

Florida Native

Robin Frydenborg and Russel Frydenborg

I'm Russ. I was born in Miami during the 1950s and grew up near the edge of the Florida Everglades in the town of Hialeah, a native word for “pretty prairie.” My early memories always revolve around the outdoors: identifying birds in the Everglades National Park, watching the sunrise over Biscayne bay from the shore of Matheson Hammock, collecting tropical fish from Bear Cut or Virginia Key beach, and canoeing the Little River canal right from my back yard. My Scandinavian parents instilled within me a love for science and nature, and from the age of 5, I decided I was going to be a biologist. I ended up attending FSU and working for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for 35 years. Since then I have worked for 6 years as an environmental consultant with my daughter, Beck. I have visited all 67 counties (68 if you count the Reedy Creek Improvement District, the “Disney county”) for both public service and pleasure.

I love the Florida mystique. I listen and observe when I'm immersed in her watery landscapes. Although I have written hundreds of scientific reports about Florida's environment, sometimes the only way to truly express my understanding of the soul of this contradictory place and her inhabitants, is through song. When I'm inspired by a Florida place, her characters, or events, I share guitar chords and words with Robin. She helps shape the ideas into concrete verses and improves the musical structure. It sometimes requires many hours (sometimes days), working in tandem, for us to consider a song worthy. We draw from jazz, rock, blues, and southern folk music to help express Florida's elusive quality associated with each song.

I'm Robin, and I am a proud Florida transplant. If you asked me where I thought I would end up spending the majority of my adult life after high school, the last place on my list would have been Florida. I grew up in suburban and rural Connecticut; my Jewish grandparents were typical snowbirds who flew south every winter and resided at the Monaco Motel on

Collins Avenue, Miami Beach. This was way before South Beach was cool and fashionable. My introduction to the great state of Florida began in my youth when I visited Nana and Poppy for a week every year. There in Miami Beach, I fell in love with the motel pool lifeguard, the beach, mermaids who performed in glass enclosures, Wolfie's Delicatessen, the Fontainebleau Hotel lobby, Florida kitsch from souvenir shops, Coppertone suntan lotion, orange-scented perfume (in an orange-shaped bottle, of course), palm trees, Monkey Jungle billboards, and Flipper!

After I graduated from high school my mother took a job teaching in South Miami, and we packed up the car and drove down. Who moves to Florida in August? I postponed college and went to work in my Uncle Milt's record store in Coconut Grove - again, culture shock. The Happy Note store provided a window onto the Miami drug culture, disco music sensations such as KC and the Sunshine Band, and lifestyles my sheltered New England eyes had never experienced. It was in Coconut Grove that I met Russ, and through him I began to learn more about this wild and beautiful place called Florida. From hanging out in Peacock Park, to camping in almost every Florida State Park, I learned to love the subtle beauty of Florida's springs, rivers, bays, swamps, woodlands, and to understand her history in novels such as Patrick Smith's *A Land Remembered*. Although I would ultimately attend music school at Florida State University, I played guitar and wrote songs for fun. After teaching Russ some guitar chords, we began collaborating on writing and singing about many of our experiences. Especially for the Florida-flavored songs, Russ often has an idea for a guitar part and some words based on his field work, and then I draw from my many various musings (I dictate ideas and words as I walk or swim) to augment the piece. We finish each other's thoughts, blending science with art. The resulting chordal tonalities and rhythms present a Florida tale interwoven with personal experiences.

Living and Dying in the Sunshine State

Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home," more widely referred to as "Way Down Upon the Suwannee River," is the official theme song of Florida. There is a thought-provoking museum in White Springs, dedicated to Stephen Foster and Florida folk history. This history includes how Florida's people of color have long been treated with disrespect, or at best, as caricatures. We wrote this song as an alternative Florida anthem, depicting a smattering of historical events and Florida places.

