

YOUR DEEPEST CONVERSATION
original songs spanning four decades
by elwood donnelly
Released 2026

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Your Deepest Conversation

Words and Music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI © 2026

Elwood Donnelly: vocals, guitar

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, banjo

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, cello

Aubrey was away at a festival in the northwest, and I was home having lunch at the breakfast nook when a blackbird kept flying into the storm door window. By the time I got to it's rescue, it had flown away. I knew then that the day would no longer proceed as planned and that I'd need to write this song.

I know I should trust my intuition
Change can sometimes shape things for the best
and there may be some bright spots in my future
or chances for reflection, faith and rest

There's a bird flying at my window
Searching for a resting place
And I won't forget
How we first met
When you looked at me - that way

Let them go
Let them go

And change can be gradual or sudden
leaving something useful in its wake
listen to your deepest conversation
learning to rely on what you make

There's a bird flying at my window
I know it's bound to shape my day
And I won't forget
How we first met
When you looked at me - that way

Let them go
Let them go

Let them go, all the circles you are tracing
Let them go, all the hopelessness and loss
Make a point - to get your own conclusions
Across

There's a bird flying at my window
But Im sure it doesn't mean to stay
And I won't forget
How we first met
When you looked at me - that way

There's a bird
There's a bird

The Long Run

Words and Music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI © 2026

Elwood Donnelly: vocals, guitar

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, mandolin

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, cello, violin

**My most recent song is about getting caught off guard by a loved one
and the wisdom of the experience.**

There's a ship sailing by and it catches my eye
I hope it will come back tomorrow
With purpose and aim, it's making a claim
On the billowing waves in the harbor

I sit here and look at a page in my book
A memory I wrote down this morning
There's a catch in my throat from the entry I wrote
Of the moment she left without warning

Chorus:

Now the ship's out of sight and I wish with my might
That I put up a fight for my dear one
But she's out of my view, and it's all I can do
To write down these words for the long run

Now the tide's rolling out and there's not much about
Except for the glistening seaweed
The ship's on the go with nothing in tow
Heading due west plowing full speed

I am closing my book and stealing a look
Hoping my ship is returning
And maybe she will, so I'll wait here until
Awakened to what I am learning

Halfway Ground

Words and Music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI © 2026

Elwood Donnelly: vocals, harmonica

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, piano

Elvis Donnelly: bass

Since we released *The Halfway Ground* in 2007, I'd been wanting to actually write a song with that title, and to include blues and old-time gospel influences.

Well, we had us a preacher and her name was Sue
She'd only been a-preachin' for a month or two
But when she spoke, she'd shake and shout
And the sins from the sinners came pouring out

All you, sinners and saints
Jump on the wagon with no complaints
That's right, children, we're going home
No more to wander, no more to roam

I say, come on people with your ups and downs
I sure wanna meet you on the halfway ground
- There's no need to stumble and fall
Join the disciples; we'll march around the wall

Then we got us a preacher by the name of Tim
Spoke three hours 'bout the wage of sin
And when he's done, we all fell down
and prayed to the heavens for a starry crown

All you, sinners and saints
Jump on the wagon with no complaints
That's right, children, we're going home
No more to wander, no more to roam

I say, come on people with your ups and downs
I don't wanna miss you on the halfway ground
- There's no need to stumble and fall
Join the disciples; we'll march around the wall

Now, I've never been to heaven, but I'll tell you what
When I go, I'll sway and strut
So take my hand and take theirs too
Cause we'll all go together
Me and you

All you, sinners and saints
Jump on the wagon with no complaints
That's right, children, we're going home
No more to wander, no more to roam

I say, come on people with your ups and downs
I can't wait to meet you on the halfway ground
- There's no need to stumble and fall
Join the disciples; we'll march around the wall

The Coxswain

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI © 2019

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, mountain dulcimer

Elwood Donnelly: vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, violin

Erin Lobb Mason: bass

Elwood wrote this song after joining a rowing team in Warren, RI.

The rowers row backward and must rely on the coxswain, who faces forward, shouting commands.

It's metaphorical, reminding us to trust and let go sometimes.

