

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN



NEBRASKA

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I saw her standin' on her front lawn
just twirlin' her baton
Me and her went for a ride, sir, and
ten innocent people died

From the town of Lincoln, Nebraska,
with a sawed-off .410 on my lap
Through the badlands of Wyoming I
killed everything in my path

I can't say that I'm sorry for the
things that we done
At least for a little while, sir, me
and her we had us some fun

The jury brought in a guilty verdict
and the judge he sentenced me to
death
Midnight in a prison storeroom with
leather straps across my chest

Sheriff, when the man pulls that
switch, sir, and snaps my poor
head back
You make sure my pretty baby is
sittin' right there on my lap

They declared me unfit to live, said
into that great void my soul'd be
hurled
They wanted to know why I did what
I did, well, sir, guess there's just
a meanness in this world

ATLANTIC CITY

Well they blew up the chicken man
in Philly last night
Now they blew up his house too
Down on the boardwalk they're
gettin' ready for a fight
Gonna see what them racket boys
can do

Now there's trouble busin' in from
outta state
And the D.A. can't get no relief
Gonna be a rumble out on the
promenade
And the gamblin' commissioner's
hangin' on by the skin of his teeth

chorus:
Everything dies, baby, that's a fact
But maybe everything that dies
some day comes back
Put your makeup on, fix your hair
up pretty
And meet me tonight in Atlantic City

Well I got a job and tried to put my
money away
But I got debts that no honest man
can pay
So I drew what I had from the
Central Trust
And I bought us two tickets on that
Coast City bus

(chorus)

Now our luck may have died and our
love may be cold
But with you forever I'll stay
We're goin' out where the sand's
turnin' to gold
So put on your stockings 'cause the
night's gettin' cold

(chorus)

Now I been lookin' for a job but it's
hard to find
Down here it's just winners and
losers and don't get caught on the
wrong side of that line
Well I'm tired of comin' out on the
losin' end
So honey last night I met this guy
and I'm gonna do a little favor for
him

(chorus)

MANSION ON THE HILL

There's a place out on the edge of
town, sir
Risin' above the factories and the
fields
Now ever since I was a child I can
remember
That mansion on the hill
In the day you can see the children
playing

On the road that leads to those
gates of hardened steel
Steel gates that completely
surround, sir
The mansion on the hill

At night my daddy'd take me and
we'd ride
Through the streets of a town so
silent and still
Park on a back road along the
highway side
Look up at that mansion on the hill
In the summer all the lights would
shine
There'd be music playin', people
laughin' all the time
Me and my sister we'd hide out in
the tall corn fields
Sit and listen to the mansion on the
hill

Tonight down here in Linden town
I watch the cars rushin' by home
from the mill
There's a beautiful full moon
rising
Above the mansion on the hill

JOHNNY 99

Well they closed down the auto
plant in Mahwah late that month
Ralph went out lookin' for a job but
he couldn't find none



He came home too drunk from
mixin' Tanqueray and wine
He got a gun, shot a night clerk,
now they call 'im Johnny 99

Down in the part of town where
when you hit a red light you don't
stop
Johnny's wavin' his gun around and
threatenin' to blow his top
When an off-duty cop snuck up on
him from behind
Out in front of the Club Tip Top they
slapped the cuffs on Johnny 99

Well the city supplied a public
defender but the judge was Mean
John Brown
He came into the courtroom and
stared poor Johnny down
Well the evidence is clear, gonna let
the sentence, son, fit the crime
Prison for ninety-eight and a year
and we'll call it even Johnny 99

A fistfight broke out in the
courtroom, they had to drag
Johnny's girl away
His mama stood up and shouted
"Judge don't take my boy this
way"
Well son, you got a statement you'd
like to make
Before the bailiff comes to forever
take you away
Now judge, I got debts no honest
man could pay

The bank was holdin' my mortgage
and they was takin' my house away
Now I ain't sayin' that makes me an
innocent man
But it was more 'n' all this that put
that gun in my hand
Well your honor, I do believe I'd be
better off dead
And if you can take a man's life for
the thoughts that's in his head
Then won't you sit back in that chair
and think it over, judge, one more
time
And let 'em shave off my hair and put
me on that execution line

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

My name is Joe Roberts, I work for
the state
I'm a sergeant out of Perrineville,
barracks number eight
I always done an honest job, as
honest as I could
I got a brother named Frankie and
Frankie ain't no good

Now ever since we was young kids
it's been the same comedown
I get a call over the shortwave
Frankie's in trouble downtown
Well if it was any other man I'd just
put him straight away
But when it's your brother
sometimes you look the other way

Me and Frankie laughin' and drinkin'
Nothin' feels better than blood on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria
As the band played "Night of the Johnstown Flood"
I catch him when he's strayin' like any brother would
Man turns his back on his family, well he just ain't no good

Well Frankie went in the army back in 1965
I got a farm deferment, settled down, took Maria for my wife
But them wheat prices kept on droppin'
Till it was like we were gettin' robbed
Frankie came home in '68 and me I took this job

Yeah, we're laughin' and drinkin'
Nothin' feels better than blood on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria
As the band played "Night of the Johnstown Flood"
I catch him when he's strayin', teach him how to walk that line
Man turns his back on his family, he ain't no friend of mine
The night was like any other, I got a call 'bout quarter to nine
There was trouble in a roadhouse out on the Michigan line

There was a kid lyin' on the floor lookin' bad, bleedin' hard from his head
There was a girl cryin' at a table, it was Frank, they said
Well I went out and I jumped in my car and I hit the lights
I must of drove 110 through Michigan county that night
It was out at the crossroads down 'round Willow bank
Seen a Buick with Ohio plates, behind the wheel was Frank
Well I chased him through them county roads till a sign said "Canadian border 5 miles from here"
I pulled over the side of the highway and watched his taillights disappear
Me and Frankie laughin' and drinkin'
Nothin' feels better than blood on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria
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STATE TROOPER

