

All original lyrics, and a short personal foreword
by Judy Niemack for each song
featured on "Voices in Flight" - GAM 924

1. **Questions and Answers** (Play Pen) (Curtis Fuller/Judy Niemack)

Trombonist Curtis Fuller joined me on my "Blue Bop" album back in the 1990's, and I've loved his music since then. He composed this modal tune, which is a perfect vehicle for us to explore some of the questions and answers about the game of life.

Questions and Answers

How do you really know when you're ready to take flight?

Well it starts with a need to be free,

Rising up with a rare urgency.

Tell me why are you standing still,

When the rest of the world is spinning 'round?

Take a minute to be in it, feel the beauty, hear the sound.

Where will we find the strength to decide to live in peace?

When we learn how to fight fear with love,

Then we'll rise up and fly with the dove.

Tell me when are we going to stop

Wanting more, hoping we can suffer less?

When it's over we'll discover,

Only love brings happiness.

2. **Ditto** (Jay Clayton)

Written as a response to a love song written for Jay.

3. **With You** (Orange Blossom) (IdreesSulieman/Judy Niemack) - **Body and Soul** (Green/Heyman/Sour/Eyton)

Bebop trumpeter Idrees Sulieman composed a new melody over the chord changes to "Body and Soul", a practice common in the Bebop years, and called it "Orange Blossom". Here's my lyric to his melody - a paraphrase of the original with a twist: an invitation to a friendship that just might lead to something more. In this recording, Jay Clayton followed with the original "Body and Soul" and we intertwined the two stories at the bridge.

With you

Don't ask for much, just a smile or a touch,
For you to show what I long to know.

Times when I get lonely, somehow my thoughts lead back to you.
Even though I know I should not sit and sigh, what else can I do?
I just want to spend some time with you; that's the truth.

You don't seem to notice, but I am sure it's plain to see,
Somehow I can't hide the way I feel when you're around, what's the use?
I just want to spend some time with you.

And I wonder, have you ever wished you could find someone to share
All your hopes and aspirations? Someone to talk to when you're sad, who'd lift you up,
Someone who believes in you, who'll lift you up when you're down, how does it
sound?

Got a funny feeling, that if you'd take a chance with me,
We could be the best of friends or maybe even more, that depends...
I just want to spend some time with you.

4. **You** (Hum) (Bob Brookmeyer/Judy Niemack)

"You", instrumentally entitled "Hum" by composer/trombonist Bob Brookmeyer is such a joyful, uplifting song, it had to be about that special feeling that makes you want to hum - love!

You

I've got something nice,
That makes the day worth living twice.
It comes from inside,
It makes me hum,
It's keeping time,
Just like a drum.
It's telling me
I've got somebody who cares,
Somebody who's aware,
Who's absolutely rare.
It's true, I thought you knew,
I've got to smile, because of you.
I've been thinking hard,
About the warmth in your regard.
It's hot as the sun,
It makes me glow,
And anyone
Can feel it flow.
I'm telling you,
You've got somebody who cares,
Somebody who's aware,
Who's absolutely rare.
It's true, I thought you knew,
I've got to smile, because of you.

5. **Beloved** (Phil Markowitz/Judy Niemack)

Several years ago, I met Phil when he played in Berlin and asked if he had any songs that needed a lyric. I chose this one, touched by the beautiful harmonic colors and the melody which sounded to me like a series of sentences. It became a story of love after separation. Phil loved the lyric and Jeanfrançois suggested doing it as a Bossa Nova, which captured the mood perfectly and allowed me the space I needed to express this song.

After the raging storms have blown away, I rise up on the crest of my feelings, into the day.

And looking back on the tangled lines we've left behind,

The glow of what we have somehow remains, that space where love resides...

Beloved

I never felt a moment of regret,

I knew I loved you since the day we met.

You kept me safe within a world where all I had to do,

Was listen to the song that floated silently from you,

A song that never wavered on its way,

A rhythm never changing 'til today.

But still you have to think that somehow you'll survive.

Another day, you'll start to feel alive.

And how could you have made it here,

Without the pain, without the tears,

That washed away the sadness deep inside,

And left a space where only love resides?

6. **Beginner** (Jay Clayton)

Jay wrote this tune to begin her sets but rarely uses it that way, in fact it often turns up in the middle or at the end of a concert: wherever a swinging blues is needed. I love singing the harmony on this - it feels like we're two trumpets.

7. **Looking Back** (Reflections) (Thelonious Monk/Jon Hendricks)

The brilliant vocalist and lyricist Jon Hendricks wrote these lyrics to Monk's "Reflections".

Looking Back

As I'm reflecting back on my life
It's like a dream
Things are not quite what they seem.
There's always something missing
Something unseen but dimly remembered.
I think of paths I might have taken
Lives I'd have changed
Some living souls rearranged
And I'm amazed how tender feelings can be
In looking back, we just peep through the crack
Between what's real and false.
In this eternal waltz
Meanwhile we just keep dancing.
Now at the end of my reflection
I'd have to say
I would live life the same way
But that's the way that life goes
Thank God I'm a woman who knows.

8. **Soaring** (Lotus Blossom) (Kenny Dorham/Judy Niemack)

Bebop trumpeter Kenny Dorham wrote this one, originally entitled "Lotus Blossom". The 3/4 section felt to me like a bird catching currents in the air and, as I wrote, it became an ode to new love and the way it can make you feel - as if you're up in a clear blue sky, soaring!

Soaring

Soaring, when I'm with you,
I'm exploring , each moment is new,
And I'm wishing, waiting, wond'ring,
Are you feeling it too?

