

**All the lyrics written by Jay Mathews
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Song 1 Bama Gothic

(Verse 1)

Under moss-draped limbs where the bard-owl calls.
Secrets sweat in an old church hall.
A rusted bell tolls out its blame,
Every echo knows your name.
A woman tends roses behind her door,
A wooden leg creaks on a pineboard floor.
Buried guilt and a preacher's lies—
In red clay soil, nothing truly dies.

(Chorus)

It's a Bama Gothic—where the past won't fade,
Red clay debts and the price we've paid.
Grace and damnation go hand in hand,
Southern drawls in a cursed, sacred land.

(Verse 2)

A boy with a match and his daddy's rage,
Sets fire to a barn like he's turnin' the page.
Smoke climbs up through the longleaf pines,
Like prayers that don't reach the sky in time.
Whiskey breath on a river breeze,
Copenhagen ain't what it used to be.
Blood on the trail, footsteps upstairs—
You feel like judgment's hidin' somewhere.

(Chorus)

It's a Bama Gothic—where the past won't fade,
Red clay debts and the price we've paid.
Grace and damnation go hand in hand,
Southern drawls in a cursed, sacred land.

(Bridge)

Kudzu crawls where the headstones lean,
Names worn down to what they've seen.
River runs dark where the baptisms go,
Wash you clean but it won't let go.
Screen door swings and the night breathes in—
You hear your name but it ain't no friend.

(Verse 3)

A child runs wild in the heatwave haze,
With heaven and hell in his bloodshot days.

Peelin' paint and a weepin' moon,
Promise of mercy that comes too soon.
Fields go sour, the timber burns,
Every lost soul takes its turn.
At the crossroads, callin' out your name—
Every heart's burning in a holy flame.

(Chorus)

It's a Bama Gothic—where the past won't fade,
Red clay debts and the price we've paid.
Grace and damnation go hand in hand,
Southern drawls in a cursed, sacred land.

Carve it deep where the roots run dark,
Bones stay silent under pine tree bark
In the Bama Gothic, we find our way—
Through a broken night to a freakin' day.

It's a Bama Gothic—where the past won't fade,
Red clay debts and the price we've paid.
Grace and damnation go hand in hand,
Southern drawls in a cursed, sacred land.

Song 2 Small Town Sins

Verse 1

There's a screen door creak in the evening breeze
And a front row full on their bended knees
Mama's Bible on the dash out back
Next to secrets in a paper sack
They'll bring you food when your whole world caves
Say a prayer like family at your grave
Yeah, they show up strong when the hurt begins
But they don't forget, and you don't get in
Pre-Chorus

It ain't written down, carved in stone
We just live by what we've always known

Chorus

We keep it covered in a smile of grace
If you wanna belong, you know your place
Sweep it deep underneath it all
Where the truth won't rise in the football fall
They'll swear they're heaven-bound, no matter where they've been
But never call out those small town sins

Verse 2

There's a list passed 'round in a quiet prayer
Funny how the same names linger there
By the time that "amen" hits the floor
It ain't prayer now, it's a little bit more
Dreams get filed under "not around here"
You can chase 'em down, just don't bring 'em back here

If you change too much or you speak too plain
You're a different kind, you ain't quite the same

Pre-Chorus

I've bit my tongue, I've played my part
Know the truth of 'Bless his heart'

Chorus

We keep it covered in a smile of grace
If you wanna belong, you know your place
Sweep it deep underneath it all
Where the truth won't rise in the football fall
They'll swear they're heaven-bound, no matter where they've been
But never call out those small town sins

Bridge

There's good in the roots, I won't deny
It's home in a way you can't untie
But the same hands reaching out to give
Can lock the chain on how you live
We keep it covered in a smile of grace
Same old lines, same old face
Sweep it deep underneath it all
Where the truth won't rise and the silence falls
They'll swear they're heaven-bound, no matter where they've been
But never call out those small town sins

Song 3 Zombie Chickens

Verse 1

While Mama heated grease and fixin's
Out back I saw them zombie chickens
Feathers flyin', feet still kickin'
Thought that's just the way things happened

Barefoot runnin' through the yard
Life and death weren't all that far
Granddad laughed and said, "Don't fret"
"That bird ain't figured out it's dead"

