

Preacher Boy - See No Evil

Throughout my musical career, I have largely avoided the overtly political in my songs. I feel I can do so no longer. There is an urgency now unlike any I've experienced before. This release is the expression of that urgency. I know your need to hear these songs won't likely match the urgency I felt to write them, but I present them to you all the same. I hope they move you. These are dire times. The anger is real.



The Damned (So Many More Of Us Than Them)

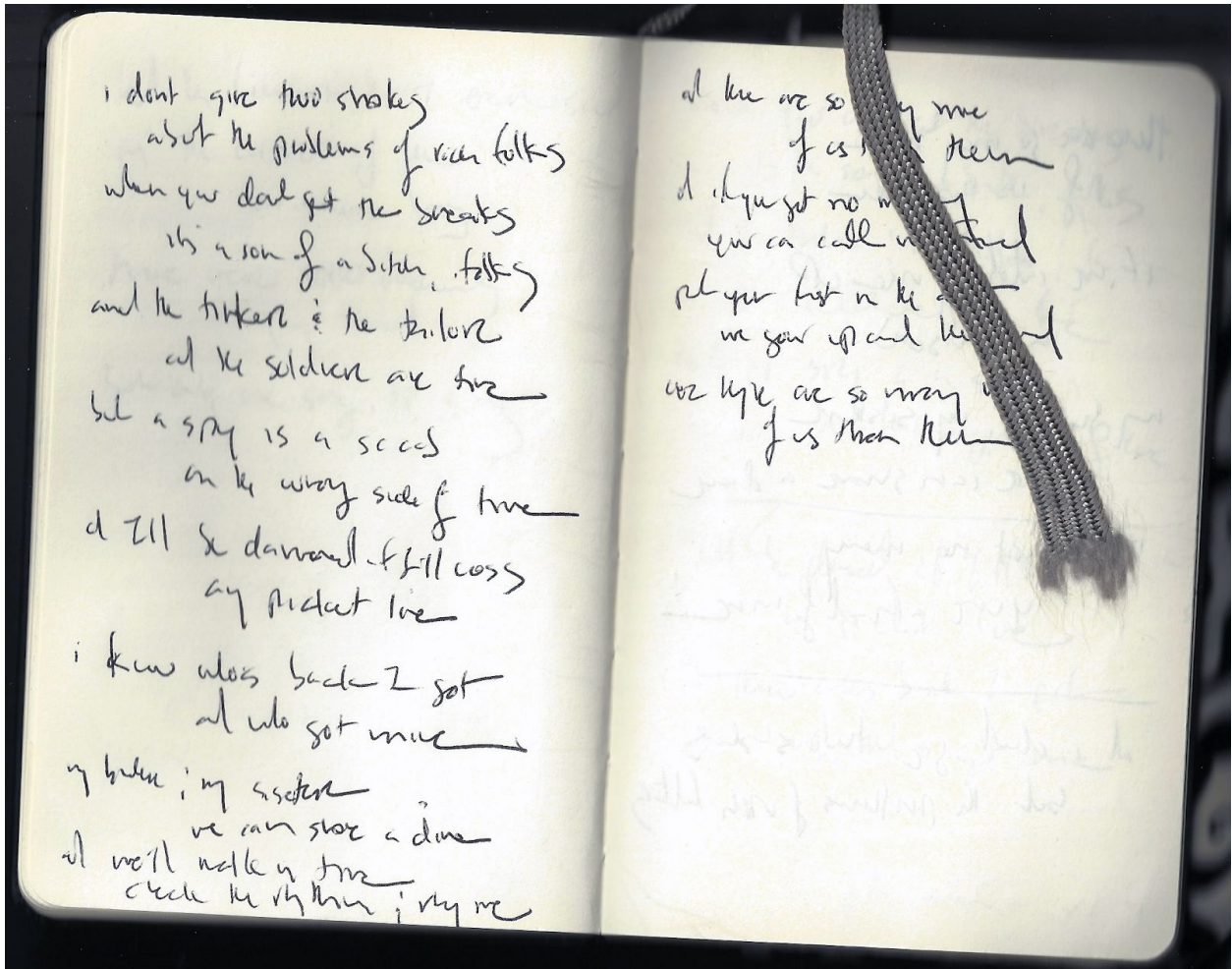
In 2007, the auto industry was one of the mightiest in the world. Then we (temporarily) stopped buying cars when the recession hit, and virtually overnight, the industry was on its knees, begging for mercy. This was proof that we can effect great change at the highest levels if we genuinely so desire. The post-capitalist corporate financial elite cannot (yet) print their own money—it comes from somewhere else. Us. And they need it. This is our power. We must cease to subsidize those whose practices we abhor. We can do it, if we do it together. Because there are so many more of us than them. Those of us living below the financial elite are damned—doomed to endure stresses of which they know nothing, and care less. But if we're damned regardless of whether we fight or quit, then we should fight, with the one weapon we still have. Remember Tom Joad's speech in *The Grapes of Wrath*:

"Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there."

This is the beating heart of the song. Wherever and whenever it comes down to two sides—the rich and the poor, capital and labor—I know which side I'm on. It's that question so memorably asked by Florence Reece, "Which side are you on?" It was Billy Bragg's version that I first heard:

*It's hard to explain to a crying child
Why her Daddy can't go back
So the family suffer
But it hurts me more
To hear a scab say Sod you, Jack
Which side are you on, boys?
Which side are you on?*

Pete Seeger's version is probably the most well known. Pete Seeger died on January 27, 2014. The official release date for "See No Evil" is January 27, 2020.



i dont give two shodges
 about the problems of rich folks
 when you dont get the sweets
 its a son of a bitch, folks
 and the tinkers & the tailors
 and the soldiers are fine
 but a spy is a scoundrel
 on the wrong side of the
 and Ill be damned if Ill cross
 any picket line
 i knew what back I got
 and who got mine
 my bible; my ass
 we can show a dime
 and well walk in time
 create the rhythm; my me

all the are so many more
 of us than them
 and if you get no more
 you can call it a day
 put your foot on the
 we grow up and the
 coz life are so many
 of us than them

[Faint, illegible ghosting of text follows]

early draft of "The Damned" written with my space pen in my Moleskine

the damned (so many more of us than them)

i don't give two shakes about the problems of rich folks
when you don't get the breaks, it's a son of a bitch, folks
the tinker, and the tailor, and the soldier are fine
but a spy is a scab on the wrong side of time

and i'll be damned if i'll cross any picket line
i know whose back i got, and who got mine
so my brothers and my sisters we can share a dime
if you ain't got no money, you're a friend of mine

and it's the end of the end as we begin the begin
we got nothin' to lose, destroy, or defend
so rise up, friend, we goin' up around the bend
cuz there are so many more of us than them

there are so many more of us than them 2x

up in the morning, dark as an alley
over the hill and down to the valley
pickin' at locks on gilded cages
breakin' rocks for unequal wages
to the haves, from the have-nots
will you listen? no, you will not.
will we stop? no, we won't.
we're damned if we do, and we're damned if we don't

and i'll be damned if i'll cross any picket line
i know whose back i got, and who got mine
the tinker, and the tailor, and the soldier are fine
but a spy is a scab on the wrong side of time

and it's the end of the end as we begin the begin ...

