

Kingston of the Grandstand

by Billy Kemp & Jeni Hankins © copyright 2014

There's a track in my hometown where I misspent my youth
With my brother and my father playing ponies to tell the truth
We'd go down to the paddock to see who was in luck
Then we'd place our bets and hope that it struck

All the colors were a-flying black, gold and pink
Lawyers in the clubhouse cool in the heat
We stood in the sun with tickets in our hand
Up on the bleachers Kings of the Grandstand

They're off just look at 'em run fingers crossed again
No there's nothing like a horse coming home to win
And there's nothing like the sound of the opening of the gate
You're sure to win tomorrow if you don't win today

Well my mother was kindhearted and had a sense of romance
She kept us in shoes and waited on Lady Chance
To smile on our father to bring him another win
So he'd come home for dinner and make her laugh again

Another Life To Live

by Billy Kemp © copyright 2017

They stood on a porch one evening
By the light of the moon up above
He'd given his heart to her surely
But she was no longer in love

He was standing beside her shadow
When she spoke those words of surprise
She never intended to hurt him
Never meant to be unkind

My dear I've fallen for another
Can you find it in your heart to forgive
I no longer wish to be your lover
My hope is that you'll find another
Another life to live

She told him farewell in the summer
When the whippoorwill makes a lonesome tone
And just like that bird he is crying
Each night he sits all alone

And wonders if he'll ever love another
Another's heart he can hold forever more
And worries if he does love another
Will she say those words he's heard before

Mr. Wilson, the Stonecutter

by Billy Kemp and Jeni Hankins © copyright 2017

The stonecutter walked down Paradise Avenue
And there weren't no doubt the old man had a few
He was known by all as the drunk of the town
For cutting his head when the drink laid him down

How sweet it is we've a journeyman's chance
Of a turn in this world but only one dance
To each of us is given
Oh mama will we see the stonecutter in heaven

Mr. Wilson worked for the gas and electric
If you had a meter Mr. Wilson checked it
But he drank up his wages at the Paradise Bar
Where my father says the stonecutters are

I'd sit with my friends at the Paradise Bar
The old men shooting pool chewed on their cigars
Mr. Wilson was good for a laugh or two
Now some of my friends are stonecutters too

Benjamin Banneker

by Billy Kemp, Jeni Hankins and Alfred Hickling © copyright 2017

Benjamin Banneker laid the lines for the city
Where the Capitol would soon come to be
He knew the sky he knew the math but always questioned
Why on earth cannot my people be set free

Benjamin Banneker loved the stars and the bible
He grew tobacco and he kept honey bees
He lived in a hollow in a place called Oella
Ay fifty eight he taught himself astronomy

Up early in the morning
Fields to tend
Sweet music in the evening
Under twinkling skies amen

Benjamin Banneker was the grandson of a slave man
Who sailed from Senegal the son of a chief
His grandmother Molly was a self made woman
Who saved her life in Londontown cause she could read

Benjamin Banneker never married but he had friends
Who lent him books he'd read at his desk by his bed
He taught himself all of his letters and his numbers
He made a clock that kept good time the people said

Tic Toc went his clock
Tobacco went rolling
Down to the docks
While the church bells were tolling

Benjamin Banneker loved to sit for many hours
In the afternoons and watch his bees
Then after supper he would play on his fiddle
And every night he'd give his thanks down on his knees

Lay down in the evening
Let his soul ascend
Deny his achievements
Over burning skies amen

Benjamin Banneker laid the lines for the city
Where the Capitol has come to be
He knew the stars he knew the math but always questioned
Why on earth cannot my people be set free

Down Where The Dogwoods Bloomed

by Billy Kemp and Alfred Hickling © copyright 2017

I watched the clouds form overhead
Turned on the radio
And listened to the storm reports
While I prepared our home

I closed the windows and pulled the blinds
Went to the safest room
And wondered when the storm would pass
And will the dogwoods bloom

You always knew we'd find a place
That had two dogwood trees
And every spring we'd catch the blooms
That only lasted two weeks

But like the flowers that fade so fast
You were called too soon
We hoped that there would still be time
To see the dogwoods bloom

I waited for the storm to break
And went to check outside
But only one lone dogwood stood
Beside its fallen bride

That's when I thought I might have caught
A trace of her perfume
As if it lingered in the air
Down where the dogwoods bloomed

Seven Mondays

by Billy Kemp and Sue Griffiths © copyright 2017

Seven Mondays two hearts one love
Seven Mondays you're all that I think of
Seven Mondays let me count the ways
We'll be together in seven Mondays

Six Mondays I'll get to hold your hand
Six Mondays I'll get to see you again
Six Mondays let me count the ways
Reunited in six Mondays

Five Mondays is all we have to go
Five Mondays I'll get to kiss you I know
Five Mondays let me count the ways
It will fly by in five Mondays

Four Mondays I will see your smiling face
Four Mondays I will be in a better place
Four Mondays let me count the ways
Side by side we'll be in four Mondays

Three Mondays the time is drawing near
Three Mondays I'll be right beside you my dear
Three Mondays let me count the ways
All will be well in three Mondays

Two Mondays I'll embrace you oh so tight
Two Mondays I will hold you darling all through the night
Two Mondays let me count the ways
Walking together in two Mondays

One Monday just a single week to go
One Monday your smile will be upon me I know
One Monday let me count the ways
We'll be together in one Monday

Lillian & the Blue Car

by Billy Kemp © copyright 2017

She had two sisters one was younger and one was older
She married Charlie but war was coming and nobody told her
They had one year together of loving and no care
Then Charlie went away and never came back to her

