

ALWAYS WEAR CLEAN UNDERWEAR

C G
When I was a little lad 'bout five years old or so
C
I don't remember much back then 'cause that's real young you know
F
It's all just a blur you see with days of "fuzzy" fun
G C
But I remember clearly getting' orders from my mom.

CHORUS:

F C
Always wear clean underwear, call home if you're late
F D G
Stay away from girls my boy, you don't need no date
F C Am
Comb your hair and brush your teeth, change your socks my dear
C G C
Blow your nose and never pick, wash behind your ears.

C G
Well I was nineteen years of age when I went off to school
C
Just fell off the "turnip truck", about ten years from "cool"
F
Mother hid me from the girls and all that life could be
G C
O what are these strange feelings, is there something wrong with me?

CHORUS 2

C G
Tried my best avoiding girls, but they all did me in
C
Wasn't my fault 'cause it was the devil made me sin
F
He reached out and grabbed my head and I was lost alas
G C
Tempted me so often that I landed on my-----backside.

CHORUS 3

C G
Well now I'm old and wiser boy, I bet that you are too
C
Had a lot of knocks in life, why just the same as you
F
Tragic this and tragic that, I guess that's part of life
G C
But I avoided most of it with my old mom's advice.

CHORUS 4

C G
Now I'm sixty nine or so, not like I was before
C
And you can just see "Virtue" seepin' out at every pore
F
Can't remember what I did to make old mother mad
G C
But I remember her advice, when I was a lad.

CHORUS 5

Reunion Offerings

Gloria called me again. "We need a speaker ", she said.

"Why me?" said I—hoping she might mention my sharp wit, my powerful
delivery or my wealth of experience.

"No one else will do it", she said. "You're our last hope"

"O", ~~said I~~. "I guess I could do it. How hard could it be."

"It's hard", said Gloria. "Get help---(pause)---get a lot of help".

"Okay", said I.

And with that, I heard her mumble a stifled "O God" followed by a click and a dial tone.

Now, doubt did not begin to creep in until a few days later. I called her back.

"Gloria", ~~said I~~

"What do you want", she said.

"I'm having trouble with the speech", ~~said I~~. "I don't think I can do it"

"Of course you can ", she said. "Remember----the school closed over fifty
years ago. These people are old -----and when they hear you are
the guest speaker, they will have very low expectations anyway.

"O", ~~said I~~ "I suppose I could try".

"Remember", she said. "You were the Junior Oratorical Champion of the
School when you were in grade 7".

"But", said I. "That was in 1956 and I was so scared that my three minute
speech only lasted fifty seconds."

"Suck it up and stop whinning", said Gloria

So here I am.

The Chorus Sheets

I thought it might be more interesting for you if we added a little singing to the program. To this end, I am distributing one page with the choruses of three songs. Please study them carefully as there will be a test.

I normally only sing at seniors residents and nursing homes. Put the wheel chair brakes on and take away the walkers - Presto - you've got yourself a captive audience. So tonight there will be people scanning the crowd looking for wheelchairs and walkers.

Now, in an ill-advised moment, Gloria told me I could do what I want for as long as I want. So, I decided to sing. - I'll do the verses and you join in on the chorus (unless, of course, you can't sing. Oh, what the heck, join in anyway.)

I almost didn't do this after hearing John McDermott's performance a few weeks ago. It was absolutely fabulous and a tough act to follow.

But then I remembered the "captive audience" and thought "why not - there's not much they can do about it."

So, let me first of all apologize for the piano playing - I really should have taken those lessons my mother arranged for me.

And secondly, an apology ~~for~~^{to} Mrs. Frazee who tried for years to get me to sing a solo in the music festival - this should make her turn over in her grave.

Walkin' Down Donahue Lane

A little bit in the way of introduction to the first song.

Shirley Donahue and I were born one day apart in January 1943. We were baptized together. We went to school together. I believe I had a "crush" on her for several years - and she wouldn't give me the time of day. In fact, as I recall, in those days I had black and blue marks all over my body from girls touching me with ten foot poles. (And Shirley tells me she still has her 10 ft pole - Keeps it as a reminder of our school days.)