It begins with Ponce de Leon who named this place "La Florida," because he discovered it around Easter Sunday (La Pasqua Florida). Other specific Florida references in this song are Iron Mountain (295 feet above sea-level, is the third highest elevation in the state), the spectacular Bok Tower and Gardens (designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.) and the White Ibis, said to be the last bird to leave before a hurricane and the first to return when the storm is over. Florida is home to several first magnitude springs, gushing at least 64.6 million gallons of groundwater per day, more than anywhere in the world. Palm Beach Island (where the exclusive shopping district of Worth Avenue is located), has more millionaires than virtually anywhere else in America. Henry Flagler's railroad is widely considered to be the force behind Florida's origin as a tourist destination. Sloppy Joe's (Key West) and Flora-Bama (Perdido Key), are famous Florida drinking establishments, located about as far apart as you can get in our state...



Robin and Russ
Living & Dying in the Sunshine State

Conquistadors, they searched for gold
It was always out of reach
Her real treasure is bought and sold
Twelve-hundred miles of beach

(Chorus)

I can feel you in the air
Chosen land of resurrection
Smell the ocean in your hair
Taste your sweet confection

From Sloppy Joes to Flora-Bama
For redemption you must scrounge
Enjoy the citrus panorama
From the Iron Mountain lounge
Chorus

In the hammock lies the crystal spring
A window to her soul
Thunderhead, flash of Ibis wing
Her storm you can't control
Chorus

Strolling down Worth Avenue
A sailor or a straggler
She comes across like an ingénue
Who just made love to Henry Flagler
Chorus
When the end approaches
And I make my final blunder
I'd like to thank the Sunshine Coaches
And the sand I will lie under
Chorus

Life on a Wave

In 1975, I worked the summer at the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (on Virginia Key, next to the Miami Seaquarium) for Dr. Sonny Gruber. Sonny conducted shark visual research, mostly for the US Navy. One of my tasks included an operant conditioning training procedure, where the lemon sharks were given a food reward if they made the correct visual decision (swimming to the light vs. dark under-water door). I had to work on July 4, since I was the newest employee, so I rode my bike from Hialeah to Virginia Key to conduct the shark training while everybody in the lab took the day off. After I finished the shark training tasks, I rode to Coconut Grove to get some food at the Oak Feed Store, one of the coolest natural foods stores in Miami. It was there that Robin's mom (Liz) approached me and asked that I bring food to her daughter, who worked down the street at the "Happy Note" music store.

I complied, and that's how I met Robin. It was Robin, who immediately demonstrated she had excellent taste in music, and who ultimately taught me so much about composition, including new guitar chords and many lyrical concepts. One of our musical hangouts was Monty's Raw Bar (we called it Monty's Conch), a place with Key West style Chickee Huts, right on Biscayne Bay. Robin had previously performed there.

Playing the guitar one day, I fantasized that I was in the audience at Monty's during one of Robin's performances and I wrote this song. Interestingly, about 40 years later, we met Monty Trainer (the owner) at Acadia National Park in Maine. Besides putting on the Coconut Grove Arts

Festival and performing loads of civic service, he's a really nice guy...

She walked into the Tiki Hut, striking and laconic

Caught the eye of the bartender, she just said "vodka tonic"

It was Open Mike night, the stage set up, action just begun

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With the confidence of a surfer girl, she stepped up and sung

(Chorus)

Ride through life on a wave

When the seas get rough, just be brave

Balance with your best moves, the rest you save

Ride through life on a wave

Ride through life on a wave

She sat down my table, we started to chat

Said she'd been around the world, but Florida is where it's at

She'd had a range of experience, triumphant, yet sometimes in need

But whatever the situation, she'd follow this simple creed

Chorus

We left the joint, I walked with her, completely mesmerized

I spoke to her with more than words, she said I was just her size

Took me back to her place, intentions very clear

As I slipped into her arms, she whispered in my ear

Chorus

Come on baby, gotta ride it on in, gotta feel the sun beating on your skin

Ride it on in 'till you touch the sand, the waves pound down like a rock
and roll band