Chorus

Have you ever seen a zombie chicken
Runnin' like it don't know it's gone?
Kids these days think I'm just kiddin'
But I swear I ain't that wrong

World was wild and we just lived it
Never stopped to question much
I'm from days of zombie chickens
Back when life was strange and tough

Verse 2

Rotary phone hangin' on the wall
Had to wait your turn to call
Three TV channels, that was it
"Don't touch that dial!"—you'd get hit

Fold-out map across your knees
Miss a turn? You guessed with ease
Stick shift rollin' on a hill
If you stalled, you learned real quick

Chorus

Have you ever seen a zombie chicken
Runnin' like it don't know it's gone?
Kids these days think I'm just kiddin'
But I swear I ain't that wrong

World was wild and we just lived it
Never stopped to question much
I'm from days of zombie chickens
Back when life was strange and tough

Verse 3

Blue light flashin', people ran
Kmart deals you had to grab
Lickin' stamps and writin' checks
Mail took time and earned respect

TV dinners on metal trays
Kids stayed out till end of day
Didn't need no passcode then
Just a knock and "y'all come in"

Bridge

Now it's all screens and passwords
Everything's explained away
But some things you just had to see
To believe back in the day

I'm so old I saw a zombie chicken
Runnin' circles in the yard
You can laugh but I ain't kiddin'
Life back then just hit you hard

We didn't film it, didn't post it
Didn't need to prove a thing
I'm from days of zombie chickens
And a world you've never seen

Outro

Now you know where we get that sayin'
Ain't a word of this I'm playin'
'Bout a chicken with its head cut off runnin'
Lord, that thing just kept on comin'

Song 4 Fool's Gold

Verse 1

I was young, thought I had it all,
Chased the shine, ran before the fall.

Took the words of a silver-tongued man,
Sold my soul for a fool's demand.

Pre-Chorus

Oh, it looked like treasure, gleamed like grace,
But all I found was an empty place.

Chorus

I was cheated by fool's gold, led by a lie,
Bought what was glittering, but my hands came up dry.
Lost in the promise of silver and pearls,
But there ain't no diamonds in this broken-down world.

Verse 2

Took the roads that the wise ones warned,
Left behind the truth I was borned.
Built my house on sinking sand,
Watched it crumble in my own hands.

Pre-Chorus

Oh, it looked like wisdom, felt like right,
But all it gave me was sleepless nights.

Chorus again...

Verse 3

So I picked up a shovel and dug down deep,
Through the dirt where the secrets keep.
Found a rock that the storms can't shake,
Truth so strong, it will never break.

Then I heard a voice call soft and low,
Said, "Come on home, boy, there's more to know."
Now I stand where the Rock won't roll,
No more fooled by fool's gold.

Now I know where the real worth lies,
Not in the world, but in faithful eyes.

Ends with chorus

Song 5 Up From the Coosa

True Story

<https://www.heraldnet.com/2009/01/13/manhunt-on-for-businessman-who-may-have-tried-to-fake-own-death/>

Verse 1

He flew out of Indiana with the feds on his tail,
A jet full of profit and a briefcase of hell.
Wall Street smile, but the numbers went wrong,
A high-rise sinner singin' his last freedom song.
He kissed his lies and his life goodbye,
Folded his courage into a borrowed tie,
Jumped through the clouds with a practiced excuse,
Headed south where the river runs wide and loose.

Verse 2

The plane kept flyin' till it fell in the pines,
Left twisted metal on Florida lines.
They found the wreckage, smoke and flame,
A staged-out death with a headline name.
But he floated down quiet in the hush of the trees,
Parachute ghost in a humid breeze,
Bag full of cash, clean shirt, clean hands,
Betting his soul on a southern plan.

Chorus

Coming up from the Coosa, man in disguise,
Harpersville Hotel, behind borrowed eyes.
Truth don't drown—it just drifts till it lands,
You can't outrun the weight of your hands.
You can fake the fall, you can pray you're free,
But you can't outfly what God can see.

Verse 3

He shaved off the man that the cameras had known,
Paid cash at the desk, said he'd wrecked his boat alone.
Clerk didn't ask, just slid the key,
Room with a window and a cracked TV.
The Harpersville Hotel hummed low and slow,
AC rattlin' like it already knew.
He said he'd been fishing, lost on the stream,
But every mirror in that room knew the scheme.

