

## Brief reflections on random tunes (2002-2008)

### *One of the diamonds:*

When I got home from the late shift last night, I was eager to hear “*All the Diamonds*” by Bruce Coburn.

The curiosity in that old song was piqued during my usual afternoon walk in which I try to clear my head between shifts.

Yesterday’s stroll had taken me to the south False Creek area where I had briefly lived in the fall of 1981. That was during my first days back from a 2-year volunteer stint in Tanzania. I was not surprised that a former block of decaying houses behind a moving van depot is now in the heart of a trendy mixed commercial district.

I stopped up on the sidewalk in front of 2333 Ontario St., where my frowsy rooming house once stood. The address was now occupied by an office low-rise. Despite the new buildings, the very gradient of the sidewalk seemed familiar. It felt like the very spine remembered slumping back to the doorway from fruitless job searches.



Then came the flashback:

I was squatting on the floor of my cubicle unpacking the wooden crate that had been stored for two years in a dank corner of EZ Storage, where I’d had a shouting match over the bill. Not only had I been gouged, but my paperbacks and clothes were moldy from exposure. Some of my cassette tapes had even been nibbled by nesting mice.

I was testing each of the tapes to determine whether they were still playable. Several of them had to be respooled so they wouldn’t gum up the fancy new boom box, picked up a couple of weeks before in Hong Kong. I was carefully watching the tiny cogwheels on the ‘Canadian folk selections’ tape when the intricate guitar notes of Cockburn’s ‘*All the Diamonds*’ filled the room.

*All the diamonds in this world  
That mean anything to me  
Are conjured up by wind and sunlight  
Sparkling on the sea*

As the song rang out, rich and stereo-clear, I had particularly missed that song in Tanzania. On several lonely nights it had come to mind. At that moment on a drizzly October afternoon, the song stirred images of African vistas, left behind. I sat on the floor, transfixed—almost overcome.

*I ran aground in a harbor town  
Lost the taste for being free*

Poignancy welled up for opportunities slipping away. For the third time in less than six years, I had “run aground” in Vancouver. I was starting all over again without a safety net. Yet unlike the previous reentries from tropical sojourns, the future was no longer hazily distant. Decisions could no longer be put off. I was without a real career and certainly without meaningful accomplishments. Less than two weeks before, I had passed my thirtieth birthday.

As the tiny tape wheels turned, I also thought of a recurrent dream of the previous year: Stranded on a train platform or on a ferry dock; abandoned by a helicopter on high plateau— in each of its iterations I was left behind.

*Silver scales flash bright and fade  
In reeds along the shore  
Like a pearl in sea of liquid jade  
His ship comes shining*

The heart beat faster in the crescendo of guitar and synthesizer. In the leadup to turning thirty, I had stoically prepared for a thickening of skin. I felt that that old assurance that I was ‘in preparation’ was a sham. The urgency of ‘now’ had to be unblinkingly confronted. Emotions would have to be kept in check. Survival post-thirty, might even require colder and more calculated responses...

Yet at that moment swept up by a piece of music, I was nearly in tears. Aesthetic responses were still intact. The capacity to *feel* might even be deepening! In the fading reverberation of the final guitar chord, the poignancy shifted to relief....

On the sidewalk outside 2333 Ontario St, yesterday afternoon, I knew that when I got home from work, I needed to listen to that song again.



As soon as I swung my bookbag into the corner of the apartment last night, I dug out the CD of “*Canadian classics*” that old buddy SK in Korea had gifted me. Following his hand-printed label, I cued the CD to track #18 and intently listened:

*Like a crystal swan in a sky of suns  
His ship comes shining...*

At first, I thought of the tiny prismatic crystal swan, picked up four years ago from a tourist kiosk in Prague. Purchased as a memento to “*All the Diamonds*”, the piece unfortunately shattered when I dropped my carry-on bag in airport security... Also, I remembered that Coburn (far from a favourite Canadian songwriter) wrote ‘*All the Diamonds*’ in the spirit of born-again Christianity.

Still, the song held something of its wistful beauty. In ejecting the CD, I resolved not to overplay it and thereby diminish its charm. That was not a promise easy to keep in the era of instant downloads...

Before turning out the light, I could not help comparing my present response to '*All the Diamonds*' to that experienced in hearing the song on the afternoon of October 1981. Would I trade the thickened skin of middle age for the sensitive skin of early manhood?