Now, back in the '90s, the class of 1961 had a reunion. Six of our class of eleven showed up and it was almost as nostalgic as this reunion.

And the Queen of Nostalgia was Shirley. That fall she wrote me a long letter from Utah and this song was my answer.

I recorded it (with introductory comments) but did not send it right away. It seems there were some grumblings at home about the last line of the chorus. I tried to explain that this was all about the "artistic symmetry" of the song - ~~to which~~ I still remember my wife's pointed reply - "artistic symmetry my ass."

She finally relented, the song was sent and Shirley avoided me for years. It seems she didn't fully appreciate the "artistic symmetry" of the line either.

Nevertheless, I think it is a lovely little song for this occasion - so here is "Walkin' Down Donahue's Lane."

WALKIN' DOWN "DONAHUE'S LANE"

VERSE #1

G C Em C G D

O how I'd like to go back there, walkin' down Donahue's Lane

Am D G Em A A7 D D7

I miss it so and I want to go, back to my old friends again

G C Em C G D

Life was so simple and easy, walkin' down Donahue's Lane

Am D G Em A A7 D D7

Green grass and sun and lives filled with fun, hangin' out evenings on main street

CHORUS

C D G C D G

I want to go back to the old home. I wonder if you'll come with me

C D G Em A A7 D D7

We'll lie in the shade of an old Elm tree, still growing in my memory

C D G C D G

We'll sit on the swing on the front porch, and wait for the end of the day

C D G Em A A7 D D7

We'll watch the moon rise in the dark summer skies, as I love you in so many ways

VERSE #2

G C Em C G D

Blue skies and long summer days then, family and friends everywhere

Am D G Em A A7 D D7

Lives filled with love and a heaven above, O how I long to be there

G C Em C G D

Cold winter nights we'd go skating, seemed like we never would tire

Am D G Em A A7 D D7

Skate on the bog and sit on a log, thaw frozen toes by the fire

VERSE #3

G C Em C G D
Little gray school down on main street, just like a family you see
Am D G Em A A7 D D7
Old oiled floors and big wooden doors, seem to be calling to me
G C Em C G D
The old school is gone now forever, and main street is not quite the same
Am D G Em A A7 D D7
But they're still close to me in my memory, walkin' down Donahue's Lane

VERSE #4

G C Em C G D
Time marches on in this big world, sometimes brings troubles and pain
Am D G Em C D C G
Just let them be and come home with me, and we'll walk down Donahue's Lane.

For –that “little gray school”,
that lovely little town, and
the memories.

D. Eagan 2013 Milltown School Reunion

As you can see, I guess I am the "King of Nostalgia" - but there are quite a few close seconds here this weekend.

It suddenly dawned on me that a lot of these things, that we remember so fondly, are gone:

Ⓐ That Little Gray School Down on Main Street is gone. And the hours we all spent in it live on only in our memories.

→ It's strange. I suffered through twelve years of professional clock-watching and now I view it, through the prism of sixty years, with affection.

→ Donna Haley was talking to me last night about my always being late. And that is one of the first things that comes to my own mind when I think of that school. Remember the song they played on the radio every morning, at 8:30 - "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" that was my alarm clock. I never did hear the rest of the song as I was scrambling to get dressed. Invariably I would be two, three or four minutes late. I wonder if I would have made it if

CFNB (530 on your dial) had played it at 8:25.

→ I remember what I would describe as academic isolationism - you pretty much hung around with your own class. I can't even remember speaking to Sue Eagan, Nancy Sue Sweeney, Edward Beldiveau or Steven Braysford. When Sue moved to Grand Falls, we became great friends. And ~~tonight~~ ^{this weekend} I met some really, really old guys who were friends of my brother - and he was ten years older than me.

- 2) And remember the bathrooms. I assume the girl's bathroom was much the same as the boy's. I sneaked a peek once but was so terrified I actually forgot to look. Our side could probably best be described as "early Canadian cast iron latrine". I remember a cold, rusty, damp cast iron smell not quite held back by a thin veneer of enamel. I very seldom sat on those cold old toilets, preferring instead to suffer "gastric distress" or a ruptured bowl. Now-a-days, schools often face the problem of kids hanging around in the bathrooms. The answer is to give them one like we had - guaranteed they wouldn't be hanging out long.