Verse 4

Night laid heavy on Highway 280,
Sirens sang somewhere far below.
He watched the ceiling, counted the stains,
Tried to drink sleep, tried to outrun his name.
The river kept movin' outside his mind,
Same way truth does—slow but kind.
You can dam a story, bury a lie,
But the current remembers every time.

Chorus

Coming up from the Coosa, shadow and shame,
A high-flyin' lie with a long southern name.
You can crash what you fly, fake your own fall,
But judgment don't blink, and mercy sees all.

Bridge

Motorbike waitin' by a red-clay ditch,
Helmet low like he'd flipped a switch.
He rode through the dark like the debt was gone,
But guilt's a hound that keeps tracking on.
From the banks of the Coosa to the panhandle floor,
The road ran out—he couldn't run anymore.

Verse 5

They cuffed him quiet in the early light,
No cameras left, no last-stand fight.
The papers moved on, the town stayed still,
Another ghost added to Coosa Hill.
He served his time, now he walks around free,
But a man don't outrun who he used to be.
The crash was a lie, but the fall was real,
And scars don't fade when the soul won't heal.

Chorus

Coming up from the Coosa, truth in the tide,
You can run through the dark, but you can't ever hide.
Names get buried, stories bend,
But the river keeps count to the very end.
Grace may wait, justice stands,
You can't outfly what God understands.

Outro

Now the Harpersville Hotel bakes in the heat,
Thin walls, old beds, memory in the sheets.
And folks still swear when the dusk winds sigh,
They hear a man fallin' outta the sky...

Coming up from the Coosa—
Truth don't drown... it always survives.

Song 6 Unforgiven

Verse 1

I rode through dust and shattered dreams,
The man I was, not who I seem.
Haunted by the blood I've spilled,
A past I can't escape or heal.

Chorus

Unforgiven, walking in sin and pain,
Haunting memories that never fade.
No peace in the valley where the cold winds moan,
A heart made of stone, and still alone.

Verse 2

The boy who dreamed of guns and fame,
Learned too late the deadly game.
The good man fell before the fight,
Lost in the dark, swallowed by night.

Chorus

Unforgiven, walking in sin and pain,
Haunting memories that never fade.
No peace in the valley where the cold winds moan,
A heart made of stone, and still alone.

Verse 3

Lay awake all night where shadows scream,
A prisoner of my own dark scheme.
The faces of the dead remain,
Their quiet eyes still spell my shame.

Bridge

If mercy's a stranger I can't find,
Will my soul be left behind?
In a world where shadows never end,
Can a broken man still mend?

Chorus

Unforgiven, walking in sin and pain,
Haunting memories that never fade.
No peace in the valley where the cold winds moan,
A heart made of stone, and still alone.

Outro

I rode through dust and shattered dreams,
Cowboy stories aren't what they seem.
The heroes fade when truth is shown,
And every legend dies alone.

Song 7 Three-Quarters Empty

Verse 1

Quarter-filled cups of coffee,
Ring-stains bleeding through the grain.
Cold as all the half-formed thoughts
That gather in my brain.
Foam collapses into nothing—
Like the hours I try to save.
Little deaths of small ambitions
Settling in their grave.

Chorus

Three-quarters empty, running thin,
A slow decay I'm living in.
Piles of paper, fractured art—
The weight of hours on my heart.
Every purpose torn apart—
Three-quarters empty, from the start.

Verse 2

Tell me what these days are worth—
A fading echo in the dirt?
Honor, riches—names that slip
Like shadows falling from my grip.
Dreams turn colorless and brittle,
Cracking under quiet doubt.
Something once alive and green
Coldly burning out.

Chorus

Three-quarters empty, running thin,
A slow decay I'm living in.
Piles of paper, fractured art—
The weight of hours on my heart.
Every purpose torn apart—
Three-quarters empty, from the start.

Bridge

There's a hunger in the silence,
Something restless, sharp, and still.
Every step feels like surrender,
Every choice a smaller will.
And the road ahead is crooked—
Bent in ways I never planned.
I keep walking, though I'm sinking,
Ash and mud in both my hands.

