

Notes on the Tunes

Most of the tunes included in this collection were written in the first 15 years of the 21st century, although a few are older or at least had earlier, 20th century, versions. Most, but not all, of them have also appeared in my blog (somanytunes.blogspot.com) where you can find both sheet music and home recordings of individual tunes. A handful of these tunes have also appeared, in different forms, in other books of mine.

This collection has the added value of a harmony part being written for each tune. Using two mandolins (or other melody instruments) and a guitar (or other chordal instrument) allows three or more players to enjoy the pleasure of group music-making. I strongly encourage you to play around with the music, concoct your own arrangements, trade parts back and forth, etc.

1837 Turnpike Road (2008) – The Historic Turnpike that runs through the restored Shaker Village at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.

All Fall Down (2004) – Written the morning after returning to Decorah from an inspiring Liz Carroll and John Doyle concert at Folklore Village in southwestern Wisconsin. It was autumn and the leaves were blowing under a full moon.

Backbone (2005) – Written while spending a weekend in one of the cabins in Iowa's Backbone State Park. One of several tunes I have written trying to imitate the great mandolin instrumentals composed by Norman and Nancy Blake.

Arcole Village (2013) – Before its name changed to Spring Mill in 1831 this Indiana village was named Arcole. Now part of the beautiful Spring Mill State Park.

Canny Crow (2017 version) – Never underestimate a crow.

Cumberland Mission (2011) – One of many tunes written while riding Amtrak's Capitol Limited. The stop in Cumberland, Maryland is usually near a downtown emergency shelter.

Dodge the Plow (2011) – The snow plow, that is.

Easter Jig no. 1, 2014, Easter Jig no. 2, 2014 (2014) – Written, you guessed it, on Easter weekend, 2014.

Ekin Avenue (2005) – A long street in New Albany, Indiana that has great significance for me. My mother's parents lived in a small house near the railroad tracks on Ekin when I was a boy. Later, in the 1970s, a larger house up the street was home to some wonderful jam sessions. I rented an apartment at least once somewhere on Ekin as well.

Dunn Meadow (2005) – A lovely grassy area near the Indiana Memorial Union at Indiana University in Bloomington, my alma mater. Home to great concerts, jam sessions and general festivities.

Emory's Crossing (2004) – A crossroads between Clarksville and New Albany of personal significance.

Fifty-Three (2004) – Written on or about my 53rd birthday. Now long ago.

A Fresh Start (2008) – Mostly written in the morning before work at the start of either the fall or spring semester in 2008.

From Artist's Point (2012) – Written after a walk around Artist's Point in Grand Marais, Minnesota, up on the North Shore. Technically, however, the actual writing occurred at the Best Western.

Graveyard Owl (2007) – On Ocracoke Island, NC we heard an owl near the British Cemetery.

Groundhog Special (2013) – no comment.

Highlandville May 14, 2004 (2004) – Written inside our minivan, parked at the Highlandville Schoolhouse, after I arrived to sit in with Foot-Notes. Watching the dancers hop around inside through the tall windows.

Jaunty Ted (2010) – Ted Hodapp asked for a jig. I think he might even have said "jaunty."

Jefferson Lives (2004) – Supposedly John Adams' last words were "Jefferson still survives", uttered just before he died on July 4, 1826. He was unaware that Jefferson had, in fact, already died a few hours earlier on the same day. Also the title of a great West Wing episode.

July 23, 2004 (2004) – Written shortly before a performance with the Bear Creek Bluegrass Band at Decorah's Nordic Fest celebration. It's too late now to come up with a better title.

Late Breakfast (2013) – no story here.

Leadfoot (2004) – meant to be a hard-driving tune.

Lemon Water (2011) – at a fancy conference hotel in New Orleans.

The Madison Road (2004) – a nice road that runs west out of Decorah.

The Least Resistance (2005) – the path of?

May Frost (2010) – For better or worse it is not uncommon to have frost on the ground in early May here in the northeast corner of Iowa. It's a feature, not a bug.