Come on baby, don't you know, this is the chance to star in your own
show

'Cause the waves gotta length and a frequency, they support you on a
transparent sea

Come on baby, do more than try, this could be the last day before you die

Ride it on in 'till you touch the sand, the waves pound down like a rock
and roll band

Ride through life on a wave

Ride through

Deadheads

Florida deadhead logs are submerged timbers that were lost during the 1800s and early 1900s, as they were being floated to a saw mill, usually as logs rafted together. Many deadheads have branding etched into them to identify the original owners. To this day, thousands remain well preserved in the anoxic sediments of Florida rivers and lakes, and they are highly valued for creation of fine furniture due to their tight growth rings/wood quality. Because of environmental concerns, it was long illegal to remove these deadheads from waters of the state. After Charlie Crist (former Attorney General and Governor of Florida) produced a legal opinion that the state had to allow owners to recover their lost property, FDEP was charged with implementing a system to allow deadhead retrieval, while protecting the environment. I was tasked with creating a committee to tackle this controversial subject, and we eventually produced regulations that were subsequently approved by Florida's Board of Trustees (at that time, Gov. Jeb Bush and his Cabinet).

Years later, I was asked to give a presentation to the Department of State on the History of Deadhead Logging and I decided to write this short vernacular song to add to the experience. I also sang it to a group of Deadhead Loggers (salt of the earth) during an environmental training event. They actually liked it. By the way, Wewahitchka (native word for "water eyes"), is a town on the Chipola River, a waterway that holds many deadheads...

Back in Florida history, when logging was King now
Down in the flatwoods, you could hear 'em sing now
As they're cutting out the cypress and the longleaf pine
Haul 'em to the river, float 'em down the line

Grab a last bottle from the still
We gotta get these timbers to the mill, yeah
Watch out Jasper

Comes a big ol' storm
The lashings done come loose
They're going down

Been a hundred years since those logs got lost
Buddy I can tell you that it's worth the cost
Of strapping on your SCUBA, facing gators and snakes
You better "man up" cause that's what it takes

You're gonna make some money but first you see
You gotta get a permit from the DEP, yeah

Deadheads
Wewahitchka gold
Snatch 'em up boys

Steely Dan Weekend

When I was a kid, I visited the St. Augustine Amphitheater (located within Anastasia State Park) with my parents to experience the official State of Florida drama, "The Cross and the Sword." From what I remember, it told the story of how the early Spaniards subjugated the native Florida people - the Tequesta, Calusa, Timucua, Jaega, Ais, and Apalachee - through brute force and conversion to Christianity.

In 1970, I saw Steely Dan open for Chicago at the Hollywood Sportatorium (Broward County). At that time, I heard a few of Steely Dan's songs on the radio (e.g., "Do it Again"), but had not listened to anything from the "Count Down to Ecstasy" album. Needless to say, my young mind was totally blown away by the dueling guitars of "Bodhisattva" and the haunting, sarcastic quality of Donald Fagan's voice as he sang "My Old School" and "Show Biz Kids." Steely Dan eventually became one of my favorite bands of all time, in the company of the Beatles, the Who, CSNY, and Pink Floyd.

About 5 years ago, Robin and I attended a Steely Dan concert (then composed of the now deceased Walter Becker, the currently healthy Donald Fagan, and 25 excellent studio musicians) at the St. Augustine Amphitheater. We stayed at the Conch House Marina, just about a mile's walk from the venue. On the morning before the concert, we decided to ride our bikes down A1A to Washington Oaks State Gardens. As we peddled across the Matanzas Inlet, I was reminded of Florida's violent past, specifically, the Spanish massacre of 111 French (Calvinist) Huguenots that occurred in 1565 right on the adjacent beach. Word has it that each Huguenot was summarily decapitated on the spot unless they promptly converted to Catholicism. Religion, am I right? *Quercus geminata* is the Latin name for the sand live oak, a coastal tree that provides life-saving shade from the brutal Florida sun. The ad lib version of this song includes recounting the skinny-dipping episode we witnessed at the Conch House pool after the concert was over (thanks to the ladies of the DeLand Skydiving Club)...