Verse 3

Do minutes always crawl like this?
What's the price for what I've missed?
Every victory fades to gray,
A dull confession, day by day.
I laugh to mask the quiet panic—
A hollow sound I barely trust.
A kingdom built on hopeful sketches,
Crumbled down to dust.

Chorus

Three-quarters empty, running thin,
A slow decay I'm living in.
Piles of paper, fractured art—
The weight of hours on my heart.
Every purpose torn apart—
Three-quarters empty, from the start.

Song 8- Just Stopped Diggin'

Verse 1

I was diggin' my own grave, thought it was gold,
Chasin' every cheap thrill my hands could hold.
Had a heart full of pride and a mouth full of lies,
Ran out of road and looked to the sky.

Pre-Chorus

Grace don't wait till you hit the floor —
Sometimes it meets you at the door.

Chorus

Should be dead, but still livin',
Never reached the bottom, I just stopped diggin'.
Turned my face from the hole I made,
Started walkin' back the other way.
Should be gone, but I'm forgiven,
Never reached the bottom — I just stopped diggin'.

Verse 2

Every wrong road's got a welcome sign,
But the end of that line ain't worth the climb.
You can lose yourself tryin' to find what's gone,
But mercy don't care how far you've run.

Pre-Chorus

Ain't about fallin' — it's about turnin' around,
When you quit goin' deeper, you can stand your ground.

Chorus

Should be dead, but still livin',
Never reached the bottom, I just stopped diggin'.
Turned my face from the hole I made,
Started walkin' back the other way.
Should be gone, but I'm forgiven,
Never reached the bottom — I just stopped diggin'.

Bridge

Now the dirt I moved, I plant with seed,
Where I buried hope, there's new belief.
The same hands that broke now build again —
It's not the end when you begin.

Chorus

Should be dead, but still livin',
Never reached the bottom, I just stopped diggin'.
Found my faith where the ground gave way,
Ain't no shame in the price I paid.
Should be gone, but I'm forgiven,
Never reached the bottom — I just stopped diggin'.

Song 9 - Through It

[Verse 1]

Woke up to thunder on a clear blue day
The phone was ringin' with the worst to say
Heart went heavy, knees went weak
Ain't no words that trouble speaks

[Verse 2]

The sky don't ask if you're ready or not
It just pours down everything it's got
But I found shelter in a voice and a hand
Sometimes just standin' is all you can

[Chorus]

I don't get over it—
I just get through it
With some scars on my soul
But I still do it
Got a circle that prays
And a fire that stays
You don't forget it—
You just get through it

[Verse 3]

Old friends showed up and didn't say much
Just offered a beer and stayed in touch
Mama lit a candle, said a prayer or two
Some things hurt, but they carry you through

[Chorus]

I don't get over it—
I just get through it
With the weight of the world
But I still move it
Got a backbone of steel
And some wounds that heal
You don't forget it—
You just get through it

[Bridge]

You don't outrun the lightning
You don't talk down the rain
But you lean on your people
And you learn from the pain

[Chorus]

We don't get over it—
We just get through it
One day at a time
Yeah, that's how we do it
With a faith that's real
And a love that feels
You don't forget it—
You just get through it

[Outro]

You can't be tough all the time
Can't walk through hell alone
Lean into love when the lights go out
And let your people bring you home

You can't be tough all the time
Can't walk through hell alone
Lean into love when the lights go out
And let your people bring you home

Song 10- Justice Ran Hot in South Alabama

[Verse 1]

Down a clay road past the pines and shade,
The police car rolled where the law don't fade.
No lights, no sirens, just dust and heat—
He came lookin' for fire and found deceit.

[Verse 2]

Stopped at a diner with a busted sign,
Screen door slammed like a warning line.
A local girl with a steady hand
Said, "You ain't from here—you're the fire man."

[Chorus]

Some say the wheels of justice turn slow—

Maybe some places, that's true.
But down where the moss and the secrets grow,
Folks don't wait on a judge in a suit.
No jury, no trial, no one with a camera...
Justice ran hot in South Alabama.

[Verse 3]

Sheriff said, "We got our man,
Found him hidin' out by the river sand."
The deputies dragged him in half-dead—
A busted lip and a bandaged head.