→ And of course I remember the teachers. Joyce Coffee was my favourite and, co-incidentally, she is the only one here tonight.

We were all about half-scared of Al Kingette. But years later I served on the NBTA Board of Directors and he was really quite personable. I did know that he and my mother had a few battles ~~and~~ over the years. When she heard the Al had had a thyroid operation, she said that "she would have cut his throat for nothing."

Fred Butland was a good Principal - though lacking in judgement - ~~When~~ he was Superintendent, he once offered me the Principalship of the Milltown School. There are 12 to 15 retired teachers out there who do not realize the great favour I did them - I declined!

The teachers were generally a good lot except for that recurring comment on the report cards - "Needs to develop better work habits"

(Which reminds me, my mother sent me to Mary McKenna for tutoring. Mary said: "Now you're got to apply yourself - the Eagans have a reputation for being lazy"

I went home and told my mother and that was the end of the tutoring)

Dorothy Brockway made a really big impression on me. She spied me cheating on a grade 7 history quiz, circled to the back of the room and hit me in the back of the head with that big World History book. I fell out of my seat, failed the test and have never cared for history since (25 on the "Departmental")

And I remember that Juliette Senna used to put me out of her grade 8 class a lot. Luckily, she also put Gerard Daly out as well. Gordon Coffee was

Principal that year. ~~He~~ would come up the stairs, see Gerard and I standing in the hall and say: "She put you out again boys". We would nod and he just kept on going. I've always liked him for that.

[Just a note to Stu Mowry - I take 90% of the blame for that 25 on the History Departmental - The other 10% I blame on Dorothy Brockway - I may have brain damage]

4) But the memory that is most vivid for me is that of the school dances. I say "vivid" because I bear the scars of those dances to this day. Some of you have heard me tell this before, so be patient—I find it therapeutic to tell the story.

It all started in grade 7 when we were first allowed to attend for a couple of hours. I would pay, go up stairs, put my hands in my pockets (not knowing what else to do with them and then I would lean on the door frame for all but the last few minutes of the dance. In the meantime the girls danced with each other for most of the evening (This, I now believe, was the female equivalent of leaning on the door frame).

Then I would summon up every ounce of courage I could find, walk conspicuously across the dance floor between songs, and ask one of the girls to dance. She inevitably replied "No Thank You" after which I made an abrupt about face and walked quickly back to the door frame, cheeks burning with embarrassment. I have never, to this day, fully recovered from that experience. I do take comfort in the knowledge

that the same thing happened to other unfortunates,

Now - the dance thing was the emotional slam-dunk, but the set-up was done by mother.

- From an early age, I remember her saying:
"This is my son David - he doesn't like girls."

I was 19 before I realized I did.

- I took Nancy Doherty to my graduation prom. The date was made in the usual way → my mother called her mother (Now, that in itself is pathetic)

- years later, Nancy told me how excited she was. "To be going to the prom with me," I said. "Hell no," said Nancy, "I got a formal gown and a new pair of shoes."

- the night of the prom, as I was going out the door, my mother said: "Now remember, she's your cousin."

→ Some years back, Nancy moved next door to me in Kilburn with the love of her life. - not Dave Jenkins, Oliver her dog.

I mentioned the "cousin thing" and she said it was the first she ever heard of that. MY GOD thought I. "What has mother done."

Of course our mothers had only the purest of intentions and so I wrote a little Anthem in honour of their efforts

DO - ALWAYS WEAR CLEAN UNDERWEAR

In spite of mother's best efforts, at 14 or 15, I discovered Calais girls. Barbara Bernadini taught me to dance. This was a small but important step in my social development.

She also introduced me to pincurls. In summer, each day I would head to the Calais pool, take a cool dip ~~in the pool~~, crawl out and lie on the hot pavement with my head in Barbara's lap while she put my hair up in pincurls. She was "going with" Gerard Daley at the time - but I didn't care.

If there is a heaven, I know it has to be somewhere close to the Calais pool.

