The Running

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Everyone likes to know what the songs are about. I don’t even know what these songs are about anymore. Nonetheless here’s what I think they may or may not be about.

1. Alive in Me – I remember writing this on our deck in Maryland while staring out at the backyard after sundown and noticing the full moon come into view. I write a lot of “moon songs”. The moon is alive in me yet at the same time dead, dusty, and devoid of life of any kind.
2. It’s Alright #23 – There is nothing profound about the number 23. The Traveling Wilburys released a song called “It’s Alright” way back in the early 1990’s thus I didn’t feel right about just calling it “It’s Alright”.
3. Running From The Truth – Sometimes it seems like we spend our lives running from the things that we **really** want so that we can have the things that everyone else tells us we **should** want. “I came bursting from my mother’s womb wearing restless shoes.” That much I know is true.
4. Special Glow – NOSTALGIA, pure and simple. This song reminds me of the night that Diane and I met, but it really wasn’t written about that. I’m not sure exactly where it was written or what I was thinking about. Love was so much simpler when love was merely a feeling and not a commitment or a responsibility or a moral obligation. Regardless, I hope that when I have loved; I have done so as passionately, responsibly and compassionately as I could. Still, love was simpler when I was younger.
5. Staying Sane at the Jiffy Lube – I used to write poetry while I was waiting for my car to have it’s oil changed. It was on a Saturday at the Jiffy Lube when I opened my notebook to write. I took out my pen. It wouldn’t write. The ink was all clogged up and sticky. I wiped off the tip of the pen, heated it up by rubbing it between my hands, and eventually it somewhat reluctantly started to blotch ink on the page. ERGO… this song which turned into some kind of metaphor that I’m still not sure I understand.
6. Tickle My Fancy – I started writing this song one Saturday morning in Maryland when I woke up next to my wife. The rest just followed whenever I found a few minutes to myself. Thanks to Susan Haefner for the excellent vocals.
7. The Love Feel – This was written as an answer to the previous song and as such it became my response to Susan’s vocal. The entire album was originally supposed to be back and forth “relationship songs and lyrics” between my cousin and myself. Some songs were to be duets while others were to be answers to the previous song. Still, listening to this song after the previous track makes me smile at just a glimpse of my original vision.
8. Long Tall Bottle of Beer – So many of my “University Pub Years” memories had faded into oblivion until I got on Facebook and then they all came rushing back into my brain. I think that’s why I wrote this. Then again, maybe I was just thirsty.
9. How Are You – I had a dream one night. The dream was something similar to this song. Other than me; I’m not sure who was in the dream. Or maybe it was a nightmare one day. Or maybe I can’t even remember writing this song. It’s probably the latter.
10. Stashed Away – When you make your job your career; and then you make your career your life; and then you make your life a quest for a goal that wasn’t even your goal in the first place, it’s important to have something that you keep hidden in a safe place that you can return to in order to secure your own peace of mind. For so many years I kept my music and songs out of my professional life. I did it because I was afraid that work would poison this part of my life and swallow it as it had almost every other aspect of my life. I’m not sure whether or not hiding it for so long was a good idea; but that’s what I did while I was on my way to becoming the man that I was pretending to be. (“The Man I Was Pretending to Be” is a song that appeared on my Mississippi Sunset album but what originally written with this group of songs for this album.
11. Already Numb – Memories can’t hurt me; even memories that were once forgotten and come back and slap me in the face. Somewhere along the line I became far too numb to experience the feelings.
12. The Catbird Whines – We don’t have any catbirds in our backyard in Kansas. In Maryland they were there all the time whining their asses off. The catbirds were kind of annoying way back then…now I miss them. I wonder what that means.
13. Mighty Long Time – Sometimes I write songs I shouldn’t write. I think I did that once a long time ago and someone completely misunderstood the song. It led us both down pathways that doomed our relationship. For that I am sorry. Sometimes songs are just stories. People should never take me too seriously.
14. Ink Spots on the Carpet – This is another song written in the waiting room at Jiffy Lube. I took out my notebook and pen; looked down at my feet and saw blobs of ink stains on the carpet. I immediately wondered what words the ink would have written had it not been dripped so carelessly onto the carpet.
15. Fifty Miles Away – Don’t know. Don’t care. I just like playing it. It’s was from some kind of a dream, or stoned tripping fantasy, or just a story in a children’s literature collection…I added the pandemic verse this year.
16. River of Love - It is a long trip for the water that runs from the mountains to the sea. Until you’ve actually done it you should keep your advice to yourself and focus on your own life.
17. The Running – Where has it gone? Where did we go? Was it a song that moved too slow? In the end it doesn’t matter. One mile at a time. One foot in front of the other. Keep going. Don’t stop. Don’t give up. Touch others’ hearts. Touch your own soul. Live well and run through it.

Lots of love,

Hope for peace on earth,

John