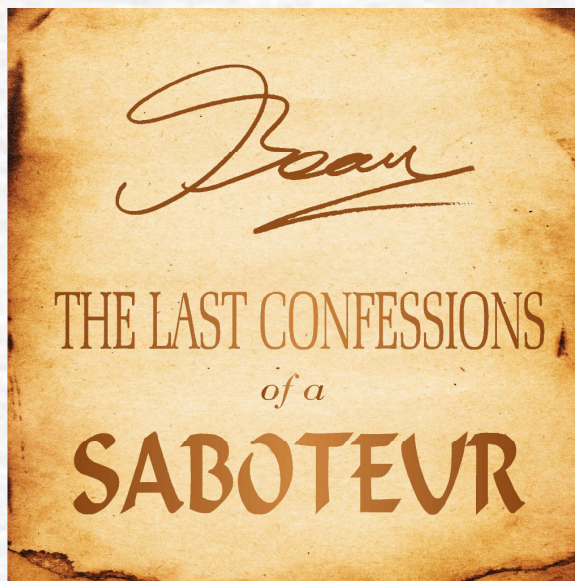


CHERRY RED RECORDS
PRESENTS



– downloadable from Amazon, iTunes and all your favourite distribution services.

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1 Shipwreck Island (3.46)

Courtesy of Daniel Defoe, Robert Louis Stevenson, R. M. Ballantyne and countless others, kids of all ages have imagined the perils of being shipwrecked on some remote desert isle. "Shipwreck Island" feeds into this proud tradition... almost!

He was a very careful man.
It was a new catamaran,
The day before it hit the fan
Off Shipwreck Island.
It came to him out of the blue
Like all the best ideas do
And so I am telling it to you
From Shipwreck Island.

So, once upon a Christmas Day
The breakers rolled into the bay
Then just as swiftly sailed away
From Shipwreck Island.
Drifting from the Coral Sea
With all the flotsam and debris –
This is how he came to be
On Shipwreck Island.

On Shipwreck Island,
Mm, mm, mm, mm...

The shingle sings out on the shore
The way it will for evermore;
The way it did the day before
On Shipwreck Island,
The day he made it through the reef,
The day the shifty little thief
Had landed to his great relief
On Shipwreck Island.

Seemingly with sleight of hand,
His footsteps melt into the sand
Like confiscated contraband
On Shipwreck Island,
So should the snoopers overfly
There's nothing for them to espy;
And so they'll keep on passing by
Shipwreck Island.

Shipwreck Island,
Mm, mm, mm, mm...

There was another on the crew
And they had both had one or two,
Celebrating getting through
To Shipwreck Island.
But say it long and say it loud –
It really didn't make him proud –
That somehow two can be a crowd
On Shipwreck Island.

And is his conscience kicking in?
It should be pricking like a pin
Like stinging sand on sunburned skin
On Shipwreck Island.
But no, he's piling on the stones
About that useless bag of bones
That he has sent to Davy Jones
From Shipwreck Island.

From Shipwreck Island,
Mm, mm, mm, mm...

Very soon he'll have to leave;
But never mourn or ever grieve.
This is a tangled web we weave
On Shipwreck Island.
It's time to open the shampoo
And maybe raise a glass or two.
I'm sure he'll do the same for you
On Shipwreck Island!

He was a very careful man.
It was a new catamaran,
The day before it hit the fan
Off Shipwreck Island.
It came to him out of the blue
Like all the best ideas do
And so I am telling it to you
From Shipwreck Island.

From Shipwreck Island,
Mm, mm, mm, mm...
From Shipwreck Island,
Mm, mm, mm, mm

2 Publish And Be Damned (4.58)

...celebrating the journalistic integrity of the free press, for so long the guardians of our liberty...

It was a present for the bride –

The guy was being crucified!
I saw it there in black and white.
They said he'd been a leading light
In something happening way out East –
I'd guess that that was true at least! –
And then they went on to debate
The crimes of the Islamic State;
But thankfully they then attacked
Perspective camouflaged as fact.