When I started this little talk, I had great plans: I was going to talk about Peck's Dray Stone (the social center of Milltown) or was it the Fire Hall or Bert Hadey's Pool Room).

I was going to talk about Joe Lindsay Sr. and all the time he devoted to the kids; about Harold Egan who crammed us into his pickup and took us to the movies on Friday night; about John Monahan and Huck Thurston and all the other nicknamed people who inhabit the town; about Ray Applebee, one of the kindest and smartest people I have ever met; about Ed Casey, who toiled alone in the wee hours of the morning to flood the bog for the coming day. (I wish I had remembered to say "Thank you")

~~But~~ these stories will have to wait for another day and perhaps another teller

Reunions in General

Now, over the years, I have been to a lot of reunions. They have been good to great.

But this one is the best and I would be remiss if I didn't thank the organizers who have done such a wonderful job. I think we should give them a great round of applause.

So lets finish this up with a "bang." I wrote this song years ago after attending Sharm's 50th reunion — they have a perpetual planning committee which never dis-bands.

It's just a fun song about some dynamics you may find at a reunion. The idea is to start more and more as the song progresses with reference to beer.

So to rehearse

I Love A Reunion

THE REUNION SONG

Chorus:

F C F
I love a reunion, gee but ain't this fun
G C
Hangin' around with people who are damn near dead and done
F C
Grinnin' like a Cheshire Cat at strangers who are old and fat
Dm Bb F C F
Wonder what I'm doing here, I think I'll have another beer. I love a reunion.

Verse #1

F Dm
The letter came six months ago that said that I should really go
Bb C
The whole gang would be coming here to celebrate again this year
Bb C
That I should pack my bags and go and bring the whole damn family so
F Dm F C7 F
I came---and here I am. Gee but ain't life grand.

Verse #2

F Dm
My hair is falling from my head, a shiny spot is there instead
Bb C
My boobs have fallen to y waist, my belly button's out of place
Bb C
My belly's gotten big and round, my ass is draggin' on the ground
F Dm F C7 F
Wrinkles everywhere, Who said life is fair

Verse #3

F Dm
Talkin' with some guy that I had known was backward queer and shy
Bb C
But now he's sittin' here with me, a big blond perched upon his knee
Bb C
He's got a thousand dollar suit, he's knee deep in his own old poop
F Dm F C7 F
And I am listening too, Oh boo hoo, boo hoo.

Verse #4

F Dm
That girl who always led the class has turned to come my way at last
Bb C
She chats away and smiles at me, it's awfully nice for her to see
Bb C
Me, and I have the urge to say, she wouldn't give the time of day
F Dm F C7 F
To me—she gave the skids, back when we were kids.

Verse #5

F Dm
 The big school jock who led the team's not leading much today it seems
 Bb C
 His "arse" is hangin' out like mine, it looks as though the hands of time
 Bb C
 Have left him on the bottom rung, I think he's here but he's "unsung"
 F Dm F C7 F
 And he's henpecked you see, Ha ha ho hee hee.

Verse #6

F Dm
 And then he walks in through the door, that guy was takin' Level 4
 Bb C
 But now he's filthy rich you see, could buy and sell both you and me
 Bb C
 He's married to a beauty queen, the likes of which you've never seen
 F Dm F C7 F
 You lucky so and so, And that's the way things go.

Verse #7

F Dm
 Some teachers came from near and far, they've all been hangin' by the bar
 Bb C
 One guy was in the "John" with me, it took two hours for us to pee
 Bb C
 And one was wanted on the phone, they missed her at the nursing home
 F Dm F C7 F
 The shapers of our mind, have damned near out-lived time

Verse #8

F Dm
 I've told this tale and now it's done, I hope you've had a bit of fun
 Bb C
 Perhaps you saw yourself in here, so have yourself another beer
 Bb C
 And sing the chorus loud and clear, we'll all be back in twenty years
 F Dm F C7 F
 Unless we're dead and gone, in which case folks "SO LONG".

Last Chorus

Plus
 BIG FINISH

F
 I, I, I, I, I, I, I,
 F C F
 I love a reunion

D. Eagan
 (1943 - _____)