Gliding, without a care, it's exciting,
I'm lighter than air,
And I'm wishing, waiting, wond'ring,
Will it be me and you?

Before you came along my life was full of schemes,
Now I know my dreams led me here to find you.

Flying up in the blue, no denying,
All I've got to do is stop,
Wishing, waiting, wond'ring,
And go soaring with you!

Wishing, waiting wond'ring,
Hoping, longing, yearning;
Wishing, waiting wond'ring,
And go soaring with you,
Flying up in the blue,
I'll go soaring with you!

9. **Happerchance** (Jay Clayton/Jay Anderson)

Jay Clayton is a musical pioneer in many ways, and is one of the first to explore the combination of sung poetry and free improvisation. Jay and Jay Anderson have performed for many years together and often include freely improvised pieces in their program, among them this poem by Jay Clayton.

Happerchance

Let go, move on, face full to the wind, the mind cleansed of "no's" and "not's",

The heart accepting of "yesses" and "can be's".

A world awaits in charity and new beginnings."

10. **Eagle Poem** (Judy Niemack/Joy Harjo)

Joy Harjo is an internationally renowned performer and writer of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She served three terms as the 23rd Poet Laureate of the United States from 2019-2022 and is winner of Yale's 2023 Bollingen Prize for American Poetry. In this beautiful poem, Harjo urges us to feel our whole selves through spirituality and looking inward for self-knowledge. She asks us to pray and to open ourselves to Mother Nature, "knowing we are truly blessed". The eagle's circling flight reminds us of our connection to all living things, and of our responsibility to take the utmost care of the world we live in during the brief cycle of our own lives.

Eagle Poem

To pray, you open your whole self
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon,
To one whole voice that is you..
And know there is more, that you can't see, can't hear, can't know.
Except in moments steadily growing.
And in languages, that aren't always sound,
But other circles in motion.
Like eagle, that Sunday morning over salt river,
Circled in blue sky and wind,
Swept our hearts clean with sacred wings..
We see you, see ourselves and know that we must take the utmost care,
And kindness in all things.

Breathe in, knowing we are made of all this.
And breathe knowing we are truly blessed,
Because we were born and die soon,
Within a true circle of motion...
Like eagle, rounding out the morning inside us.
We pray, that it will be done in beauty, in beauty, in beauty...

11. **He's a Man** (Sagittarius) (CurtisFuller/JudyNiemack)

This is another composition by trombonist Curtis Fuller, who himself was born under the star sign of Sagittarius. The qualities of the Sagittarian man: passion, curiosity, wisdom, and intuition, inspired me in writing this lyric.

He's a Man

Nobody doubts the fact, he's a real man,
A paradoxical soul with a heart of gold.
He's got an animal nature, and a spirit too,
That will see him through, when he grows old.
He's a man.

Imperfect combination of wisdom and tolerance,
With a youthful desire for fun.
He doesn't think he's so special,
but I know the truth,
He's the man for me, the only one. He's a man.

The kind of guy who's ready to listen,
Intuitive, with a smile when you're feelin' low.
He lends support when you need it,
Then he lets you go.
As the arrow flies, it leaves the bow.
He's a man.

Out in the world he's second to no one,
Hey, confidence is the name of the game, you know.
But when he's home and it's quiet,
And you're not around,
Then he wonders why he feels alone, (so alone.)

12. **Like Water Off a Stray Dog** (Judy Niemack)

For thirteen years, I flew from Berlin, Germany to San Sebastian, Spain, to teach vocal jazz at Musikene Conservatory. It's a beautiful place and classes were held in a castle overlooking La Concha bay in a Summer vacation spot for lovers and families. One evening, sitting alone at a "Pinxo" bar with a glass of wine, watching the waves crash on the beach, I watched a couple of stray dogs running around by the water, and this lyric was born.

Like Water Off a Stray Dog

Sittin' in a crowded restaurant,
Avoiding the eyes of others.
Alone again, with fam'lies all around,
Mine is so far away,
Scattered in time and places,
Like water shaken off a stray dog .

Ridin' on a crowded tourist train,
With children and tired parents,
They think I've got it made.
But my heart is far away,
Scattered in foreign places,
Like water shaken off a stray dog.

No doubt these people play out strange histories,
But from the outside, always from the outside,
It looks like love to me.

No one' gonna change this loneliness,
I know it's a place inside me,
And I alone can fill it up,

But sometimes I lose myself,
Scattered in lonely places,
like water shaken off a stray dog.

And tears fall down anyway,
Scattered on lonely faces,
Like water shaken off a stray dog.

13. **Badadadat** (Jay Clayton/Jerry Granelli)

Jay and Jerry Granelli had a deep and beautiful friendship, and often performed this in duo.

Badadadat

Why do people come and go?

Why do people come and go?

Why when? Why now?

Why when? Why now?

And then there are those who stay and stay and stay and stay and stay,

Even when they go.

There are those who stay and stay and stay,

Even when they go.

14. **Wondering** (Judy Niemack)

This is the first song I wrote upon moving from Pasadena, California to New York City in '78, where I experienced culture-shock for the first time. Scared, exhilarated and broke, my spirit was fueled by my determination to survive and thrive as a "woman with her own free will".

Wondering

I'm wondering what to do,

To simplify the beginning of something new.

When I'm with you, I'm filled with confusion,

That look you give, is that an illusion?

Or will we find a perfect conclusion?

I know you know, I know you know, oh.

I'm a woman with her own free will,

I'm not afraid to fall over and take a spill.

Experience is my only master,

When I take a chance I seem to learn faster

And when I do it's not a disaster,

I know you know, I know you know, oh.