Riding 'cross the inlet
You sense the cobalt water
The gleaming strand
Where the Huguenots went to slaughter

Matanzas, ah, ah
Matanzas, yeah
Matanzas, ah, ah
Matanzas

Coquina walls
You block the pain, transgressions past
Augustine
You share the name, Iconoclast

Anastasia, ah, ah

Anastasia, yeah

Anastasia, ah, ah

Anastasia

A blackened ribbon cuts through the land

Spartina dry

Geminata, you give me shelter

From the sky

A1A

A1A

A1A

Loxahatchee Storm

When Robin and I were in our twenties, we went for a canoe trip up the Loxahatchee River to Trapper Nelson's place, within the Jonathan Dickinson State Park, a semi-tropical area of southeast Florida. Right before we arrived at Trapper Nelson's, an incredibly dangerous lightning storm ensued, forcing us to run quickly for shelter in Trapper's old homestead. The lightning strikes were very close and the thunder vibrated the little cabin like a series of sonic booms. During this maelstrom, the park ranger recounted in great detail the amazing history of Trapper Nelson, a Swedish immigrant whose life made Florida a much richer place. During a stormy night, Nelson died from a shotgun blast under mysterious circumstances.

About 30 years later, while sampling the Loxahatchee on a field trip with several fellow FDEP co-workers, an almost identical storm hit us. Because we knew that an average of 10 people in Florida are killed by lightning strikes each year, while 40 are seriously injured, we justifiably feared for our lives. As we huddled beneath the shelter of the old Sunshine State Parkway bridge, I told everyone I would write a song about the ordeal, assuming we lived

through it. Just prior to that trip, my friend, Dr. John Epler described a new species of midge (family Chironomidae), which he named “thanatogratis,” after his favorite band...

On the Loxahatchee and you see some big lightning
What do you do?
Forget about the site you were trying to sample
So you don't get screwed
Head on downstream to the Sunshine State Parkway
Hide under the bridge
Talking to your buddies about the State of the Union
And that Grateful Dead midge

(Chorus)

The sky is flashing, one helluva jolt
Smell the ozone, another 50 million volts
The air is heavy, your breathing's ragged and worn
Got to get through this, y'all
Loxahatchee storm
Loxahatchee storm

Remembering the time back at Trapper Nelson's, checking out his old
zoo

Dude was like a Tarzan with an indigo snake, eating gopher tortoise stew
Making money off the tourists, selling pelts for a living
He had a hammock for a bed
He was the “wild man” of the Loxahatchee
'Till they found him dead

Chorus

Loxahatchee storm (Watch out Trapper)

Loxahatchee storm (It's a shotgun)

Loxahatchee storm (It's hurricane season)

Loxahatchee storm (It'll get you, too)

Break Through Days

This song was inspired by some of Beck's random musings while we were hanging at a beach bar during a Frydenborg EcoLogic (our consulting company) field trip. The Sand Bar is an actual place on Anna Maria island. Picture us surrounded by modern day Gasparilla-fueled rough boys, bragging about their exploits...

Sand Bar dudes, they were old school

Talking 'bout their big score

But the numbers you hear on a bar stool

You best be dividing by four

(Chorus)

The road has its moments of salty and sweet

Maybe mundane is incredibly deep

So you keep moving forward past the headlights and haze

Getch-yer adventure, in break through days

The Egmont light lit our highway

As we crashed through heavy seas

Trawling past the Moonshine Skyway

I Heard a chopper cut the breeze

Chorus

Get on the VHF, call the boys in
By now you know the drill
Avoidin' the lead poison
On our way to Pass-a-Grille
Chorus

Some seek love, some seek treasure
Some just want to slide
Tell me what you measure
When it washes on out to tide
Chorus

