

Teaching the song to Dad was much easier than expected, mainly because of his remarkable mimicry skills. We started with the lyrics as a poem, letting him get a feel for the language. Then I'd hum a few bars of the melody for him to play back. By the second or third try he had the chords and rhythm down. The process could have gone much faster if I was able to play him a tape, as my humming wasn't what they call pitch perfect. But this turned out to be a good thing, as it made the song one step closer to his own. The same was true for the delivery of the lyrics, as my lack of melody also allowed Dad's "cover" to deviate from the originals.

Wanting more, I threw "Lounge Act" by Nirvana at him next, trying to emulate *Unplugged* but ending up somewhere between *Nevermind* and *Rubber Soul*. Kurt would have been proud.

The whole scenario brought back memories of nights spent with my former college roommate when he would write songs in my presence and I'd give an immediate thumbs up or thumbs down as he tried various sets of lyrics and chord progressions. Inspired, I taught my Dad one of his unreleased numbers that I always loved, but my roommate thought sounded "too '60s." I'd even come up with the clever title of "Won One" as a play on a repeated homophone in the chorus, my one claim to songwriting (ok, song titling) fame. It also took away some of my guilt in this plagiarism exercise, as my friend always refused to play it at his shows in college even though I insisted it was great. That argument would be ended soon enough.

As I recited the lyrics for Dad to transcribe, it struck me for the first time that they seemed to eerily foretell my current situation. Was the author a prophet of sorts? Or possibly from the future? Probably not, but you be the judge:

Come on in you might as well hear this too
One day your mind took flight and it flew
Around the trees you thought were waving at you
No things just don't seem like they used to

So turn up the rain and turn down the sun
As I lift my hand from yours girl I assure you no one won
Turn up the sun and turn down the rain
The clouds they came but they were not the same

Come on in you might as well hear this too
Well it's slipping away but hey it's just a part of you
These are all things I thought you knew
Oh things just don't seem like they used to

(Great solo here: duh doo doo doo doo doo, di doo doo...)

So turn up the rain and turn down the sun
As I lift my head from yours girl I assure you no one won
Turn up the sun and turn down the rain
The clouds they came, swelled with their pain

Dad paused briefly after finishing his first full run-through of our tri-fecta. "You wrote these?"

"With a little help from my friends, but they won't mind if you use them."

Dad took my lyrical bait and had a glow in his eyes when he made his next proposal.

"You and I should become a songwriting team. Like Lennon and McCartney. It'll be great."

"Let's just see how these three songs go over first, okay?"

Dad played those three songs at a coffeehouse open mike night on Halloween and they went over brilliantly. He won the girl, blowing Mr. Classical Pianist off the stage with his dangerous folk rock appeal. I feigned an illness caught from too much time in the cold without a jacket and boycotted when I realized it was in a basement cafe, but I did peek my head in through a back corner of the ceiling and saw the entire set. It was quite a high to see the joy and adulation the crowd bestowed upon my father.

Based on his open mike success, the venue wanted to book Dad for his own forty minute set the following week. I agreed, figuring a few more songs wouldn't hurt.

"Stealing" music was about to be taken to an entirely new level. File sharing was a hole in the bucket compared to actually claiming authorship. Was it wrong to teach my Dad some future hits, intercepting potential royalties from the artists who created them? I can justify downloading since it creates hype, selling concert tickets and increasing album sales when fans