I am a rolling stone, I am a lock and chain
I am the boat you row that brings you home again
I am a decent sort, the kind you might forget
And though you know your way, I am your safety net

It's time you learned to wake up the ghost in you
We are the ones who believe the most in you
Rally round, muster up and send for relief

There is a time to live, there is a time to die
There is a time to dance, and a time to cry
I always try and find a little grain of peace
And let my feelings show and let my love increase

There'll come a day when we'll forgive ourselves
That ghost we liberate will outlive ourselves
Float away, let the coxswain take over for a while

I am a rolling stone, I am a lock and chain
I am the boat you row that brings you home again
I am a decent sort, the kind you might forget
And though you know your way, I am your safety net

The Rest Of Our Lives

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI © 2022

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, banjo

Elwood Donnelly: vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, violin, piano

Erin Lobb Mason: bass

This song started as a question Elwood asked Aubrey's mother during her final weeks. Dedicated to Nina Dodd, it's meant to launch conversations about wishes for what remains of our lives.

What will you do with the rest of your life?
I asked her mother and I asked my wife
The first one smiled and the second one said,
"Let's talk about this when we're in bed."

All these days - we've had time to blink
Months gone by - we've made time to think
What to do with the rest of our lives?

My mother-in-law just wants to write
Read some books and sleep at night
And Aubrey'd like to have some rest
Regard the things for which she's blessed

Like grow some flowers. - plant some more next year
Sing some songs - hold her husband near
What we'll do with the rest of our lives.

Bridge:
Other ones have tried to lead the way
Only you have words that can convey my view
now. - I'll turn that love on you
everyday, every way I can
That's what I'll do with the rest of my life.

BREAK, THEN REPEAT Bridge, and...

What we'll do with the rest of our lives.
What to do with the rest of our lives

Each Other's Story

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©2010

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, mountain dulcimer, tin whistle

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, violin

John Cerrigione: bass

Kevin Doyle: djembe

Elwood wrote this song in 2009, thinking back on how well he understood his kids' lives while they were young and growing, compared to how little he knows about their daily lives now that they're adults. Of course, he deludes himself if he really thinks they let him in on all what they were up to, even back then.

I'd like to get to know you better
Right now it's speculation and wishful thinking
We assume so much
Until it's pretending we know each other's story

I've been - knowing
You've been - growing
1 -Today we're gonna say it all

What was it like when you were seven
Why in the world don't we banter informal
the boy that I knew
I don't like pretending we know each other's story

I've been - knowing
You've been - growing
2 -Today we're gonna change it all

It's many times I wonder
Is it gradual absorption or deliberate learning
As simple as that
When it grabs my attention, I know each other's story

I've been - knowing
You've been - growing
3- Do we even need to speak at all

I only want to know you better...
I've been - knowing
You've been - growing

1 -Today we're gonna say it all
2 -Today we're gonna change it all
3- Do we even need to speak at all

Parting Words

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©2010

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, tin whistle, mandolin

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, piano

John Cerrigione: bass

Alex Krepkikh: harmonica

Elwood wrote this song in 2008, while he was coming to realize that although he's not responsible for the mental health of others, he is also not impervious to the hurt of accusations and mistreatment.

It's the saddest thing; this I know
To leave me standing here
Your parting words will bring me woe
If I live a hundred years

OH...OH....OH.....OH

There's a wicked wind that follows you
And shake it though you try
You're ill-equipped and can't undo
The damage you deny

OH...OH....OH.....OH

And when my time on Earth is through
I'll still be by your side
This goodbye wish I'll send to you
That kindness be your guide

Still I'll always wonder what became of you

Repeat first verse

Forgiveness

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©1996

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, guitar

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, violin

John Cerrigione: bass

Kevin Doyle: chimes, djembe

Rick McKinney: mandolin

Lisa Schmitz: vocals

This song is about how Elwood's mother seemed trapped in a relationship with his father, always attempting to circumvent his anger and mood. Their relationship helped teach Elwood to be forgiving.

He never told her he loved her—Leastwise while I was around
Well he seldom spoke, but his message was clear. And besides he could hardly be found
And he held the privilege of power, While she circumvented his will
Each day a challenge, and a chance to gain ground. Never quite conquering still

There's a hole in his heart, where love should have been
And I don't think it'll ever be filled
There's a hole in his heart, where love could have been, instilled

Look all around you, your destiny taunts you
You never had even the slightest of chances
Had you foreseen what would be your lean portion
Could you have even improved circumstances
It's mostly behind you now
see the result
You're standing within while he wanders without.