Apalach

I began conducting ecological surveys of Apalachicola Bay in the 1970s as part of Dr. Skip Livingston's (FSU) research team. One year, after preventing high rise condos from being developed on nearby St. George Island, Skip was named "King Retsyo" (oyster spelled backwards), the honorary dignitary of the annual Apalachicola seafood festival. Under Skip's direction, we would snorkel in the bay doing seagrass surveys, haul in trammel nets for fish sampling, and jab coring devices into the sediments to collect benthic macroinvertebrates (bottom dwelling organisms with no backbone, such as crabs, shrimp, and worms). At one point, 90% of Florida's oysters, and 10% of the nation's oysters, were gathered here. Even though no oil or dispersant from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill came anywhere near Franklin County, the threat of the spill caused state officials to allow over-harvesting of the oysters. Unfortunately, after a year of over-harvesting, global climate change influenced a severe drought that lasted the next several years. Fresh water is needed to significantly reduce the oyster's predators. In the absence of low salinities, the already stressed oysters were devastated by predation, and very few folks can now make a living on the water.

Robin and I enjoy strolling through the live oak-lined streets of the town of Apalachicola, appreciating the historic Victorian homes. During one such walk, we witnessed a funeral procession, while the church bells solemnly rang out in the distance...

Bells are tollin' down in Apalach
Angel of Entropy, another soul did snatch
You'll find one day you're gonna meet your match
Like King Retsyo did, down in Apalach
Transmission, transition

Used to be that special shore
Just like going down to a seafood store
It was good and you wanted some more
Used to be that special shore
Transmission, transition

Waiting for my happy ending
The Apalachee dream I am defending
Gotta have more of what the river's sending
Then the bay can get to mending
Transmission, transition

Zero, Zero

In Cascades Park, just down the hill from the Florida Capitol, is the Prime Meridian marker. This was the official starting point from which all surveying and mapping in the state had its origin. I was attending Hiialeah Junior High (located at the site of Amelia Earhart's final take off) when I first learned the concept of graphing and how everything started at the origin. One day I was jogging through the park towards the Prime Meridian marker, which is inlaid within a beautifully carved stone map of the state. As I stepped directly over the marker, these words almost magically spoke to me...

Begin with zero, zero

Ground your sense of place

Identify a hero

Build a knowledge base

Lock into an attitude

Transcending time and space

Enveloped by the gratitude

Live for the chase

(Chorus)

Choose a point and make it Prime

Universal joint, universal climb

Before I die, I think I'll make the time

Make the time

Saltwater Cowboys

I spent a week with several FDEP co-workers in Key Largo, SCUBA diving and conducting the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stony coral rapid bioassessment methodology. After the hot, radiation-filled, arduous days, we would sit and drink beer on the mangrove-lined shore of Florida Bay. I would strum the guitar, thinking about what we observed that day. On one trip from the reef back to shore, we saw a series of bicycle reflectors nailed to some mangroves, specifically designed to enable late night drug smuggling rendezvous. I heard that several of the more recent arrests included guys with pet monkeys. As I breathed in the hydrogen sulfide aroma of the salt-flats, this concept of the Keys' version of "wild west outlaws" kind of seeped into my consciousness. The place name "Matacumbe" is Spanish for "rudder." The Collier County town of Chokoloskee (native for "old home") has a very colorful history of drug smuggling and unscrupulous characters like Edgar J. Watson...