there are so many more of us than them 2x

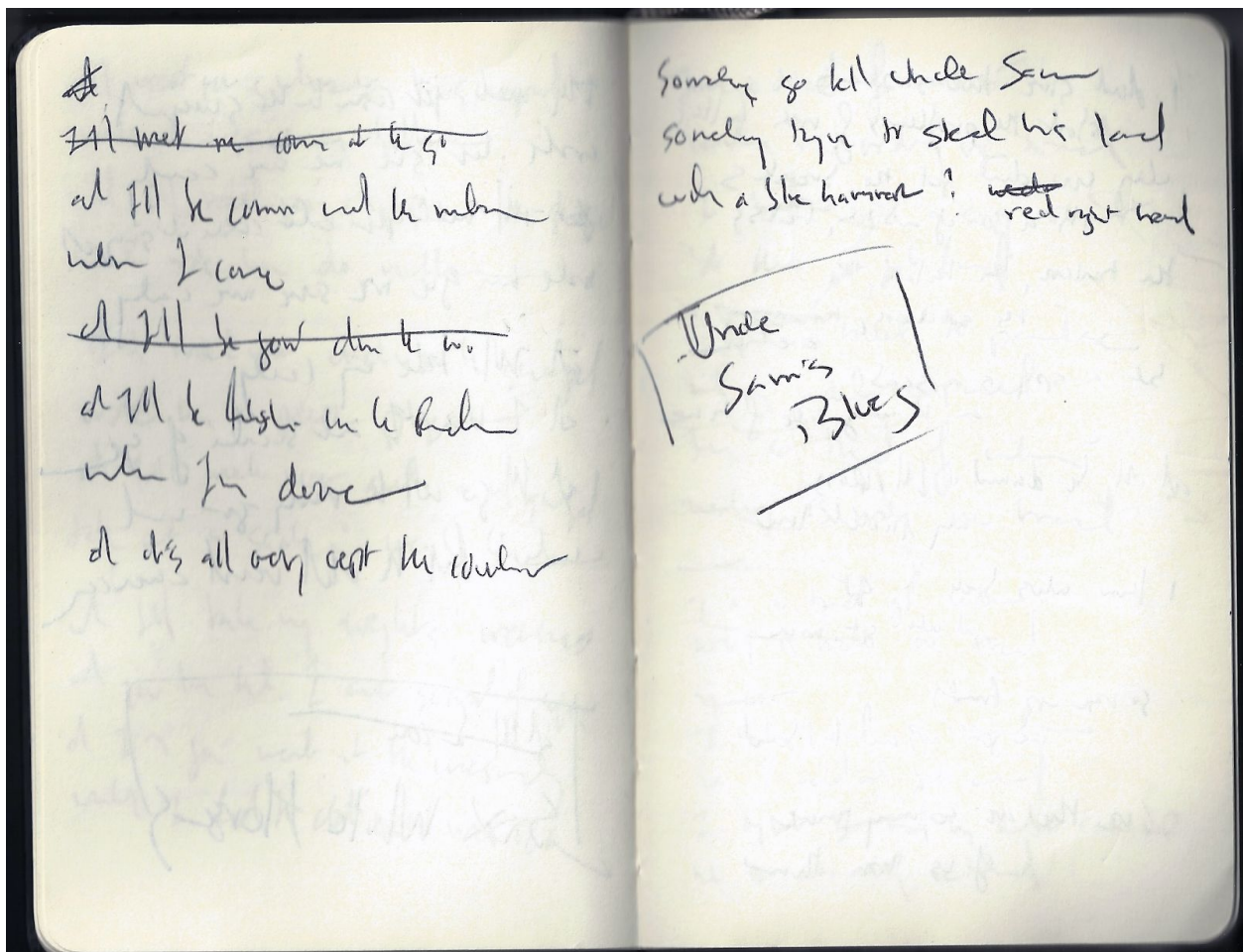
up in the morning, dark as an alley...

Uncle Sam's Blues

If you were watching or listening to the impeachment hearings, you would have heard the testimony of Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman:

"Congressman, because this is America. This is the country I have served and defended, that all of my brothers have served. And here, right matters."

I started writing this song that same night, while washing dishes. I was listening to Dave Van Ronk on headphones, and "Tell Old Bill" came on. Old Bill became Uncle Sam, and I wrote the whole lyric in my head. Soon as my hands were dry, I got over to a guitar, and finished the song.



first lines of "Uncle Sam's Blues" written with my space pen in my Moleskine

uncle sam's blues

somebody go tell uncle sam
somebody's tryin' to steal his land
with a blue hammer and a red right hand
and the soldier man said, "right matters, here"
and the radio clash was loud and clear
and then i heard that gavel pound
and the walls came tumblin' down

somebody go tell uncle sam
somebody broke into the promised land
with a fountain pen and a rebel stand
and the soldier man said, "right matters, here"
and the radio clash was loud and clear
and then i heard that gavel pound
and the walls came tumblin' down

somebody go tell uncle sam
the workin' woman and the workin' man
are breakin' rocks for the high command
and the soldier man said, "right matters, here"
and the radio clash was loud and clear
and then i heard that gavel pound
and the walls came tumblin' down

somebody go tell uncle sam
that something's rotten in glory land
all the spanglin' stars, don't give a good goddamn
and the soldier man said, "right matters, here"
and the radio clash was loud and clear
and then i heard that gavel pound
and the walls came tumblin' down

somebody go tell uncle sam
they're tellin' tales on the witness stand
'bout the purple heart and the soldier man
but the soldier man said, "right matters, here"
and the radio clash was loud and clear
and then i heard that gavel pound
and the walls came tumblin' down