[Verse 4]

The Marshal frowned, but said no more,
He'd seen this script in towns before.
Then he made his way down a pecan lane,
To a house that still whispered old Creole names.

In a high-back chair sat a woman proud,
Dress like Sunday, voice like a cloud.
"That girl was mine—four generations down.
And he lit the match when he came 'round."

"I can't sign your paper, my hand's all broke.
Split it wide on the devil's nose."
She pulled her glove, showed purple and red—
"Don't need no court when there's pain to spread."

[Chorus]

Some say the wheels of justice turn slow—
Maybe some places, that's true.
But down where the moss and the secrets grow,
Folks don't wait on a judge in a suit.
No jury, no trial, no one with a camera...
Justice ran hot in South Alabama.

Now the fire's out, but the ashes stay,
And folks still whisper when they pass that way.
He wrote his report, then drove on slow—
With the trees behind and the truth below.

'Cause the woods don't burn by themselves down here..
the only sounds in lonely pines is a hammer
the lawman is way too slow and cool
justice ran hot in South Alabama.

Song 11- Cause and Effect

Verse 1:

Napped through school, didn't care back then
Philosophy was Just noise in my head
Thought cause and effect was a made-up plan
Till life came callin' with a test for a man.

Bridge:

So listen up, son, and take it to heart
'Cause physics sounds funny till you're fallin' apart

Chorus:

I'm snoozin' and losin', missin' my shot
Laughin' and lyin' 'bout the troubles I got
Dozin' and posin', actin' the fool
Slackin' and lackin', broke every rule
Now I'm livin' my story like a hall of shame
Cause and effect is a helluva game

Verse 2:

Figured I'd coast, let the good times roll
But every shortcut dug a deeper hole
Them books tried to warn me—I just shrugged
Now I'm stuck in a mess that I gladly dug

Chorus:

I'm snoozin' and losin', missin' my shot
Laughin' and lyin' 'bout the troubles I got
Dozin' and posin', actin' the fool
Slackin' and lackin', broke every rule
Now I'm livin' my story like a hall of shame
Cause and effect is a helluva game

Bridge:

Now I'm older and grayer, not much to show
Just a PhD in "I told you so"
If regret paid money, I'd be doin' just fine
But I spent every dime on borrowed time

Chorus:

I'm snoozin' and losin', missin' my shot
Laughin' and lyin' 'bout the troubles I got
Dozin' and posin', actin' the fool
Slackin' and lackin', broke every rule
Now I'm livin' my story like a hall of shame
Cause and effect is a helluva game

Song 12- My Check Engine Light is Red

[Verse 1]

I'm a GTO 64, clean and mean,
Built for late nights on pure gasoline.
Chrome shone bright, engine so tight,
Raced the curves on a Nascar night.
Now my shocks are shot, they don't spring back,
Mountain Dew's leakin' from a radiator crack.

[Chorus]

Warranty's gone, miles pile high,
Crankin' each mornin', I barely get by.
No tradin' me in, I'm plumb near dead—
Help me Lord....
My check engine light is red.

[Verse 2]

Tires are bald, alignment's a mess,
Suspension creaks like I'm under duress.
Gears turn slow, lost their old spark,
Rearview's full of miles in the dark.
Paint's all cracked, grill's got a bend,
Oil's burnin' out at three percent.

[Chorus]

Warranty's gone, miles pile high,
Crankin' each mornin', I barely get by.
No tradin' me in, I'm plumb near dead—
Help me Lord....
My check engine light is red.

[Bridge]

Doc says, "Tune-up, your timing's off beat,"
Pistons are sluggish, I'm draggin' my feet.
No shiny new keys, no trade-in to score,
I'll roll till I rust right down to the core.

Duct tape's holdin' where it shouldn't stay,
Hummin' along in a broke-down way.
Pray for some grace, young faces frown,
This old sports car ain't going down!

Song 13- Climbin' Out of A Bad Hole

(Verse 1)

Tried to dig a garden, but I went too deep,
Now my shovel's missin', and I lost both feet.
Neighbor's laughin', says I need a plan,
Guess I should've watched where the dirt pile stands.

(Pre-Chorus)

Every time I think I'm set,
Life hands me a bigger debt.
Ain't no ladder, ain't no rope,
Just my hands and a little hope!