Got a bag full of lobster, you know they're under-size
Here come Grouper Trooper, gonna give you a surprise
Head on out full throttle, to your secret cove
Deep in the back country, in the black and red mangroves

(Chorus)

From Matacumbe to Rubicon Keys
Saltwater Cowboys, they rule the seas
They got smuggling monkeys, reflectors in the trees
Saltwater Cowboys

Got a boat load from Cuba, full of refugees
Once they get a "dry foot," they can do just what they please
Here come Immigration, to keep the deal from going down

Head to the Tortugas, put your cargo on the ground

Chorus

Got a thousand pounds of Ganja, headed for Key Biscayne

If the Coast Guard finds ya', you know they'll bring the pain

Head to Chokoloskee, take the Tamiami Trail

Misdirection tactics, might keep you out of jail

Chorus

All your misfits, end up in the Florida Keys

Kind of a criminal element, in the Florida Keys

Not enough law enforcement, in the Florida Keys

Come on let's party, in the Florida Keys

Chorus

Old Town

Robin and I love living in Tallahassee, a native American place name meaning “old town” or “old fields.” The red clay soils are rich and fertile, which attracted archaic farmers to this area for thousands of years. Most contemporary Tallahasseeans are genuine, friendly, and highly educated (home to FSU, FAMU, and TCC). Tallahassee is recognized for having the finest urban forest of any similarly-sized city in the US. We have actual hills, with elevations ranging from about 30 to 275 feet above sea level, with some 10% gradients near downtown (try riding your bike up that).

Robin and I wrote this song as an alternative version of a Tallahassee theme song. It's kind of an “insiders-guide” to what makes this town such a distinctive place. Here are a few hints: the FSU film school has graduates that have won Oscars; cycling on Tallahassee's canopy roads and many off-road greenways is spectacular; Wakulla Springs is one of the largest springs in the world; the state capital is here; and Mid-town Tallahassee is the trendy place to be. Miccosukee is a place named after the “Chief of the Hog-eaters.” The Legacy Walk runs through the most picturesque part of FSU...

Miccosukee, Lafayette
Fifth Avenue, Mid-town
Kool Beanz, Waterworks
Shopping at the lost and found

(Chorus)

Greenway to Legacy, homeward bound
In a moment of clarity, see the spark of my old town

Levy Mark, Myers Park
Meridian Prime
Cabo's for a Shipwreck
Get off the capital dime
Chorus

Munson Hills, Overstreet
Shadows on the road
Stroking through the crystal blue
Stop, Action, films unfold (Cut)
Chorus
Strawberry fields

Highwayman

For many years, I taught environmental sampling techniques at Harbor Branch Marine Institute (now Florida Atlantic University) and I would stay in the historic town of Ft. Pierce, on the Indian River Lagoon. Ft. Pierce is home to the A. E. Backus Gallery, which exhibits and sells works of the Highwaymen, arguably the most “quintessentially Floridian” of any group of artists. Basically, the Highwaymen are a group of 26 African-Americans, largely self-taught, Florida landscape artists from the Ft. Pierce area, that generally use bold colors to depict classical Florida scenes. A few years ago, Robin and I attended a lecture at the Florida Museum of History in Tallahassee that included several of the Highwaymen. I was inspired not only by their magnificent art, but by their bravery as they struggled against racial inequality in the Jim Crow era of the 1950s and 1960s. After the lecture, when we saw Al Black selling his paintings from the back of his car in the

parking garage, I knew I had to write this song...

Growing up in the Jim Crow south

Catching redfish from the Big Lagoon

You know some folks be meaner than a cotton-mouth

So you sit in the shade and draw cartoons

Mr. Backus he brought you in to his Indian River School

Blend the colors and pull the pin

Turn the Upson board into a jewel, turn the Upson board into a jewel

(Chorus)

Hangin' with the Highwayman

Catch the light, got to feel the land

Sellin' door to door the best he can

Hang tough with the Highwayman

Good stuff from the Highwayman

Get a system and you learn to create
The poinciana, the moonlit Bay
Teach 25 more that you dedicate
Earn a little cash along the way
Newton, Gibson, and Mary Ann Carroll

Let's go ahead and fetch Al Black
Grab your works and in your best apparel
Sell 'em out back of his Cadillac, yeah, yeah
Sell 'em out back of his Cadillac
Chorus

The Only Constant is Change

During a consulting job in the Pensacola area, Beck and I had many interesting conversations at the local pub, Hub Stacey's, and I started to get ideas for a song. Soon after, I received news that my oldest brother, Kort, had died. I decided to finish the song with Kort's life in mind.