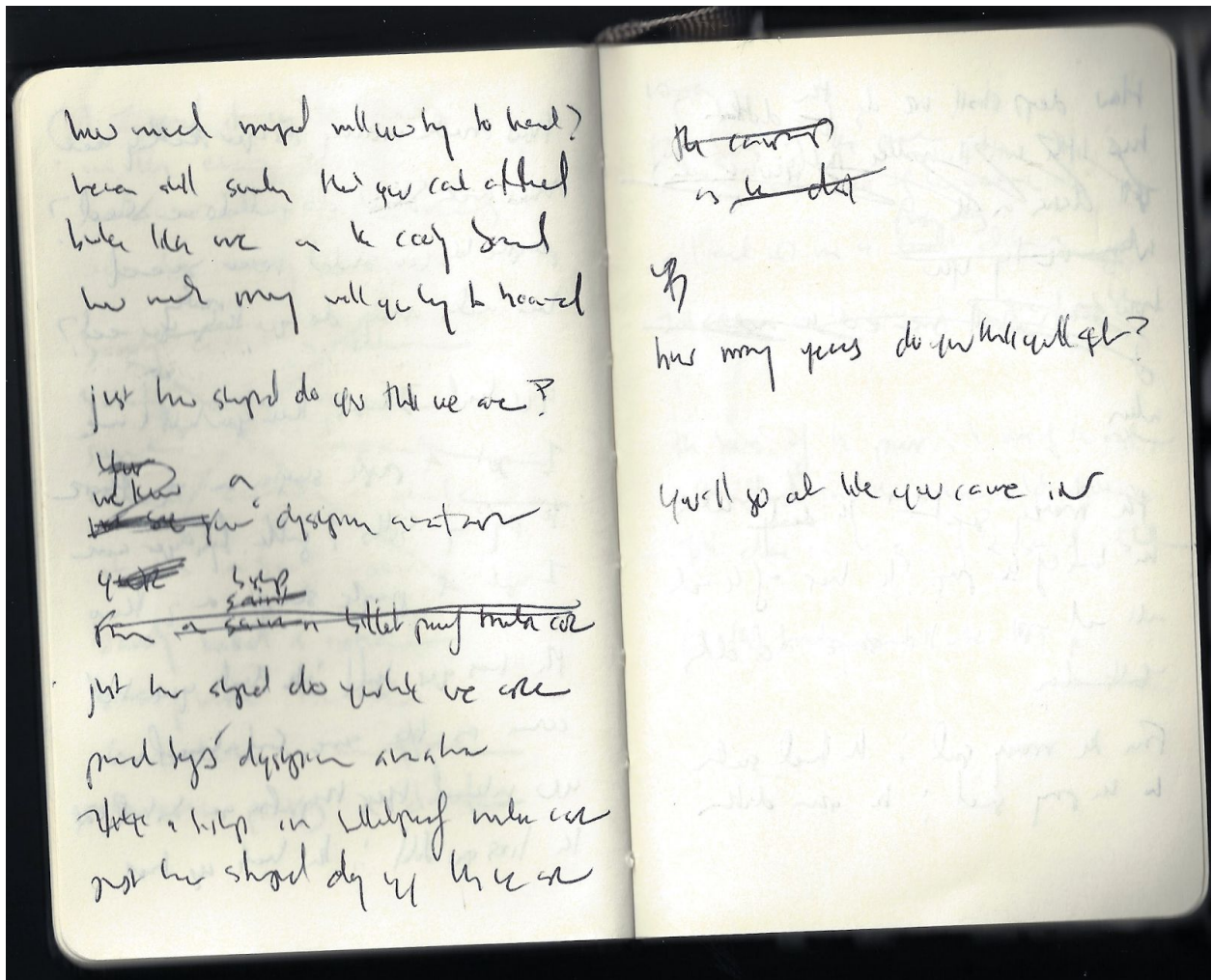
When The Dirt Is Down On Your Grave

The final line of the song is borrowed from Diane Wakoski's great poem "Dancing on the Grave of a Son of a Bitch." The phrase "dystopian avatar" is something from "The Skin of the System: On Germany's Socialist Modernity" by Benjamin Robinson. In spirit, the song owes its largest debt to Elvis Costello's "Tramp the Dirt Down":

"...when they finally put you in the ground, I'll stand on your grave and tramp the dirt down."