(Chorus)

Climbing out of a bad hole, hands gettin' dirty but I won't let go,
Life's got a way of teachin' me slow,
Next time I dig, gotta check where it goes!

(Verse 2)

Bought a car with money that I didn't own,
Now I'm dodgin' calls on my broke-down phone.
Banker says, "Son, you're in way too deep,"
Maybe next time I should learn to read.

(Pre-Chorus)

Every time I think I'm wise,
I get caught up in my own disguise.
Ain't no shortcut, ain't no cheat,
Just a long hard climb to get back on my feet!

(Chorus)

Climbing out of a bad hole, hands gettin' dirty but I won't let go,
Life's got a way of teachin' me slow,
Next time I dig, gotta check where it goes!

(Bridge)

Ain't just the ground where you can sink so low,
Love gone wrong or a mind closed slow.
Some holes you dig, some holes just appear,
Either way, man, I gotta get clear!

(Verse 3)

Fell in love too fast, oh, what a ride,
Didn't see the warning signs flashin' inside.
Now I'm knee-deep in a messy goodbye,
Should've brought a parachute before that dive!

(Chorus)

Climbing out of a bad hole, hands gettin' dirty but I won't let go,
Life's got a way of teachin' me slow,
Next time I dig, gotta check where it goes!

(Outro)

Pothole, foxhole, sinkhole too,
Credit score crater, love gone blue,
If you find yourself at the bottom, my friend,
Better start climbing 'cause the shovel ain't your friend!

Song 14 A Lot Right By Livin' A Lot Wrong

Verse 1

I've got the creak of old leather boots,
Dust on my jeans, deep roots in the truth.
Every line on my face tells a tale,
Of crawling back up when I thought I'd failed.

Pre-Chorus

I've kissed the dirt, I've touched the sky,
Been knocked down more times than I can count or deny.

Chorus

They call me a wise man, strong,
But I've lived through a whole lot wrong.
Every broken bone, every late-night fight,
Showed me how to finally get it right.
It ain't just time that makes you strong,
I got a lot right by living a lot wrong.

Verse 2

Young ones laugh when I move too slow,
But they don't see what these hands know.
Built barns in the heat, strung fences in rain,
Held on tight through love and pain.

Pre-Chorus

I've seen the light through shattered glass,
Found some truth in a broken past.

Chorus

They call me a wise man, strong,
But I've lived through a whole lot wrong.
Every broken bone, every late-night fight,
Showed me how to finally get it right.
It ain't just time that makes you strong,
I got a lot right by living a lot wrong.

Verse 3

I've watched good men fade away,
Seen the sun set on my better days.
But this old heart still won't give in,
Still finds a spark beneath the wind.

Bridge

I've walked through thorns, I've walked through flame,
Chased down dreams that burned my name.
But ashes clear what used to grow—
You don't learn much if you never let go.

Chorus

They call me a wise man, strong,
But I've lived through a whole lot wrong.
Every scar I carry, every sleepless night,
Led me here just to get it right.
It ain't just time that makes you strong,
I got a lot right by living a lot wrong.

So if you're wondering how I know,
It's in the miles and the seeds I've sown.
Life sings low but it sings strong—
You get a lot right from living a lot wrong.

Song 15- Hemingway

Verse 1

In the fall, the war was there,
We walked away, wounds laid bare.
Strength is forged in quiet flame,
Through loss and pride, we played the game.

Verse 2

"The world breaks all," the old man said,
"Some rise strong, and some just bled."
Through the dusk, the hero stands,
Grace under pressure, trembling hands.

Chorus

Let the wind come — we won't bow.
It may break us — not us now.
Scars don't mean that we give in,
They're proof we stood in the wind.
Let us stand in the wind

Verse 3

A quiet room at 2 a.m.,
The walls don't hide what's caving in.
Medals rest beside the bed,
But ghosts still speak of things unsaid.
The clock ticks like a distant drum,
Each second asks what we've become.
Scars don't shine in silver light —
They ache the most when it's this quiet.

Bridge

I almost laid my purpose down,
Almost let the silence drown.
But something in me still won't bend —
A quiet voice that says, "Stand."

chorus

Let the wind come — we won't bow.
It may break us — not us now.
Every scar beneath our skin
Says we stood in the wind.

We stood...
We stood in the wind.

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