The headline that at first they chose –
"The Duchess and Her Broken Nose!" –
Had only lasted half the night
Until the story came to light
Of how the Bishop lost his speech
Whilst dogging at the Pleasure Beach.
They splashed out on the Womens' Page
With *"Nipples and The Living Wage!"*
But thankfully they then attacked
Perspective camouflaged as fact.

The competition for today
Had really blown them all away;
"A Night in Someone Else's Bra!" –
The best they'd ever had, by far.
The phones were ringing off the hook.
The free gift of the prayer book
Enlivened by a tasteful nude
Had really caught the public mood,
But thankfully they then attacked
Perspective camouflaged as fact.

"So Much To Give, So Much To Lose!"
The Sports Page carried tragic news
Around the death of Mickey Finn
Below an ad for Gordon's Gin.
For 'Magic Mick' had been a face –
Though later, more a basket case –
Of why you shouldn't drink and drive.
"In all our minds, he's still alive!"
But thankfully they still attacked
Perspective camouflaged as fact.

And may they never compromise
The journalistic enterprise;
Remember, "Publish and be damned"
And, though the phone lines may be jammed,
To give the readers what they need
Whilst seeking never to mislead;
To conscientiously expose
The duchess with the broken nose
While making sure it is attacked;
Perspective camouflaged as fact.

3 The Sound Of The Poulterer's Man (4.23)

A song of possible redemption... In much the same way Sir Tom Stoppard used minor characters from "Hamlet" in his "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead", so I've rather shamelessly dragooned a few personalities from Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol". Sorry; Sir Tom for pinching your idea, and Mr D for the impertinence!

"As easy as throwing a chain round the moon!"
I'm guessing that that's what he meant
When ending his talk in that late afternoon.
He'd got it, one hundred per cent!
They rested in silence with hoods on their heads,
Like characters out of the Klan.
And then it came to me; from under their threads,
The sound of the Poulterer's man.
All four of them stood by the shimmering light
Like ghosts from the silvery screen.
With faces of chalk, they were there to indict,

Debase and defile and demean.
When everything else had been taken away,
Their task of rebuilding began.
And what would be left by the end of the day?
The sound of the Poulterer's man.

We'll argue round whether it's virtue or age –
I don't think it matters at all –
But sometimes you have to get out of the cage,
Climb to the top of the wall,
And look to your days in those dizzying streets
Where something, or nothing began;
Then study the silence, then learn to repeat
The sound of the Poulterer's man.
It starts with a rattle of wheel upon stone
And senses so hard to explain
That wheedle and wound as they cut to the bone;
And then it starts over again.
But this time the rattle is quiet and mute –
The poison remains in the can.
There's time to recover, there's time to reboot
The sound of the Poulterer's man.

If I'd have been anxious, if I'd been obsessed,
I'd never have started to climb.
When something's important, it must be addressed.
I've known that for most of my time.
With light flooding in from a faltering sky,
The rest of their day over-ran.
"Now open the hatches!" We all heard the cry –
The sound of the Poulterer's man!
When all that the earth had to offer was good,
We gratefully drank from the well;
And mostly believed that we knew where we stood,
Or kidded ourselves we could tell.
Those toxins that eddy and swirl in the mire
Will show up again where they can.
And as for the rest? We can only admire
The sound of the Poulterer's man.

When all that the earth had to offer was good,
We gratefully drank from the well;
And mostly believed that we knew where we stood,
Or kidded ourselves we could tell.
Those toxins that eddy and swirl in the mire
Will show up again if they can.
And as for the rest? We can only admire
The sound of the Poulterer's man.

4 The Barbershop Quartet (3.56)

We know what it's like with cities; how unpleasant things have to take place underground to maintain the veneer of hygiene on the surface. Further up the food chain, nation states are remarkably similar; and almost always, what happens down below is something we'd rather not know about...

"Everybody's keeping quiet!" I hear a whispered word.
"No one here will take the risk of being overheard!"
Some suggest that maybe I could draw a diagram.
I have to ask what kind of fool you really think I am?
Why would I – or anyone – run up that kind of debt?
You're talking to the tenor in the barbershop quartet!