It seemed telling that just before the synthesizer crescendo, I had turned down the volume lest my old neighbour be woken...

*2002, June*

fwt

### *Echoes of Silence:*

It was at the behest of MH and TE last evening, that I turned the channel from CNN to watch the Grammy Awards. I was still digesting the reports of the “inevitable showdown” with Saddam Hussein, when Dustin Hoffman introduced Simon and Garfunkel. They were about to receive lifetime achievement awards.

When the greying Hoffman called the duo “the voices of our generation,” he was backhandedly sharing the accolade. Any viewer in the English-speaking world over the age of forty would remember Hoffman as the neurotic golden boy in ‘*The Graduate*’, whose angst under the California sun played out to a Simon and Garfunkel soundtrack.

As the old actor patted the backs of his fellow 1960s superstars and grinned, an American armada was assembling in the Arabian Gulf. The self-proclaimed defender of the Judeo-Christian heritage was drawing its mighty sword against the heretics in the Middle East. Arab scalps were about to be taken; Iraqi children about to be terrorized... In that seething moment, it seemed that joining the applause would be effectively bowing before the many-tentacled leviathan which subjugates as much by entertainment as by brute force...

“What’s the matter, dad?” asked MH.

“American pop culture is like a big candy bar,” I scowled, “a delicious treat riddled with carcinogens.”



Just then, the balding Simon began stumming. From the side of the darkened stage, the lanky Garfunkel, oddly boyish in his sixties, stepped towards the microphone. The applause gave way to a hush, as Simon picked the opening notes of ‘*Sounds of Silence*’. Holding his rolled white sleeves, Garfunkel leaned into the mike:

*‘Hello darkness my old friend  
I’ve come to talk with you again...  
Because a vision softly creeping  
Left its seeds while I was sleeping’*

While politics were not quite swept away, for 3 ½ minutes, I surrendered...

I thought of the distant night in late August 1969, when I walked with my hitchhiking buddy through Greenwich Village, New York City, before catching a Greyhound back north. I remembered stopping in Washington Square, before a monument that was scrawled in multi-color graffiti. In the heightened sensitivities of those hours, the lyrics from ‘*Sounds of Silence*’ seemed almost epiphanic:

*In restless dreams I walked alone  
Narrow streets of cobblestone  
‘Neath the halo of a streetlamp  
I turned my collar to the cold and damp*

Then there were the nights alone in African mission schools in the 1970s-1980s, listening to cassettes by candlelight. *Sounds of Silence* was one of those few songs that never failed to raise goosebumps— especially when accompanied with a few jolts of firewater...

*And in the naked light I saw  
Ten thousand people, maybe more  
People talking without speaking  
People hearing without listening*

It was when the middle-aged duo sang that verse— still with their choir boy voices— that I recalled hearing the song for the very first time:

It was at the end of December, 1965, near the low solstice sunset amid the gradual bombardment of the kitchen radio from faraway stations. It was a wavering signal from somewhere in New England that first carried the angelic harmony and mysterious lyrics of the new song. For months I had been waiting for another 'folk rock' hit as powerful as *'Mr. Tambourine Man'* and I knew I had just heard one...

I was still shivering in the tremolo guitar when I headed out into a night as cold as the pulsing stars. In circling the ploughed streets, I ran into CH, a sometimes friend who was a year older than me. He was coming from the village skating rink accompanied by ML, a cute girl who was a year younger.

With nowhere to go and nothing to do, we circled the dark streets for at least an hour, talking. At some point the 13-year-old girl moved from the other side of CH and walked between us.

When we grew too numb to stay out any longer, we walked the girl to the front of her house. I stood aside kicking snow when she gave CH a goodnight smooch. Then unexpectedly, she stepped over and turned her face up to me.

I was startled. Still, I bent hesitantly towards her, closed eyes and lightly kissed her. My heart bounced and blood rushed instantly to my chilled skin.

Yet immediately aware that the older boy was watching, I patted her back in a 'brotherly' gesture, bade goodbye and scurried away. All the way home through the sparkling snowbanks my chest thudded, and my head rang with the electric tremolo of *'Sounds of Silence'*...