New Jersey Turnpike, ridin' on a wet night
'Neath the refinery's glow out where

the great black rivers flow
License, registration, I ain't got none
But I got a clear conscience 'bout the things that I done
Mister state trooper, please don't stop me

Maybe you got a kid, maybe you got a pretty wife
The only thing that I got's been botherin' me my whole life
Mister state trooper, please don't stop me
In the wee wee hours your mind gets hazy
Radio relay towers lead me to my baby
Radio's jammed up with talk show stations
It's just talk talk talk till you lose your patience
Mister state trooper, please don't stop me

Hey somebody out there, listen to my last prayer
Hi ho silver-o deliver me from nowhere

USED CARS

My little sister's in the front seat with an ice cream cone
My ma's in the backseat sittin' all alone

As my pa steers her slow out of the lot
For a test drive down Michigan Avenue

Now my ma she fingers her wedding band
And watches the salesman stare at my old man's hands
He's tellin' us all 'bout the break he'd give us if he could but he just can't
Well if I could I swear I know just what I'd do

Now mister, the day the lottery I win
I ain't ever gonna ride in no used car again

Now the neighbors come from near and far
As we pull up in our brand-new used car
I wish he'd just hit the gas and let out a cry
And tell 'em all they can kiss our asses good-bye

My dad he sweats the same job from mornin' to morn
Me I walk home on the same dirty streets where I was born
Up the block I can hear my little sister in the front seat blowin' that horn

The sounds echo all down Michigan
Avenue

Now mister, the day my number
comes in
I ain't ever gonna ride in no used car
again

OPEN ALL NIGHT

I had the carburetor cleaned and
checked
With her line blown out she's
hummin' like a turbojet
Propped her up in the backyard on
concrete blocks
For a new clutch plate and a new set
of shocks
Took her down to the carwash,
check the plugs and points
I'm goin' out tonight, I'm gonna rock
that joint

Early north Jersey industrial skyline
I'm a all-set Cobra jet creepin'
through the nighttime
Gotta find a gas station, gotta find a
pay phone
This turnpike sure is spooky at night
when you're all alone
Gotta hit the gas 'cause I'm runnin'
late
This New Jersey in the mornin' like a
lunar landscape

The boss don't dig me so he put me
on the night shift
It's an all-night run to get back to
where my baby lives
In the wee wee hours your mind
gets hazy
Radio relay towers, won't you lead
me to my baby
Underneath the overpass trooper
hits his party light switch
Goodnight, good luck, one two
powershift

I met Wanda when she was
employed
Behind the counter at the Route 60
Bob's Big Boy
Fried chicken on the front seat,
she's sittin' in my lap
We're wipin' our fingers on a Texaco
road map
I remember Wanda up on Scrap
Metal Hill
With them big brown eyes that make
your heart stand still
Five A.M., oil pressure's sinkin' fast
I make a pit stop, wipe the
windshield, check the gas
Gotta call my baby on the telephone
Let her know that her daddy's comin'
on home
Sit tight, little mama, I'm comin'
'round
I got three more hours but I'm
coverin' ground



Your eyes get itchy in the wee wee hours
Sun's just a red ball risin' over them refinery towers
Radio's jammed up with gospel stations
Lost souls callin' long distance salvation
Hey Mr. Deejay, won'tcha hear my last prayer
Hey ho, rock and roll, deliver me from nowhere

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

Last night I dreamed that I was a child
Out where the pines grow wild and tall
I was trying to make it home through the forest
Before the darkness falls
I heard the wind rustling through the trees
And ghostly voices rose from the fields
I ran with my heart pounding down that broken path
With the devil snappin' at my heels
I broke through the trees and there in the night
My father's house stood shining hard and bright
The branches and brambles tore my clothes and scratched my arms

But I ran till I fell shaking in his arms

I awoke and I imagined the hard things that pulled us apart
Will never again, sir, tear us from each other's hearts
I got dressed and to that house I did ride
From out on the road I could see its window shining in light

I walked up the steps and stood on the porch
A woman I didn't recognize came and spoke to me through a chained door
I told her my story and who I'd come for
She said "I'm sorry, son, but no one by that name lives here anymore"

My father's house shines hard and bright
It stands like a beacon calling me in the night
Calling and calling so cold and alone
Shining 'cross this dark highway where our sins lie unatoned

REASON TO BELIEVE

Seen a man standin' over a dead dog lyin' by the highway in a ditch
He's lookin' down kinda puzzled

pokin' that dog with a stick
Got his car door flung open, he's standin' out on Highway 31
Like if he stood there long enough that dog'd get up and run
Struck me kinda funny, seem kinda funny, sir, to me
Still at the end of every hard day people find some reason to believe

Now Mary Lou loved Johnny with a love mean and true
She said "Baby I'll work for you every day and bring my money home to you"
One day he up and left her and ever since that
She waits down at the end of that dirt road for young Johnny to come back
Struck me kinda funny, funny, yeah, indeed
How at the end of every hard-earned day people find some reason to believe

Take a baby to the river, Kyle
William they called him
Wash the baby in the water, take away little Kyle's sin
In a whitewash shotgun shack an old man passes away
Take the body to the graveyard and over him they pray

Lord won't you tell us, tell us what does it mean
At the end of every hard-earned day you can find some reason to believe

Congregation gathers down by the river side
Preacher stands with a Bible, groom stands waitin' for his bride
Congregation gone and the sun sets behind a weepin' willow tree
Groom stands alone and watches the river rush on so effortlessly
Wonderin' where can his baby be
Still at the end of every hard-earned day people find some reason to believe

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