I've only ever told them of one crazy episode.
We broke her legs, but still she kept on walking down the road.
No one had concerned themselves the wrath it would incur,
Listening to the last confessions of a saboteur.
It's meaningless, it's worthless even working up a sweat.
Best to go for glory with the barbershop quartet.

Someone mentioned years ago – I never knew his name –
"Rhetoric and reality are really not the same.

So rarely is reality the way of getting through!"
That, I guess, must be a politician's point of view!
Those of us who keep our heads below the parapet
Sing a different songbook in the barbershop quartet.

Often when the moon is high and lighting up the stars,
Comets race across the skies and jokers play guitars.
A rider on a kicking mule comes waving Aaron's Rod
And punishes the ones who choose a different kind of God.
There's still a satisfaction in the absence of regret –
Always standard issue with the barbershop quartet...

Don't hanker for affection if you're swimming dark and deep
Underneath the radar when the world is still asleep.
Something is confected in the outrage that they feel;
From the father, from the son, from the wholly genteel.
So many songs are left to write. I'd gladly take a bet
Always there'll be singers in a barbershop quartet.

5 Never Trust A Cat (4.08)

In the sure and certain knowledge this will alienate 50% of the population...

Well, I got myself a dog. I taught him how to read and write.
Remarkably perceptive and unusually erudite,
He was tall and he was handsome and his coat was kinda wiry
And every time I'd see him he was writing in his diary.
It happened he was sleeping – I'd caught him as he'd just been fed.
I opened up his diary and here's a bit of what I read...

"Oh, he feeds me, he leads me out beyond the sacred wall
And now and then he likes it if I run after his favourite ball.
He says he wants it back, and then forgives me if I misconstrue.
He smiles on me benevolently, whatsoever I may do.
I've put it to the other dogs, and no one thinks it odd –
Because he feeds me and leads me, I believe that he is God!"

Now, I am not emotional but happy here to testify
This doggy-style devotional had brought a tear to my eye
So I got myself a cat of a particularly gifted breed
And taught it with alacrity to competently write and read.
When I checked the introduction to the thesis for her PhD,
Here we have the opening regrettably I chanced to see...

"Hey, he feeds me, he needs me, he really was a fortunate find.
And never in my lifetimes have I met a more obedient kind.
I issue my demands and I am certain he will always give
No matter how I scratch and can be generally combative.
The other cats agree with me; they spit and sagely nod.
Because he feeds me and needs me, I believe that I am God!"

So it all comes down to attitude and here is how I feel we stand.
Knowledge is a blessing; unless it's getting out of hand.
I did some reassessing, and finally normality returned;
I called it an experience, and ended knowing lessons had been learned.
The dog was on the money, but the moral surely has to be
Never trust a cat who is a Doctor of Philosophy...

6 The Passing Of Eli Mackay (5.07)

A modern morality tale...

It all seemed so easy, the first time they met.
He'd called himself Eli Mackay;
'A Scot with an accent that's pure Somerset!' –
His opening attempt at a lie.
She wrote many letters; convinced herself trees
Were dying in a wonderful cause.
The man had an aura that placed him with ease
Between Jesus and Santa Claus.

The blossoms of summer seemed light on the breeze,
Whilst 'Eli' was notably shrewd.
He offered, one time when he sensed her unease,
Her something to lighten her mood.
Then slowly but surely, the atmosphere changed;
The weather vane started to shift.
She came to believe she was truly deranged:
And that's when he cut her adrift.

He'd said, in exchange for a reasonable stance,
Of course he would do her a deal.
The choice, in effect, was agree in advance
Or be tied to a Catherine Wheel.
"You be a nice girl and be good to those guys!"
He snorted his line of cocaine.
"Now take it; or leave it and lose your supplies.
I won't make the offer again!"

It thundered and lightened that night as he fell.
In rage, with a merciless cry
She gave him his answer; and truth be to tell,
He'd picked his own moment to die.
The way she remembered, when nothing was left
A pearl-handled pistol appeared.
Though some sent condolences, few were bereft.
It ended how everyone feared.

