
and your hand will lead me home
like a newborn awed and naked
And Bare to the Bone

Chorus

When I rise I rise in Glory
If I do I do by grace
Time will wash away our footprints
And we'll leave without a trace
Between her and now and forever
is such precious little time
What we do in love and kindness
is all we ever leave behind

Here I am without a message
Here I stand with empty hands
Just a spirit tired of wandering l
ike a stranger in this land
Walking wide eyed through this world
is the only way I've known
Wrapped in hope and good intentions and
Bare to the Bone

The Yes of Yes

Carrie Newcomer 1995

When the morning comes like a moment blessed
Breathing next to you my Yes of Yes
I hold you like some promise made
It's a way of way of praying

I hold her little tender hand
Walk side by walking side
She asks me why I smile and say
"It's a way of way of praying"

It's moments so fleeting that make our whole life long
Oh and Some things come and some things go
And some things we will never know
Some mysteries will guide our way
It's a way of way of praying

So I raise my hands to frame the light
I raise my voice in the middle of the night
I close my eyes when I start to sing
It's a way of way of praying

In the silence you surround my soul
In the laughter you can make me whole
I hold it like some promise made
It's a way of way of praying
It's a way of way of praying

I Should've Known Better

By Carrie Newcomer

Been a long time comin'
And the cards were stacked
It's been a long hard road
To hell and back
Your love meant trouble from the day we met
You won every hand and I lost every bet
Now you'd think that I should've known better
Now you'd think that I would have seen it come
My heart sank when I read that letter
It sank like a stone
It sank like a stone
A cup of cold coffee, yesterday's mail
Hard love like that's always bound to fail
Your love meant trouble from the day we met
If you want your things I put them out
On the front step
Now you'd think that I should've known better
Now you'd think that I would have seen it come
My heart sank when I read that letter
It sank like a stone
It sank like a stone
All alone in my kitchen, All alone in my bed
Some things you can't take back once they've been said
I don't know what this love is for
All I know is baby
I don't want it anymore
Now you'd think that I should've known better

Now you'd think that I would have seen it come
My heart sank when I read that letter
It sank like a stone
It sank like a stone
It's been a long time comin'
And the cards were stacked
It's been a long hard road
To hell and back.

The Moon Over Tucson

C. Newcomer 1998

We just can't help it so we do it again
We just gun the gas and let the wheels spin
It's true and I've heard it said
We're not so very far from the back of our heads

And the moon shines high over Tucson
Over waters that were long ago dried
Cause the moon don't care if the water's not there
It's high tide

Isn't it physical, and we can't pretend
That we know where this starts and where this thing ends
It's a mystery and we don't know why
So we just breathe in deep and close our eyes

And the moon shines high over Tucson
Over waters that were long ago dried
Cause the moon don't care if the water's not there
It still tries

It calls to the water and it calls to the land
It calls to the hearts of women and men
It calls to the water and it calls to the land
It calls to the hearts of women and men

Isn't it a pity, isn't it a shame
That so much of what we are we won't call by name

And it's crazy in little ways
In the light of each and every full phase

And the moon shines high over Tucson
Over waters that were long ago dried
Cause the moon don't care if the water's not there
It's high tide
And the moon shines high

When one door closes_

C. Newcomer 1998

Cool my heels and hold on to the best parts

Chorus: When one door closes another one opens wide

It's hard to believe

all of the locked doors I've tried

You just can't pray for what you want

or what you'd have instead

You can only offer out your hands

and ask that you be lead

Life's gonna take you,

where you never thought your go

When you finally think you've got it down,

It isn't so

There are windows and doors,

you're not finished with yet

But It's not always getting what you want,

but wanting what you get

Chorus

Bridge: It's not gettiin' easier,

so I'm not going to pretend

That I know this story

from it's beginning to it's end

So believe me when I tell you, believe if you can

If I could turn down the noise of my own will and choice

I'd hear the truth of my life in a clear voice

So I will bow down my head to the wisdom of my heart

Love is Wide

Carrie Newcomer 1999

I love you for all the worn places
What's smooth, ragged or raw
For what you've been and what you are
I love it all
I know it hard I know it's scary
I'm not saying you don't have the right