And for the "too-ra-loo" bit, I owe a debt of gratitude to Townes van Zandt's "Our Mother the Mountain."

From many parts, the whole.



early draft of "When the Dirt is Down on your Grave" written with my space pen in my Moleskine

when the dirt is down on your grave

how much money do you really need?
how much blood do you think we bleed?
forged in a fire of graft and greed
how much money do you really need?

the lies you've told and the luck you've had
comin' on like some galahad
you inherited your money from your bastard dad
the lies you've told and the luck you've had

how much money will you try to hoard?
heaven still something that you can't afford
broke like me on the cooling board
how much money will you try to hoard?

just how stupid do you think we are?
proud dystopian avatar
bishop in a bullet-proof motorcar
just how stupid do you think we are?

bones of the poor, bones of the rich
nobody knows which is which
we'll gather when the dirt's down on your ditch
to dance on the grave of a son of a bitch

Proverbs

The obscenely wealthy fiend for money like a junky does the needle. This is not metaphor. Think of how we think of junkies—we mourn the loss of the person they used to be before the corrupting influence of drugs. We can't believe they'd choose drugs over us. We're shocked at the lengths they'll go to, and the things they'll risk, just to get more drugs. We see them cocooning themselves in the echo chambers of other junkies. The rationalizations, the lies, the deceptions. They're never happy, never satisfied, they always need more, it's all they think about, it becomes their lives. We can't believe it, that their existences could revolve so wholly around one thing only. But that's all there is for them. Until the end. Only as they're dying do they look back and see the shadows they've cast, and the light they've lost.

Proverbs

The handwritten chord chart for "Proverbs" is written on a six-staff system. The chords are as follows:

- Staff 1: Am | C | D | F | F | G | Am 2X
- Staff 2: Am | C | D | F | Am | C | D | F
- Staff 3: Am | C | D | F | F | G
- Staff 4: Am | G | F | G | F | G | C | $\text{C}^{1/2}$ | Am
- Staff 5: F | G | Am | G | F | G
- Staff 6: F | G | F | G
- Staff 7: E with a right-pointing arrow
- Staff 8: (Empty)
- Staff 9: (Empty)
- Staff 10: (Empty)

early handwritten chord chart for "Proverbs"

proverbs

in the boardrooms and the banks, i seen 'em tie off
waitin' for the poor people to die off
i ain't no see-no-evil monkey
show me a rich man, son of a bitch, man
and i'll show you a junky

i'm just a poor man lookin' up at the ivory tower
i wish i had a hammer
oh, if i had a hammer
i would tear this whole building down

i see the empire chokin' on its final binges
i see the road to ruin lined with old syringes
i ain't no see-no-evil monkey
show me a rich man, son of a bitch, man
and i'll show you a junky

i'm just a poor man lookin' up at the ivory tower
i wish i had a hammer
oh, if i had a hammer
i would tear this whole building down

at the needle's eye, the bribe is refused
a golden coffin, and a scarlet bruise
i seen the dollar and the damage done
and every rich man is a setting sun

i read the news today about the war
and all the lies it was started for
i ain't no see-no-evil monkey
show me a rich man, son of a bitch, man
and i'll show you a junky

The Day The Rebels Took The Devil's Side

It's all too easy to bemoan modern apathy. To believe we cannot organize this country. But meanwhile, there IS a revolution afoot. It's happening. I heard the President give a speech on the radio, and the intensity of the cheers that followed every horrible thing he said was terrifying. This was not a staged media event with a crowd full of planted supporters. This was a massive rally of people voluntarily and euphorically embracing all the anger, all the stupidity, all the lies. Make no mistake, the revolution is live. But the rebels have taken the devil's side.

Rebels

The image shows a handwritten chord chart for the song "Rebels". It consists of several staves of music notation. The first staff is marked with a circled 'G' and contains the chords G, D, G, C, G. The second staff contains G, D, G. The third staff is marked with a circled 'CHO' and contains Am, D7. The fourth staff contains G, G/F#, Em, D, C, D. The fifth staff contains G, D, G, C, G. The sixth staff contains G, D, G. Below these are four more empty staves.