The judge kept his cards very close to his chest –
He'd come across Eli before.
The person who'd found herself under arrest
Was surely a prisoner of war.
He'd fixed on the photograph set in the frame
And so much had welled up inside.
The face was the same, but that wasn't his name
The day that his daughter had died.

So the judge took a view, and quite rightly it seems,
This case must be handled with care.
She'd told how the nightmares and devilish dreams
Had driven her to depths of despair.
He closed his eyes slowly. He let out a sigh
And told her, "I think you will find
When it comes to the passing of Eli Mackay
That justice is seen to be blind!"

7 The Minnow (3.24)

Looking at many of the postings I see on social media, I fear one day I may understand human nature...

I'm a minnow, just a minnow in a fast-flowing stream
With my old friend the stickleback and an arrogant bream
Whom we hate with a passion, but even more so the sharks
And of course the barracudas and the arch-patriarchs
Who lord it over everyone who ever shed scales.
I'm referring of course to those bastards, the Whales!

It's all a conspiracy, and we've known it for ever,
The total frustration of our every endeavour.
"You're tiny, you're a tiddler, and you don't know your plaice!"
She's our Member of Parliament; and a total disgrace!
Now at long last we've discovered it; our *esprit de corps*
And thanks to social media, we're powerless no more!

There are deep wells of bitterness in the dark of our caves,
But the minnows and the sticklebacks are no longer slaves.
We threaten rape and disfigurement, and once in a while
Innovate to coordinate tsunamis of bile.
So we're weak, insignificant, and we fictionalise;
Why not, with anonymity both possible and wise?

We're the masters of misogyny when safely unseen,
Rejoicing in the poetry of the whorehouse latrine.
The females, especially the Bottlenose and Blue,
Have learned to fear the stickleback; his associate too.
So we taunt and we terrify with the utmost élan,
And we do it 'cos we want to; because simply, we can.

It's a price, I won't apologise for having to say,
That as they have more than I have, then for this they must pay.
I call it "freedom of speech" and with a ghost of a smile
Defend my entitlement to be disturbingly vile.
So this is my power; my little pull on the chain.
I began as a minnow, and a minnow I remain...

8 Chavasse (4.44)

"The past is a foreign country: they did things differently there..." (apologies for slightly misquoting L. P. Hartley).

Sometimes it happens. It's how people are, and it's risky to generalise,
But some are born under a different star; they see things through different eyes.
It was such a man – you won't know his name, at least it's unlikely you do –
Who was, so his comrades would loudly proclaim, the bravest that ever they knew.
So this is a story of calling and class.
Remember the name; Noel Godfrey Chavasse

Noel came out of a time and a place where duty and service was all;
There wasn't a challenge he wouldn't embrace, responding whatever the call.
An Olympian competitor, Noel was there the summer of 1908,
But something more beckoned; the mission to care that nothing would ever frustrate.
We're sowing the seeds now for what came to pass;
The story and legend of Noel Chavasse.

Today, we would say that the guy had a goal; he knew what he wanted to be.
Applying himself with both body and soul, he qualified in surgery.
It wasn't the way that at first he had planned but, just before outbreak of war,
He offered his service to country and King; and the Royal Army Medical Corps.
Now slowly we move to a critical mass
Events that immortalised Noel Chavasse.

It's 1915. The Army sees fit to award him the Military Cross.
In 1916, still doing his bit and amidst all of the carnage and loss,
Through what was gazetted "*A Selfless Display Of Conspicuous Gallantry*",
The Military Cross moves aside and makes way for Captain Chavasse's VC.
Yet more will emerge from the mud and morass
Of the Somme in the story of Noel Chavasse.

The second Victoria Cross that he won, awarded the following year
For braving the perils of mortar and gun, showed selflessness way beyond fear.
Whilst wounded and under the heaviest of fire repeatedly still he returned,
Crossing the craters and crossing the wire, attending the broken and burned.
But two short days later, the ranks and the brass
Lamented the passing of Noel Chavasse.