Chorus: Come on baby it's not what you're thinking
You've got nothing you need the hide
I'm still here and I'm not leaving
Life is deep and Love is Wide

For every lie somebody told you
for every dream you've drug this far
For every time someone else held you
I love you as you are
I know it hard I know it's scary
I'm not saying you don't have the right

Chorus: Come on baby it's not what you're thinking
You've got nothing you need the hide
I'm still here and I'm not leaving
Life is deep and Love is Wide

Bridge

I know there are some

And there's some that you've got to be careful
But I'll never leave you or ever forsake you
Where ever this takes you and I

For every loss you counted like sparrows
And badge you've had to earn
For every time you lay down with sorrow
I love you for what you've learned
I know it hard I know it's scary
I'm not saying you don't have the right

Chorus: Come on baby it's not what you're thinking
You've got nothing you need the hide
I'm still here and I'm not leaving
Life is deep and Love is Wide

When It's Gone it's Gone

Carrie Newcomer 2000

The New York Central Railroad was something in her day
A million tons of coal and steel must have passed this way
The Ghost of some old engineer
Walks this earth and you might hear
While looking down on all those lights
"Could I see your ticket please."
Ah

Chorus: When It's gone it's gone
But the echoes just go on and on and on and on
We send it out like our breath
And somebody takes it in, Somebody takes it in
Someone

In the age of possibility cheap gas, John Glenn and tube TV
When Martin walked many miles to stand beside Gandhi
But faith was stoned with cans and rocks
And the neighbor kid came home in a box
Now we don't believe so much of everything we hear
Ah

Chorus: When It's gone it's gone
But the echoes just go on and on and on and on
We send it out like our breath
And somebody takes it in, Somebody takes it in
Someone

Bridge: Tomorrow's just so far to see
To far to know to love or grieve
Every action is received
Like a legacy
It is our legacy

Route 26 was open fields and I remember when
Now every town I pass on through
Has the same outer skin
How could he sell his father's bones
All the others did but he just won't
He says "When I'm dead you can take it all
But for now just let them graze."
Ah

Chorus: When It's gone it's gone
But the echoes just go on and on and on and on
We send it out like our breath
And somebody takes it in, Somebody takes it in
Someone
When It's gone it's gone
But the echoes just go on and on and on and on
We send it out like our breath
And somebody takes it in, Somebody takes it in
Someone

My Father's Only Son

It's a Good excuse to watch the sun go down
In a gravel pit outside of town
My father had three daughters
So I became his only son
Summertime in Allen County
You can slice the air like bread
Pack up our old Rambler
With cane poles and little said

Chorus: You never talk much in a fishin boat
It just scares the fish away
You just give it time and watch your line

When I'd ask what we were fishin for
He'd just say an hour or two
Some folks are always like that
And never really answer you

Chorus:

The sun goes down and why no one knows
I grew up out of my fishin clothes
I told him once and he slowly smiled
His only son was expecting a child

Chorus:

I'll remember all my life

My father's face in the deep twilight
In a boat under the evening sun
Throwin' back
The little ones

Carrie Newcomer and Jason Wilber 1996

Three Women

Carrie Newcomer 1994

There's a light in the kitchen there's a glass on the stand
Three women around the table and they're holding hands
They're caretakin' the birthin'
Bringin food when they can
They're easin' the leavin'
And they're holding hands

Oh yes life can get jumbled and tangled sometimes
You can lose your way in this world and home is hard to find
But there is something of love I've come to depend
It's the strength in women holdin' hands

Chorus: Life is dark sometimes, so dark and wild
And it burns like a diamond, it's unbareably hard
But it's sweeter than honey right from the jar

Your eyes have the look of some distant place
You have one foot in heaven and though we don't understand
We breath it in deep and we let it out slow
We're holding you up
While your letting us go

Chorus there's a freefalling feeling I'm lighter than air
Home burns like a beacon in your eyes
Somehow we get anchored somehow we get by

Chorus: Life is dark sometimes, so dark and wild
And it burns like a diamond, it's unbareably hard
But it's sweeter than honey right from the jar

Carrie Newcomer 1994