early handwritten chord chart for "The Day the Rebels Took the Devil's Side"

the day the rebels took the devil's side

i was driving in the rain, and listening to the radio
and i heard the soundbite from the rally
and the way he spoke, and the sound of the cheerin'
it was like it was still nineteen-forty

and a chill went up my spine, and a tear went down my cheek
and i felt the old fear down in my belly
and i know this land, is still our land
but death now stalks us on that ribbon highway

and the cheers rose up
like the roar of some great engine
like the crashing down of some terrible tide
at the setting of the sun
the revolution had begun
but the rebels took the devil's bloody side

and i heard the awful news, coming in from all directions
and i thought at first that surely they were lying
but the facts were the facts, they'd gone behind our backs
and sent the bloody missiles bloody flying

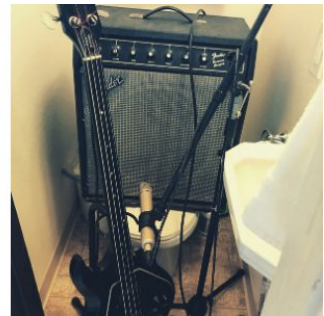
and they laughed and laughed, and they mocked us for protesting
with the smug smiles of the triumphant
and planes that fly, once more fell from the sky
upon our bloody heads in bloody judgement

and the cheers rose up
like the roar of some great engine
like the crashing down of some terrible tide
at the setting of the sun
the revolution had begun
but the rebels took the devil's bloody side

Recording “See No Evil”

Basic tracks were recorded at Zack Kirk Olsen’s Drum Studio in Soquel, CA. It’s where he keeps his gorgeous Craviotto kit, and it’s where his immense talent is most at home. So that’s where I went. It was a simple setup—four mics. Kick, snare, and two overheads. We recorded basic tracks with just me on electric guitar. Very few takes were required. The drum track for “Proverbs” is one take only—the first one.

I tracked everything else back in my own studio. These songs differ in some key ways from previous Preacher Boy recordings; for one thing, they’re much “strummier” rhythmically. I recorded the strummed acoustics on top of the drums before anything else. I used my Martin D-16 for both tracks. After that, the bass. The Ripper. What a monster. It was “custom” de-fretted by a jazz bassist here in town years before the instrument came to me. I ran it through a decades-old Fender Bassman. I used that same amp for the electric guitars. One track was my Harmony H78 with the Bigsby. The other was my cream Tele with the gold hardware and the mother-of-pearl trim. There’s a third electrified guitar on 4 of the 5 songs. It’s an acoustic Yamaha 12-string, with a pickup, run through the tremolo patch of an ancient old Rev 7, into the Bassman. Crazy sound. And that’s it. That’s the music. No synths, no samples, no loops. Just drums, bass, and guitar.



Dedication

To my missus, who feels the world more deeply than anyone I know. To my father, who continues to teach me the truth about class and inequality. To my mother, who shows me by her example the courage individual change requires. To my daughter, into whose hands I hope to help gently place the world. To the musicians whose songs have given me strength and courage—Billy Bragg, Phil Ochs, Dave Van Ronk, Pete Seeger—and whose singing of union songs lifts my spirits. To Thomas Piketty, author of “Capital in the 21st Century,” who has given us the alpha and omega knowledge we need to move forward.

To everyone who votes against evil in the next election.

"In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act."

– George Orwell

"When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross."

– Sinclair Lewis

"The genius of racism and its succubus twin fascism—that genius is that any political structure can host that virus and virtually any country can become a suitable home. Fascism only talks ideology but it really is just marketing, marketing for power. It's recognizable by its need to purge, the strategies it uses to purge and its terror of truly democratic goals. It changes citizens into taxpayers so individuals become rife with anger at the notion of the public good. It changes citizens into consumers so the measure of our value as humans is not our humanity, nor our compassion, nor our generosity, none of the virtues that human beings aspire to claim. None of that but what we own. And in so doing produces the perfect capitalist. The one who is willing to kill a human being for a product—a sneaker, a jacket, a car, a company. That is the ideal situation for a consumer, lay capitalist society. You don't have to advertise any more. It changes parenting into panicking so that we vote against the education, against the healthcare, against the safety from weapons, against the interest of our own children. It may wear a new dress, it may buy a new pair of boots, but fascism is not new."

– Toni Morrison

"An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics."

– Plutarch

"Which side are you on?"

– Florence Reece

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All songs written by Christopher "Preacher Boy" Watkins
(p) PreachSongsMusic/Kobalt Music/BMI

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Preacher Boy: acoustic & electric guitars, electric bass, vocals
Zack Kirk Olsen: drums

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