*'And the sign flashed out its warning  
In the words that it was forming  
And the sign said, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls  
And tenement halls"  
And whispered in the sounds of silence*



Back on the 2003 Grammy Awards, Paul Simon, gave his acoustic a final sweeping strum. When the lights went up, the camera panned the standing ovation. With their faces zoomed in on the dual jumbotron screen, the voices of a generation smiled....

My teeth were back on edge. Ostensibly New York liberals: might they have made some acknowledgment of the looming darkness—if not a brief anti-war statement? A more courageous musician like Peter Seeger—would have boycotted an obscenely glitzy ceremony on the eve of America’s launching an invasion. There are numerous examples of actors boycotting the Academy Awards or using the spotlight to make a passionate political statement. But Simon and Garfunkel were clearly not of the ilk of Jane Fonda, Marlon Brando, or Woody Allen...

“Mind if I turn the channel?” I said gruffly.

Both kids tsked.

I switched back to CNN. The dilemma seemed to be about resisting the evils of America while acknowledging its gifts. Would I even have remembered that chaste kiss on a sharp winter night 4 decades ago had the moment not been so magically enhanced by ‘*Sounds of Silence*’?

I had to pay tribute.

2003, February



### ***Knee Play and blue butterflies:***

It was listening through earphones attached my new Nokia flip phone on a grassy bank this evening which lent Philip Glass's *'Einstein on the Beach'* such an unearthly beauty...

Spellbound, I glanced from MH's Little League game on the field below up to the shafts of sunlight breaking through grey cloud. The ethereal music was crystal-clear. In the heightened sensitivity, the *Knee Play* #5, movement could have been sacred music of the spheres.

In one ear, an angelic choir sang through a loop of the numbers 1-8. In the other ear, a tranquil scene was narrated by a male voice:

*'... We have need of a soothing story to banish the disturbing thoughts of the day, to set at rest our troubled minds, and put at ease our ruffled spirits... And what sort of story shall we hear? Ah, it will be a familiar story, a story that is so very, very old, and yet it is so new....'*

In the almost reverential moment, a troubling memory of nearly a decade past was illuminated:

It was in July 1995, when my older sister K. and I were standing on the edge of a meadow behind the long-abandoned rural homestead of our maternal grandparents in the St. John River valley in western New Brunswick. She was in the final stages of metastatic cancer and on her last visit to the province of her girlhood.

We were both stopped up before the knee-deep grass to behold a yellow blaze of wildflowers. Suddenly, scores of blue butterflies fluttered up before us.

For a few seconds, we were both too overwhelmed to speak. Then my sister whispered:

"It's like heaven! Someone could write a poem about it. Do you still write poems, F.?"

Had we been closer I might have given a heartfelt response. Instead, I scoffed, "I might have written some doggerel as a kid. That's not poetry."

"Well, someone could write a poem about this," she said, "or paint a picture." She sighed, possibly wondering why a brother nearly middle-aged with 3 kids of his own still reminded her of the touchy adolescent...

Drawn back to *'Knee-Play'*, I thought of what I should have said to my late sister in that meadow 12 years ago:

"Yes, K., I have dabbled in poetry but never really had the ear for it. Anyway, even a great poet couldn't do justice to the ineffable beauty that we've just beheld. Let's just silently rejoice in having shared it..."

But that was unsaid.



As the voice of the narrator quickened in my right ear, a violin, both ethereal and plaintive, rose from the left:

*'...Two lovers sat on a park bench with their bodies touching each other, holding hands in the moonlight... There was silence between them. So profound was their love for each other, they needed no words to express it....'*

Hardly able to bear more feelings beyond the reach of words, I pulled out the earphones. I scanned across the field to locate MH. He was among his teammates in red uniforms lined on the bench, waiting to bat...

*2004, June*

fwt

*A light classical accompaniment for eternal spring:*



In punching the radio buttons at the traffic light on the crawl home yesterday afternoon, I accidentally hit upon the finale of '*A Taste of Honey*.' Heard for the first time in decades, it evoked a flurry of old associations:

Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass was certainly not to my adolescent taste. Brass band albums seemed crafted for Playboy pads of middle-aged swingers. I did allow that some music designated as 'easy listening'—if listenable at all—were at least useful for testing woofers and tweeters. I was certainly impressed on first hearing on a high-end cabinet stereo, the *fortissimo* of grand pianos in Ferrante and Teicher's cover of the theme from '*Exodus*.'