He had been, and proudly, a child of his age – the bravest, they said, of the brave.
Again, a citation laid bare on the page the many he'd managed to save.
One solitary soldier received the award of the double Victoria Cross;
Another who never came home from abroad, another expendable loss.
He's resting in Wipers, forgotten alas,
The man and the hero called Noel Chavasse.

9 A Cautionary Tale (4.36)

...a jaunty little song about no-platforming – the intellectual equivalent of sticking your fingers in your ears and going la, la, la...

"It worried me," I told them, "how the conversation steered
That first and last time that we met – the night she disappeared."
I rather think she'd spent the evening soaking up the sauce.
She gazed at me through bloodshot eyes and, shaking with remorse,
She seemed to dwell on times gone by; she downed her glass of red –

Sat herself back on the stool. "Come closer in," she said...

"Y'see, I'm a cast-iron liberal, the sort that no one owns,
With nothing you can ever call authoritarian bones.
Imagine, picture my surprise and visualise the shock –
Freedom running through me like a stick of Blackpool rock –
To find that maybe, possibly I'm less than I appear.
So listen up, my new best friend, 'cos this you gotta hear..."

"We'd started out that smoky night. The car had broken down.
We knew we had to make it to the other side of town.
They'd told us it was happenin', down in our refectory;
'We've got to stand together now!' was what they'd said to me.
And we were sure – well, I was sure! – this was the way ahead,
'Cos freedom is my middle name as I already said.

"They said that we'd be silencing some ancient dinosaur
Who'd opened up her stupid mouth a thousand years before.
Why the hell, when I have worked so hard for my degree
Should I hear something, anything, with which I disagree?
That's why I held my banner high and prominently placed,
Both in defence of freedom, and as arbiter of taste.

"We shut the old dissenter down. She didn't have a chance,
'Cos who can stand against a mob demanding ignorance?
They told us that she mustn't speak; like one of them declared,
'Your minds will all get muddled up, your judgements be impaired!'
It lasted less than half an hour, and then we hit the bar.
We threw the banners in a skip and now we're where we are."

"That's not so bad!" I said to her – I owed her that at least! –
"But this is no confessional and, lady, I'm no priest!"
The way it all appeared to me, too much had come to light.
Her eyes had trouble focussing. "You've had too much tonight!"
That's when she leaned the other way; I caught her as she fell.
"I really think you've had enough!" She wasn't looking well.

The barman pulled the shutter down and slowly shook his head.
My best friend took the hint, and took her bottle off to bed.
"Go sleep it off," I told her as she stumbled to the stairs.
The barman did what barmen do – looked to his own affairs.
"She sits here every night," he said, "and each night, without fail,
She tells that same old story! It's a cautionary tale..."

10 Revolution Rendezvous (3.06)

is a paean to champagne socialists everywhere...

"Now I'm guessing you're a bit like me,
Fully paid up to the bourgeoisie,
Trying to avoid the rain,
Determined never to complain
And looking for a signpost to
The Revolution Rendezvous,
The Revolution Rendezvous?

"Well, step this way, I'm a practised hand,
Very well-known to the High Command
And a master of all that he surveys!
The champagne and the canapés
Will always help to get you through
The Revolution Rendezvous,
The Revolution Rendezvous.

"We sometimes sample this Bordeaux
When planning for the overthrow
Of fascististal regimes
And maybe, going to extremes,
The vintage Margaux (*entre nous!*)
At the Revolution Rendezvous,
The Revolution Rendezvous.

“You may find several volunteers
Revolting, and with strange ideas,
Preferring their Courvoisier
At any time throughout the day!
There’s really every point of view
At the Revolution Rendezvous,
The Revolution Rendezvous.

“We do prefer to stay disguised,
Though still we must be recognised.
The secret is to squeeze the hand
Whilst proffering the peoples’ brand
Of rum we know as Malibu
At the Revolution Rendezvous,
The Revolution Rendezvous.

“Take my advice, it’s kindly meant;
But keep to loitering within tent.
Pigs don’t fly, but they can use drones
And sometimes even mobile phones.
It’s cheating but what can you do?
It’s the Revolution Rendezvous,
The Revolution Rendezvous.