As a young kid, Kort moved to Miami from Brooklyn, NY, with my father Cal, my mother Ovie, and my other brother Lans. My dad worked at the now defunct Pan American airlines. Kort was a rebel, one of the original Beatniks, a Miami Beach jazz disc jockey, a terrific Shakespearian actor, with a mellifluous voice to die for. When he attended acting classes at Miami-Dade College (North campus), he convinced my mom to allow me to participate in the production of Luigi Pirandello's "Six Characters in Search of an Author," where I basically played a mute kid who shoots himself in the head with a toy gun at the play's finale. I was 5 years old. Of course, Kort played the lead.

Around age 19, Kort left Hialeah for a TV job in Orlando, where he also attended Rollins College, majoring in drama. I saw him act the part of Hamlet. He was very impressive. Later, he got his own local Saturday morning TV show, appearing as a patch-eyed, sci-fi, space-swashbuckler known as "Commander Kort." When I was about 10, I got to be one of the

kiddie guests on his program. I won my first Frisbee on the Commander Kort show. This song is dedicated to Kort...

Fatalistic, pantheistic

Leave it behind

Solipsistic, realistic

Better than blind

You got free will

Life is not prearranged

Choose your hours to fill

Because they can't be exchanged

Nothing is constant but change

The only constant is change

Futuristic, atavistic

Fit into a scheme

Pessimistic or synergistic

Don't fear your dreams

You got free will

Life is not prearranged

Choose your hours to fill

Because they can't be exchanged

Nothing is constant but change

The only constant

Peacock Park

Peacock Park is located in the heart of Coconut Grove, named for early Miami pioneers, Charles and Isabella Peacock. There are some nice live oaks near the top of the gently sloping hill, some ball fields, and a mangrove fringe near the bay. You can see the boats of the Dinner Key Marina in the distance to the north, while the Barnacle (the historic home of another early Miami settler, Commodore Ralph Munroe), is to the south.

In the 1970s, the Grove oozed a grungy, Bohemian, hippy vibe. I loved it. During spring break from FSU, Robin scored a temporary job for me at the Happy Note music store, located about a block from the park. During a lunch hiatus, I ventured down to the park with my guitar, immersed myself in the tropical ambience, and wrote this song...

Hanging out in Peacock Park on a Friday afternoon

I'm entertained by the people, but I gotta get back to work soon

I'm sitting here strumming, my mind is humming, to the drumming of the day

Here at Biscayne Bay, what can I say, it's a Biscayne day

A bearded "boho" comes to me and this is what he says

"Hey man if I'm not mistaken, you sound a bit like Joan Baez"

I was hoping he would have said Crosby or Nash, but lately he'd been smoking too much hash

Gets you quite smashed, now it's time to crash

(Chorus)

You awaken in a sleepy cove

Don't be mistaken, you're in Coconut Grove

Watching Frisbees flying through the air

Disregarding the City, of which we don't care
But we share, because it's there, we share to put an end to despair

The Grove is a place that, when you meet, you can soon be friends
Although your status is never hurt by driving a Mercedes Benz
Leads you to the end of your dream-filled chase, at the earth and ocean
interface

Open up into your space, you'll find this is the place

Chorus

Marine Biologist Blues

I knew from an early age that I wanted to study Florida's environment, and I was enthusiastic about collecting organisms from the reef and seagrass meadows and observing them in my marine aquaria. During the 1960s, the Jacques Cousteau TV program stimulated half the kids my age to also aspire to be marine biologists. At FSU, I knew close to 100 students who professed to major in marine science but ultimately gave up (washed out) due to the difficult course load (think organic chemistry). During my FSU days, I worked for Dr. Skip Livingston (who is known as King Retsyo in the song, "Apalach"). I also worked with Dr. Bill Hernnkind, a bright, jovial person who had the exceptional distinction of actually being featured on the Jacques Cousteau show, where his lobster research was showcased.