While the latter 1960s is often regarded as the golden age of Rock, the day-to-day background music of the era sounded more like the Henry Mancini orchestra than Led Zeppelin. 'Easy listening' saturation extended from AM radio to the soundtracks of TV shows and movies. One would have had to plug ears to avoid it.

As much as I would have been loath to admit, a few of those unavoidable brass and string band tracks did pierce my adolescent armour. Who could resist the heart-shivering trumpets in '*Wonderland by Night*' or '*The Lonely Bull*'? Even album covers showing perky blondes in turtlenecks smiling at open-shirted playboys could not spoil those numbers.



Turning off the car radio, I thought of other background music of my adolescence. Coming particularly to mind was an instrumental piece regularly heard on the local station to which the kitchen radio was permanently set. The piece may have even been used as an opening theme to one of the weekday programs. Yet unlike the other dreary devotional songs (e.g. '*Showers of Blessing*' bleated every morning at 8:30 AM) it was a graceful melody that haunted for years afterwards.

It was only in the mid-1980s on the BBC world service that the music was identified. It was a 'light classical' piece called '*The Elizabethan Serenade*'—composed by Ronald Bilge for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Hearing it for the first time since the '60s brought back a particularly tender moment of adolescence:

It must have been on a sunny Thursday in late May, *circa* 1968, around 12:30 PM. I was sitting on my bed after lunch thinking about the upcoming weekend. The fragrance of spring was wafting in from the open window.

I was thinking about the Friday night dance in the neighbouring village 25 miles away. I was wondering how I could get a ride there. I hated to put myself at the mercy of drunken drivers on a stretch of road in which I'd already had close calls— but those spring and summer dances at the Orange Hall by a lakeside, were unmissable. Unlike the local village dances, they were often attended by a few 'outside' girls. There was always the chance of sitting beside some visiting girl

from far away, brought along by a local cousin. There was even the chance of discovering by some knowing glance— that such a girl would love to talk with someone ‘different’ who would really ‘understand’ her...

Meanwhile, accompanying this imagining was ‘*the Elizabethan Serenade*,’ playing fainting downstairs on the kitchen radio. In its strains hope and anticipation sprouted like the budding branches of the poplar outside the window...



Tapping thumb on the steering wheel, for a moment I hummed the tune. I was lucky, I affirmed, to be of the last generation nurtured by broadcasting. I was exposed to a broad range of musical genres. How likely that I would ever stumbled upon— let alone listened to— an orchestral piece with the staid title of ‘*the Elizabethan Serenade*’? Now like nearly everyone else in our era of narrow-casting, I listen only to music that is pre-selected.

I turned the radio back on and pressed the ‘scan’ button. What do I know of the music my kids listen to? For a few moments, I was determined to be exposed to Hip Hop or Rap...

*2005, September*

fwt

### *Lost Ballads of the lumber woods?*



I like to think that I welcome contrary evidence for challenging long-held prejudices. One such prejudice originating from adolescence was the belief that the soil of my natal province was too barren to have given root to an original musical style... It was in the hope of challenging that old prejudice that I received last week from E-Bay: '*Folk Songs of Southern New Brunswick*'.

Knowing that the author, Helen Creighton, wrote a number of books on folk culture of the Maritimes over several decades, I had expected something richer. Unfortunately, her 1971 work read more like amateurish anthropology than folk-musicology.

Her sources were largely confined to the contributions of an old farmer from Albert County, New Brunswick, and a former fisherman from St. Andrews who sang unaccompanied into her tape recorder. Their songs, as described, seem to be standard Scots, English and Irish ballads with only lightly altered lyrics (e.g. a substitution of the Marimichi for the River Clyde). The formal style of the transcribed lyrics ('*Doth wept she*'... '*bid thee adieu*'... '*With grief I daily mourn*'...) seems more akin to the English of King James than the vernacular of rural New Brunswick.

Maybe Creighton's informants were behaving rather like the Samoans before Margaret Mead: giving the friendly woman with the notepad what they assumed she was after. I wondered whether meatier (or bawdier) songs would have been spilled forth from more informal encounters well lubricated with rum...

The overall impression that was that Creighton's' gentlemanly informants has held back the juicier material. Just as likely, the livelier songs of the lumber camps and fishing boats had already disappeared along with the best of the old-timers...