She never remarried she took a job down near the shipyard
Binding books on a factory line she was kind and always worked hard
Younger sister had a baby older sister she did too
Lillian became Aunt Lil not just one nephew but two

She bought a row house in the county just across the city line
She kept a garden it brought her color made her feel a little bit fine
Went to church on every Sunday the only time she'd drive her car
Took the bus to work each work day she never went far from home

In her blue car
In her blue car

She liked her hard candy Rheb's candy store was just a half a mile away from
her
She'd walk down there on Fridays get a bag of sweets and bring 'em on home
with her
Watched her TV in the evenings sitting on her day bed
She ate so many sweets she had every tooth pulled out of her head

She watched the nephews grow up she had a drawer with sets of teeth that
never fit just right
She kept her cash beneath her mattress and on birthday cards
She never spelled your name right
She got a dog when she turned eighty a little dog Bebe a Shih Tzo
They were always seen together walking down Elmridge Avenue

She died when she turned eighty two and Bebe died the very next day after her

She was laid out at Witzke's Funeral Home her teeth they finally fit

And Bebe was buried with her

Her home smelled of the old days when I would visit her at Christmas time

I'm nephew number two and now her blue car is mine

Night Time Sky

by Billy Kemp and Sue Griffiths © copyright 2017

Best friends from the beginning we were going to rule the world
We were together through thick and thin you were my best friend and my girl
You had to take your dream job and go live in the big city
You couldn't get there fast enough this small town couldn't keep you

I look into the night time sky
And gaze at the stars above me
I think of you so far away
And I'm hoping that you see what I see

You barely said goodbye to me those bright lights had your attention
You hopped a plane that very day and said I'll see you when I see you
You've been gone so many months now thanks for dropping me a line
Life goes on in our small town I guess I'm doing fine

I look into the night time sky
And gaze at the stars above me
I think of you so far away
And I'm hoping that you see what I see

I'm trying to let go of what I thought would be our future
I didn't plan for you to leave it was all my hallucination
I know my way seems desperate but this is all I ever dreamed for
I'll be here I always will I haven't given up on you yet

I look into the night time sky
And gaze at the stars above me
I think of you so far away
And I'm hoping that you see what I see
I'll always hope that you'll want more

Requiem for an Organ Player

by Billy Kemp, Jeni Hankins and Alfred Hickling © copyright 2017

There was a time when the crabs ran high
And my neighbor he played his organ at night
Us kids kept still to hear the music spill
Down the avenue ooh ooh ooh

During the day he earned his pay
With ink and paper at Hopkins Place
He had two sons one died young
And a daughter too ooh ooh ooh

Things were so good when the old man would
Play his songs on a hot summer night
You could walk by and hear the organ sigh
Deep down you felt everything was alright

The old man was nice he'd fix your bike
He took early retirement to be with his wife
They'd leave Baltimore go down the shore
For an ocean view ooh ooh ooh

Things were so good when the old man would
Play his songs on a hot summer night
You could walk by and hear the organ sigh
Deep down you felt everything was alright

He went out on his bike for flowers for his wife
He never got to the store because they took his life
Two kids on the run with a stolen gun
What are you gonna do ooh ooh ooh

Things were so good when the old man would
Play his songs on a hot summer night
You could walk by and hear the organ sigh
Deep down you felt everything was alright

Chesapeake Narrows

by Billy Kemp and Geoffrey Himes © copyright 1983

Been gone four months 'round the North Atlantic
Haulin' drills and lathes packed in plywood crates
When the gale winds shriek we scramble down below
When the tables tilt we have to catch our plates

The salt wind turned my skin to leather
My beard grew out till it turned and curled
I got favorite bars all around the globe
But just one home in this whole damn world

A tugboat whistles a lonely gull cries
The Chesapeake Narrows city towers rise
Many seas I've sailed many ports I've roamed
But I never can get lost for Baltimore is my home

Docked in Glasgow the ship unloaded
Cranes took the crates whiskey took the men
I felt so alone till I met Margaret
She said she'd be my temporary friend

Had a good time playing bedtime
Till we heard her man singing in the street
He came through the front I left by the back
Running through the snow in my stocking feet

A tugboat whistles a lonely gull cries
The Chesapeake Narrows city towers rise
Many seas I've sailed many ports I've roamed
But I never can get lost for Baltimore is my home

When my feet start itchin' and my nose starts twitchin'
I know I should be back on the open sea
Harbor swimmin' and foreign women
The sailor's life is the life for me

Down in Marseilles I did some gamblin'
I won more francs than a Yankee should
I caught a knife but I threw it back
Ran for the boat as fast as I could

We took on sugar in Jamaica
Took out our guitars and tap dance shoes
Found a street band in Kingston's ghetto
We sang reggae and Baltimore blues

A tugboat whistles a lonely gull cries
The Chesapeake Narrows city towers rise
Many seas I've sailed many ports I've roamed
But I never can get lost for Baltimore is my home

Every vessel must have it's anchor
Or it gets lost between the rocks and foam
Every compass must have it's magnet
And Baltimore is pulling me back home

When we reached Norfolk were nearly home
Music and perfume were all along the shore
I was so tired of the unfamiliar
I stayed on deck and sang of Baltimore

Turned up the Bay and I saw Maryland
That Chesapeake shore I know so well
My family waits on that Mobtown pier
There's time to kill and tales to tell

A tugboat whistles a lonely gull cries
The Chesapeake Narrows city towers rise
Many seas I've sailed many ports I've roamed
But I never can get lost for Baltimore is my home