“It speaks ill of the country’s state;
They even try to infiltrate,
So should they mount a surprise attack
A taxicab will take you back.
I’d keep it quiet if I was you,
About the Revolution Rendezvous
The Revolution Rendezvous.”

11 The Watchmaker’s Arms (3.26)

Anyone who’s eavesdropped on taproom conversations in an old-fashioned British pub – the drinking-establishment kind that doesn’t serve up effete items such as food – will understand where this song’s coming from...

I did a straw poll in the Watchmaker’s Arms.
This isn’t a moment for sounding alarms
But I’m here to tell you we’re all in accord.
What some might consider electoral fraud
Is simply a method of setting things straight;
Engaging the righteous before it’s too late.
Vote early, vote often, and throughout the day –
Though just ’cos you can it doesn’t mean you may.
However you play it, don’t tell the gendarmes
You heard of it first in the Watchmaker’s Arms.

“Now why are we standing out here in the rain?”
I’d asked her repeatedly, time and again,
But all that came back was that quizzical stare
She’d learned from the pages of Vanity Fair.
I’d told her before we went into the joint,
“If you meet your idols, they will disappoint!”
And really it should have been written in blood
That just ’cos you can it doesn’t mean you should,
So under those dubious pineapple palms
Another heart breaks in the Watchmaker’s Arms.

The thunder was rolling around his hotel.
The guy was a vagabond – that we knew well –
And when he’d discovered how power beguiles
He’d hacked all the Pentagon’s top secret files.
For some, it may seem such a meagre reward
But “Vengeance is mine!” said the Digital Lord!
So; freedom of speech or betrayal of trust?
Well, just ’cos you can it doesn’t mean you must.
“It’s surely the sweetest, most soothing of balms!” –
So said the landlord of the Watchmaker’s Arms.

When we cut to the chase, it's always the same;
So often spectators see more of the game.
That genius for pity; the sun on the shields
From Hades across the Elysian Fields
Reflecting on glorious losers. The loss
That's driven so many back onto the cross
Can sweet-talk the frail into being contrite –
Though just 'cos it can it doesn't mean it might.
Oh, they shoot from the hip; that's one of their charms.
Try asking around in the Watchmaker's Arms...

12 Song Of Accountability (3.55)

So often, in our efforts to apportion responsibility, we allow those truly accountable to remain under the radar. This song simply re-focusses the beam...

It goes without saying, so much can go wrong –
We know that it's true – as we're scraping along.
But luckily, no one can ever contest
It's perfectly clear where the buck comes to rest.
Important, imperative, vital to see...
Accountability!

We hear it from the City and we hear it in the shires –
It never fails to reassure, and always it inspires.
It emphasises duty as it fortifies the soul –
The order from the very top; "Assistant heads must roll!"

The Archbishop knew it, the bishop had lied.
Monseigneur was having his bit on the side.
With media casting a critical eye,
"No ducking and diving, no passing on by!"
Came thundering down from the Holiest See...
Accountability!

We hear it from the clergy when their cover has been blown,
Comfort for the innocent the guilty will atone;
Just one more encyclical on one more vellum scroll;
Another order from the top – "Assistant heads must roll!"

The hospital somehow had failed to explain,
When questioned repeatedly time and again,
The sufferers who oddly expire in their care.
With ringing of hands and with cries of despair,
The CEO testified how there must be
Accountability!

We hear it from the hospitals; it's gratefully received,
That crumb of comfort handed out to those who are bereaved
Who gather round to hear the boss man herald and extol
His order from the very top; "Assistant heads must roll!"

'There'd been half-a-dozen, holed up in the fort,'
The Adjutant put in his evening report;
'Six little soldier boys, out in the sun
Who ran out of ammo, and then there were none.'
An honourable soldier, he knew there would be
Accountability!

We hear it from the Ministers, those sorcerers of spin
Who hold their hands up willingly to take it on the chin;
Who run the table, deal the deck and in the end control
The orders from the very top; "Assistant heads must roll!"