Thus, I was left with a stinging reminder that a book soon to be consigned to the Sally Ann thrift shop cost \$30 plus shipping charges...

Still, there was one gem of discovery: I had a vague memory of an old New Brunswick ballad called '*Peter Emberley*,' but Creighton shone a new light on it. Composed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the song tells the story of a poor lad forced away from his home in Prince Edward Island by a cruel father-in-law. The young Peter ends up in the lumber woods of neighbouring New Brunswick:

*I hired to work in the lumber woods on the Sou-West Miramichi.  
I hired to work in the lumber woods where they cut the tall spruce down  
While loading teams with yarded logs I received a deadly wound.*

Told from the grave by victim himself, Emberley's tragic tale is a worthy example of an authentically rooted New Brunswick ballad: but how original? I had to hear the tune.



Yesterday on YouTube, I found two versions of *'Peter Emberley'*. The earlier one was a CBC recording from the mid 1960s by one Tom Kines, a folklorist from Manitoba. With a sprightly tempo and flute accompaniment, his interpretation seemed quite at odds with a mournful tone... The other recording of the song was by an Ontario group called the Wakami Wailers from a 1986 album called: *'The last of the white pine loggers.'* Albeit decked out as Ottawa Valley loggers with funny hats for school kids, the quartet still does better justice to the tragic ballad.

In the feed-back space accompanying the latter version, one commentator identifies himself as the great-grandson of the John Calhoun of Boiestown, New Brunswick. He claims that his great-grandfather wrote the song in 1881. As also credited by Creighton, Calhoun knew Emberley and composed the ballad after the young man's untimely death.

A further Google search of the song's origins led, surprising, to a site dedicated to the early songs of Bob Dylan. In a brief citation on Dylan's relatively obscure *'Ballad of Donald White'*, the website Dylanologist claims that the song was heavily influenced by an old ballad of the north woods called *'Peter Emberley'*. Unfamiliar with *'Ballad of Donald White,'* I tracked it down for a comparison:

While the tunes of *'Donald White'* and *'Peter Emberley'* are quite different, the themes are broadly similar. Both White and Emberley suffer a cruel fate. Yet quite in contrast to the circumstances of the white boy accidentally killed, Dylan's character is a black man hounded through a rootless life and condemned to death for murder. Unlike Emberley's voice from beyond the grave, Donald White tells his story just before his execution.

There is, however, an unmistakable similarity in both songs' lyrics. To illustrate, the following are lyrics from Dylan's song followed by bracketed verses from Calhoun's ballad:

*'My name is Donald White, you see'* (*'My name 'tis Peter Emberley, as you may understand'*)

*'I landed in the old northwest, Seattle, Washington'* (*I landed in New Brunswick in a lumbering counterie*)

*'There's danger on the ocean where the salt sea waves split high'* (*There's danger on the ocean where the waves roll mountains high*)

*'There's danger on the battlefield where the shells of bullets fly'* (*'There's danger on the battlefield where the angry bullets fly'*)

*'Farewell unto the old north woods of which I used to roam'* (*'Here's adieu to Prince Edward's Island, that garden in the sea'*)

The resemblance clearly goes beyond a balladic template. But is it plagiarism?

It is well documented that the young Dylan voraciously ‘assimilated’ a broad range of musical influences. It is certainly possible that he came across a CBC recording of ‘*Peter Emberley*’. He may have also heard the song from Canadian folksinger, Bonnie Dobson, who moved in Dylan’s circles during his Greenwich Village days in the early 1960s.

Still, if Dylan did indeed ‘borrow’ from the ballad written in 1881 in New Brunswick, Canada, the descendants of John Calhoun are probably tickled. The association does give ‘*Peter Emberley*’ more attention than it would otherwise receive— whether justly or not...



In ordering the Creighton book, I had hoped for perhaps a half-dozen songs of a quality similar to that of ‘*Peter Emberley*’. I had especially hoped for more songs from the New Brunswick lumber camps. However, in fairness to Creighton, I recognize that she was attempting to field the songs of English-speaking southern New Brunswick. A gathering of songs of the lumber camps would have to source the entire province (the largest camps were in the north) and would certainly include Acadian contributions... At least Creighton’s book has whetted curiosity to keep looking.



