FRECKLES \* (1966)

She's got the sexiest freckles under the sun

When you kiss her face they tickle, softy stirring up fun

There are a thousand and two now, a thousand and one

Have sprung up overnight for every man that she's won.

Mother Nature marks them up like the notches on a gun:

They signal all the victims that her freckles have won.

*REFRAIN Freckles that tickle, freckles that prickle,*

*Freckles that cuddle and freckles that befuddle*

*Freckles, Hydes and Jekylls and Robin Hoods,*

*She's got freckles everywhere for all of her moods.*

I know that what I say you won't believe is true

But listen to me anyway, I'm telling you

I know you only met her yesterday at the zoo

But you're ten ago, you know, you're number nine nine two.

Numbers 5 and 67 and sixteen others were me.

In maybe half an hour, I'll be a thousand and three. *REFRAIN*

She's today got three more freckles, two of them on her face

It's not just there they settle, they're all over the place

I remember once when she (with my blood starting to race)

Showed me eighteen freckles, sent me into space.

Other lovely freckles you're more likely to meet

Are on her back, her navel, and the soles of her feet. *REFRAIN*

\* \* \* \* \*

BLISTERED FEET (1967, but lushly elaborated upon since that first version)

Last night, I dreamt about two girls

who don't exist as yet:

red-haired Gwynne, with the unkempt curls;

blond pixie Kate.

They brewed a stew out of hemp and pearls,

stirred with their blistered feet.

Their breath cast spells in twists and swirls

of steam, till the whole world ate.

Over towns and farms, in clouds it drifted,

and clifftops, whispering, *Eat*—

until kings and armies bowed to the lifted

whiff of their blistered feet.

Only I was immune—I resisted the charms

of those sisters Gwynne and Kate.

My will was my own as I knelt at their throne

and I sniffed their blistered, stroked their blistered, smelt their blistered,

smooched their blistered, felt their blistered, kissed their blistered feet.

Last night, I dreamt about two girls,

who don't exist as yet,

who tempted paupers, priests, and earls

as they insisted, *Eat.*

Only I was exempt, as they conquered the world

with their blistered feet—

exempt to my temptress, empress girls

as I kissed their blistered, kissed their blistered, kissed their blistered feet.

\* \* \* \*

PAINT (1969)

Don't you try to tell me, boy, that things are how they're not

You pour in spite and rumor and you mix your painting pot

You love to spill a big red stain and watch the colors spread

No way I'm letting spite and rumor stir paint in my head

Don't you try to tell me, boy, that things are how they ain't

I'm not going to listen to the splashing of your paint

You love to spill your big red stains and watch the colors sprawl

Don't come spattering gossip like I'm some stupid wall

Don't you try to tell me, boy, that things are how they aren't

I've given all your sneers and sniggers all the time they warrant

My darling's eyes are burning, the sun is growing faint

Try as you might you'll never dim her colors with your paint

• • • \*

VERY GLAD (1969)

Hello, sweetheart, it's so nice to see you

Hello, sunshine, such a lovely day

Thank the clouds for being so nice as to free you

I'm very glad to see you come my way

Meet some friends of mine, they're moods and feelings

Nervous laughter, lost for things to say

Thoughtful silences and goofy squealing

We're very glad to see you come our way

Hello sunshine it's so nice to see you

Come on and tumble with me in the hay

Maybe teach me what it's like to be you

And very glad to see us come our way

\* \* \* \*

LAMENTS IN PASSING (1970)

Come to the sea while the whales are still singing

Their sliding, sighing song

They may not sing for long

They may not sing for long

Come to the woods where the wind is still singing

A sliding, sighing song

But now that the trees are gone

it's singing it thin and wrong

\* \* \* \*

PEEL A RADISH \* (1970)

Blue mosquito, peel a radish,

Feeling baddish, want to feel much better.

Peel a radish, John and Yoko,

Stony broke, oh, tired of being a debtor.

*REFRAIN: Looking for somewhere to go, oh, oh,*

*Looking for someone to know, oh, oh, oh, oh.*

Black boots fidget, peel a radish,

Feeling saddish, want to feel much gladder.

Peel a radish, play with language,

Eat a sandwich, sleep, relieve my bladder.

*REFRAIN*

Brown sock, buff sock, peel a radish,

Going maddish, want to be much calmer.

Peel a radish, small red cabbage,

Not that faddish, grown in spring or summer.

*REFRAIN*

*(The title, the tune, a few scattered phrases from the stanzas, and the entire refrain come from a John Lennon song I was listening to in a dream.)*

\* \* \* \*

THE SINGERS (1970)

*(This is actually a mash-up of two songs written at the same time and with pretty much the same tune.)*

In your room, we are listening to the singers.

They are bringing us their sweet, small truths again:

Singing, There's one line for the sunshine,

There's another for the rain.

And we're reeling from the realness of their meaning,

As we sing along, and feel their same sweet pain,

That there's one line for the sunshine,

And another for the rain.

*But in five years time you will be somebody*

*Who right now neither of us knows.*

*I think I'd like to stick around and watch you grow—*

*Can I stick around and watch you grow?*

In your room, the singers broach their notions,

And we feel their touch shiver in our bones—

That there's one line for the punchline;

There's another for the pain.

Because we're healed feeling second hand emotions;

Because we're lost left dealing with our own.

Oh, there's one line for the punchline,

There's another for the pain.

*But in five years time I will be somebody*

*Who right now neither of us knows.*

*Do you think you'd like to stick around and watch me grow—*

*Care to stick around and watch us grow?*

In your room, we are listening to the singers.

\* \* \* \*

THE WIND IN RAGGED ROSES (1970)

the wind in ragged roses

the off-white scleral sky

this spiral of squat houses

cluttering the eye

the I threaded through thousands

the faces someone knows

the barely unique houses

that wind in ragged rows

schoolgirls in shabby blazers

sparrows in Dutch elms

the wind in trees and roses

that woos and overwhelms

subdued and fading colours

such dusty browns and greys

these old men growing dahlias

by dual carriageways

[\*these bees in our thin roses

this patch of common ground

this wind that lifts and loses

itself in a poplar stand]

such quiet compromises

as I've come to understand  
the wind in ragged roses

ragged roses in the wind