

## OVERVIEW: 1990-1999

In the beginning of the 1990s, I split my time between Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis, Minnesota. A couple years later I landed in Prescott, Arizona where I remained until graduating from college and heading off for a Peace Corps stint in Turkmenistan (1995-1997). After traveling a great deal through Asia and Africa, I returned to the U.S. in 1998 and then split my time between Minneapolis and Prescott before drifting over to my friend's flower farm in Viroqua, Wisconsin in 1999.

I wrote song lyrics prior to 1990, but *Butterfly* is the first I feel is worthy of keeping for posterity. Like many songs from these early years, much of the inspiration for the verses was drawn from a reawakening and/or connecting into the power of nature. It started during my high school years, trying to find the pockets of urban wilderness in the Twin Cities, but it really wasn't until I headed off to Oregon that the more powerful forces seemed to draw me in. Looking back now as an older man, I feel slightly sheepish about some of the sentiments found in these early lyrics, but I've decided to present them as a window – if nothing more – into who I was at the time.

# Butterfly

(released: [Brother Nature](#), 2010)

*I believe, if memory serves me, this song was largely written after a trip up to Superior National Forest to take part in one of the infamous Rainbow Gatherings. Despite the rather disillusioning effect of the trip, I was still riding high on enough idealism to craft the words. In 2010 when I decided to pull it from “the attic” and record it with some other of my earliest songs, it received some minor changes to the words, but largely it is as originally constructed.*

*I should also note that on that album, Brother Nature, I purposely tried to soften and raise my voice to make it sound younger, hoping to match more of the young dreamer I was in the time period the song was written.*

Just another fool

Climbing a rainbow

Just another dream weaver

Spinning a web of illusions

Just another juggler who's holding

The Earth, Moon, and the Sun

Just another child, turned man

Turned child playing until he's dead

And just like that butterfly

I'm floating free

Just like that butterfly

I'm discovering what's inside of me

Just like the sunshine

Sleeping on the grass

Just like the moonlight

Swimming in the sea

Just like the raindrops

Laughing down from the eyes of the sky

Just like the wind

Playing the leaves on the trees

And just like that butterfly

I'm floating free

Just like that butterfly

Discovering what I could be

Just like a fisherman

Casting a line in the desert

Just like a scarecrow

Watching over a barren field

Just like the lark

Without a song for the rising sun

So I was until I laid down my shield

And now just like that butterfly, I'm floating free

Just like that butterfly, discovering what it's like to have wings

## Jester's Crown

(released: [Brother Nature](#), 2010)

*This song reflects the “drop out” attitude I was feeling in those days (and still do to some extent.) Essentially this attitude was about not believing “the hype”; it was about trying to extract myself from a system of beliefs that would get me to an end that had lost its shine; and it was about trying to tune in to something that felt bigger (yet humbler) and more important. Similar to Butterfly and most of the songs on Brother Nature, the words did receive some amendments when making the album but not much. The verse about the eagle didn't make it into the final recording.*

There's a monkey in a tree, he's swinging about so carefree

He looks down from his tree to see, a man in a suit that's me

He has no regret, as he asks me what it's like to be someone's pet

He has no confusion, he knows the fool is me not him

And he sings down to me as he swings, he sings to me, he sings:

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

There's an eagle above mountain high

Yeah, Jimi, he can kiss that sky

But in those crazy eagle eyes, I can see he's really crying

He dreams of stars and Saturn's rings

And all those other above cloud things

He doesn't realize he's free, my God, that eagle is me

So I better learn to sing as I fly, I'll sing:

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

There's a clown in a circus tent

On a mute parrot his last dollar he just spent

His wife gave him the boot 'cause he can't pay the rent

I say to him: "Man your life is bent"

He said: "Don't ever forget this is a play

No use letting yesterday and tomorrow ruin today

You with your ideals, pride and fine clothes –

It's you, it's you who wearing the clown's nose"

And then he came up to me and he shook my hand

And he smiled and he danced and he sang:

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

There's a king on a golden throne

With knights, nobles, and servants

Yeah, he's alone

The smile on his face there has been sewn

Happiness he can't own

Well, in a craze he takes off his crown

He puts it on his jester and gets down

He gives the queen, his wife, a sideways glance

And then, you know, he starts to dance

Singing: "no more kingdoms for me, I've got to be free"

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today

Sha la la la la la la la my life away

Sha la la la la la la la today