Many science jobs are simultaneously intellectually demanding and tedious, and after a hard day of science, composing songs really takes the edge off. Incidentally, the Latin name for the hairy crab is *Pilumnus sayi* and my friend Bill Lindberg received his doctorate degree conducting behavioral studies on this species...

For my misfortune, it's my mom and dad I have to thank
They're the ones that bought me, my first saltwater tank
With certain friends and brothers, I also have a beef

Florida Native

They're the ones that addicted me, to the coral reef
Now I work my ass off, trawling night and day
Learning trophic interactions, of Apalachee Bay
Or watching little hairy crabs in their Bryozoan holes
In the cold and turbid waters of Dog Island Shoals

(Chorus)

I wish I was a'diving, in seas the sun has kissed
Somewhere on a tropical island, being a marine biologist
And looking back at evolution, of the past 4.5 billion years
It suggests that oceans are filled up, with marine biologist tears
Get me on a lifetime cruise
Before I'm washed out, by these saltwater blues
Why did I choose, when I knew I'd lose?
Saltwater blues

Don't have the money, just to pay the monthly rent
'Cause I'm so busy doing, these unpaid experiments
Science is my religion, the sea my destiny
All my life I've been learning, now I'm swimming to be free
Still you got to hit those books, and cram that brain
And hope that someday it won't be, all in vain
Or if there's something along the way that, I might have missed
In my struggle to become a marine biologist
Chorus

Stingray

In 1977, Robin and I were lifeguards at the FSU “Bim Stultz” Union Pool, an activity that paid the bills and was not too strenuous. Occasionally, we would hear some of the swimmers (who were generally southern) say, “Let’s go down to Cape Sand Blast.” Actually, the place name to which they referred is called “Cape San Blas,” named after Saint Blaise, an Armenian martyr and the patron saint of wool combers. The entire geographic feature is known as the St. Joseph Peninsula (Gulf County), which separates St. Joseph Bay from the Gulf of Mexico.

While working for the FDEP (around 1982), I spent a week conducting toxicity testing at the St. Joe Paper facility, which historically discharged to St. Joseph Bay, although the facility shut down during the late 1990’s, and St. Joe Paper has since sold its ~100,000 acres of forest lands to the Mormon Church.

Around 1998, Robin, Beck, and I paddled kayaks to the northern end of the St. Joseph Peninsula for a primitive camping trip. The water was very transparent and seagrass beds were quite extensive. The fish and wildlife viewing was spectacular. Beck started counting the cow-nosed rays we observed, and the total was something like 87 by the time we reached our camping spot.

Since we are in the environmental consulting business together, Beck and I often discuss current events on our long drives to conduct field sampling. One day, Beck pointed out that due to the huge wealth discrepancy now occurring in America, the Millennials are the first generation in recent memory to be worse off financially than their parents. Later, while playing guitar at home in our Rune Garden (a circular patio inscribed with ancient Viking symbols) I thought about how Millennials could be metaphorically compared to stingrays: appearing fluid and placid until they are disturbed, whereupon the toxic barb can be used to inflict serious damage (that’s how Australian naturalist Steve Irwin died). Thinking of the connection across time, I wrote the lyrics and melody for this song’s chorus, which suggest a spirit of awakening, cooperation, revolution, and subsequent fulfillment. When Robin came home from work, I was singing the chorus in the Rune Garden, and she thought the song had potential. We then collaborated on creating the verse and improved the chorus...

Chorus

Stingray, you are consenting

Stingray, you've got more than enough

Stingray, now you are presenting

Stingray, come and get your stuff

Gliding, past the seagrass, primeval

Undulate to get on through

Placid waters spike with trouble, upheaval

Skew your vision into the blue, horizon

(Repeat chorus and verse)

Sound Recordings, Glen Swan, Burlap Productions

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