In listening to the Tom Kine recording of *Peter Emberley* on YouTube, it was touching to see the accompanying video clip. In fuzzy black and white, a bundled-up woodsman, *circa* 1935, pulled on the bridle of a draught horse. He could have been my grandfather. Right to his retirement in the early 1960s, my maternal grandfather hauled sleighs of peeled pulp to the frozen bank of the St. John River St. for the spring log drive...

When I stayed at the old farmhouse, sometimes I would wake before dawn and listen to the sounds from the downstairs kitchen. Lying under the heavy quilt in the icy air I would smell the crackling wood stove and hear my grandfather clear his throat as he put on his heavy work clothes. Sometimes he would softly whistle or even sing to himself... Of course, there are no photos of that— let alone any recordings.

*2007, June*

### ***Getting to Glen Gould:***



Watching the Netflix documentary of Glen Gould last night, I remembered the surprise in reading his lengthy obituary in the *Guardian Weekly* in 1982 while in Africa. I was chastened by the fact that I knew almost nothing about a fellow Canadian of such international acclaim.

But then until my late adolescence, I was averse to any music broadly labelled as ‘classical’. Through childhood, any exposure at all to a symphony orchestra would have been to a Massey Hall concert broadcast on CBC TV. Having only one TV channel, such programming was dreaded as much as the pre-empting of a show like *‘Adventures in Paradise’*, for election night returns.

‘Classical’ was scarcely ever heard on the local radio station to which village radios were locked. Country western, pop and devotional was the daily fare fed by the station owned (like nearly everything in the province) by the patrician Irving corporation. The overlord seemed to know the peasant appetite: “longhair” music was only for the snooty.

Among my family’s LP collection, which ranged from Marty Robbins to Doris Day, there was no remotely classical records. When once a Van Cliburn album was sent in substitution for another record ordered from the Columbia Record Club, it was immediately shipped back. A Christmas album ordered from the club that featured a solo harp was kept despite the conviction that the family was cheated out of Bing Crosby and *‘Frosty the Snowman’*. Still, it was played only once in something akin to embarrassment.

A few living rooms in my natal village certainly accommodated pianos by which piano lessons were dutifully taken in middle class aspiration. Of course it was the TV that was at the center of my childhood living room.

Playing self-taught guitar was common among my peers— but guitar players stuck to country or rock and roll standards. An interest in Segovia would have been commensurate to a declaration of sexual deviance. Along with Chuck Berry, any teen in that milieu could gleefully taunt: *‘Roll over Beethoven’*!

To listen to classical music was to ridiculously put on airs. It seemed designed by snobs for making common folk feel ill-mannered, sloppily dressed and stupid. Still, one could not deny the intimidation was effective...



It was only in latter adolescence in the gritty port city of Saint John that I first mingled with schoolmates who took music lessons and who were interested in fine arts. As confidence grew, intimidation gradually gave way to curiosity.

Along with first exposure to pianos recitals, I credit certain films of the era for tweaking my interest in symphonic classics. Scores such as that of Kubrick's '*2001 a Space Odyssey*' and '*A Clockwork Orange*' seeded an appreciation of Beethoven, Strauss, Elgar *et. al...* The appreciation grew through the early 1970s, during which time concerts and recitals were a feature of college life.

Still, I do not recall from that era, any knowledge of Gould. The philosophy professor who often digressed into lengthy homages to Bach, did not mention him. Even CBC radio's Bob Kerr, whose '*Off the Record*', I avidly listened to in the mid-1970s did not, to my recollection, feature Gould. I must simply have been unlucky in missing every edifying CBC discussion on the eccentric genius of Toronto the Good.

After turning off the TV, I pulled up from YouTube the video clip of Gould's performing Bach's '*Partina #2*', which was featured in the documentary.

In watching the Maestro humming like a child with a mouth full of Turkish Delight, I thought again of the Columbia Record Club, *circa* 1961. If a Glen Gould record has been sent instead of the Van Cliburn— would it still have been sent back? Had I been told that Gould was an internationally famous countryman— would that have made me any more curious about hearing his piano?

In awe of Gould's ecstatically executed contrapuntals— I also realized that there was some justice that it had taken a lifetime to get to '*The Goldberg Variations*'. Perhaps there was no other path than beginning through the territory of '*Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs*'...

2008, September