New Blanket (2006) – I think we had recently purchased a nice, new blanket.

Needle in the Sawdust (2006) – not sure about this one either.

The New Henrietta (2011) – The Henrietta Hornpipe appears in the classic *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*. I borrowed a few notes from the B section and added some of my own.

The Night Train Waltz (2013) – I think this was written in a sleeper compartment riding the Empire Builder back from Portland.

A Northern Exposure (2011) – Written shortly after meeting Arto and Antti Jarvela when they visited Decorah for a workshop and concert.

Not an Option (2012) – no comment.

The Old Basement Piano (2011) – My childhood home had an old upright piano in the basement. My parents said that it had been waterlogged in the great 1937 Ohio River flood and somehow ended up with us.

Old Books in Motion (2010) – In my long career as a librarian I certainly moved a lot of old books.

Not in My Groundwater! (2013) – No one wants poison in their water.

The Old White House (2013) – My first visit left me this tune.

One Hundred Year Flood (2007) – We've had three of these in the Upper Iowa River valley since 2008. The old language is misleading, probably obsolete.

Oneota Stomp (2012) – Before it was called Upper Iowa our local river was known as the Oneota.

Pocket Change (2005) – The only slip jig in this collection.

Quack the Goose (2010) – Picture our dog digging into her stuffed toy goose.

Quarry Hill Road (2008) – The road that goes uphill just across the river from our house.

Raccoon in the Bird Feeder (2007) – Witnessed while playing a dance at River Bend Nature Center near Faribault, MN.

Rainy Island Sunday (2011) – The island would be Madeline Island, one of the Apostle Islands, following a hike in the rain there while staying in Bayfield, Wisconsin.

Return to Dream Acres (2009) – A beautiful farmstead/ activity center near Wykoff, Minnesota.

Seed Savers Waltz (2009) – Mostly written on the stage in the red barn at the famous Seed Savers Exchange outside of Decorah, following a barn dance.

Rocks in the Sun (2003) – Thinking of relaxing among the rocks on the shore near Thunder Hole on Mt. Desert Isle in Acadia National Park. One of my favorite places.

September Last (2012) – An especially nice September.

Shepherd's Purse (2009) – I figured if James Oswald (1710-1769) could name each of his 96 *Airs for the Seasons* after individual plants that I could do it at least once.

Shelter Dogs (2005) – A good shelter dog (or cat) might be just what you need.

Shenandoah Bound (2012) – Heading home on the Capitol Limited.

Sledding at Walnut Ridge (2004) – A cemetery in Jeffersonville that provided rest for the weary and joy for us kids.

Small Town Downtown (2007) – Written in the teaching studios above Kephart's music store in downtown Decorah, while waiting for a rehearsal.

St. Anthony and the Fishes (2008) – Another attempt to write a tune in the style of Norman and Nancy Blake. I am a proud graduate of St. Anthony of Padua grade school in Clarksville, Indiana.

St. Francis and the Birds (2012) – This version might be from 2012 but this tune goes back a long way with me. It exists in numerous versions, most recently as a piece for recorder quartet.

Snow Harvest (2011) – I’m not sure what this means. Maybe a reference to snow shoveling?

Two Lieutenants (2004) – One of my favorite titles because it recalls a long story my Dad would sometimes tell about his experiences as an Army MP in France, Belgium, Germany and Czechoslovakia from June 1944 until late 1945. The story takes place in newly liberated Paris.

Waiting in the Wood (2013) – Individual instruments often have tunes within just waiting to be called forth.

Walk On Dry Leaves (2012) – Walking on a leaf covered road in Palisades Park.

Walnut Dog (2013) – not sure where this title came from.

Waterloo Polka (2009) – Waterloo is the last Indiana station on the eastbound route of the Capitol Limited.

The Wedding Broom (2005) – Another tune of mine that has appeared in a variety of versions, including a longer arrangement in my *Midwestern Mandolin Duos* book.

Winter Leaves (2005) – When the first snow falls there are still plenty of leaves on the ground.

Wintry Mix (2013) – Not our favorite weather condition.