And he never asked for forgiveness... Though I'm sure he wishes he did
Cause there's a hole in his heart Where love should have been
When I was his loyal young kid

Oh, What Do We Know?

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©2001

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, guitar, tin whistle

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

John Cerrigione: bass

Heidi Cerrigione: autoharp

**This one was written as a testimony to love and why we might pursue it rather than avoid it,
even when heartache is inevitable.**

I'm told that we'll meet them on the other shore

Oh, what do we know?

Is waiting until then worth waiting for?

Oh, what do we know?

I disregarded good advice and fell in love

Oh, what do we know?

When confidence and friendship would've been enough

Oh, what do we know?

I wonder if it's possible to love too great

Oh, what do we know?

I know I'd rather love this way than love too late

Oh, what do we know?

It's seldom smart to get attached

(It's not supposed to end like that)

But if you do, then you'll discover what it means

To be...one's lover

Pity Undue

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©1996

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, tin whistle

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar, harmonica

Cathy Clasper-Torch: violin

Alex Krepkikh: tambourine

Cari Norris: vocals

Lisa Schmitz: guitar

This song of hope is for all of us who have, at a time, felt downtrodden and defeated.

There's hope in the gutter,
I certainly know
I've been there myself,
Downtrodden and low
We try to recover
But we land on our backs
And the rest of the family
Has slipped through the cracks

Well, somebody told me
That you're working for pay
But your health is declining
So you'll quit any day
They said you'd be leaving
Before you get old
And your bills total more
Than the house that you sold

Chorus:
Oh, it's a pity undue,
The hardship that's fallen
On people like you
And oh, it's a pity to see
What little's accomplished
By people like me

Well, people don't worry
There's more to this life
Than struggling for honor
As mother and wife
You've nothing to prove
That you've not proven yet
The kettle is boiling; the table is set

Well, someday we'll show them,
If we all don't die first
That the world they're creating
Gets progressively worse
When they choose to exclude some
And keep others in check
Their mindless injustice
Will fall on their necks...Chorus

Problem With Words

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©1993

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, guitar

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: violin

John Cerrigione: bass

Everett Brown: piano accordion

This is the only purposeful duet Elwood has ever written, where the two vocals counter each other from both the physical and spiritual domains. It is a song of longing and hope for rejoining dearly loved ones in the hereafter while attaining peaceful acceptance here on earth until that day.

I'm going to sing you this song
Even though I don't know all the words
That never stopped me before
Even so, I don't know all the words

You won't be laughing when it is done
And you won't be joking or poking at fun
But I'm going to sing you this song
Until my sorrow is gone
Until my sorrow is gone

I'm going to write you some prose
Even though you won't know that I do
That never stopped me before
Even so, you won't know that I do

You won't consider the words that I write
And you won't be tactful or act so polite
But I'm going to write you some prose
Until my pining is through
Until my pining is through

Sing me a song
I don't care if you know all the words
Read me your prose
I'm aware of your problem with words

You were the reason that living was fun
And you gave me hope when I knew there was none
So I'll always be close at hand
Until your sorrow is gone
Until your pining is through

I'm going to sing you this song
(Sing me a song)
Even though I don't know all the words
(I don't care if you know all the words)
That never stopped me before
(Read me your prose)
Even so, I don't know all the words
(I'm aware of your problem with words)

You won't be laughing when it is done
(You were the reason that living was fun)
And you won't be joking or poking at fun
(And you gave me hope when I knew there was none)
But I'm going to sing you this song
(So I'll always be close at hand)
Until my sorrow is gone
(Until your sorrow is gone)
Until my pining is through
(Until your pining is through)

Beginning With You

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©1993

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, tin whistle

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, piano

John Cerrigione: bass

This song was written as a reminder that, change, be it personal or social, begins with ourselves.

Peace will come later, at best
Find yourself comfort, and rest for awhile
As you empty your pockets again with a smile
With hope that you'll manage to win the world over
Believing in miracles time and again

And you sit back and hope that the world will keep changing
But it never changes, just people do

Follow your vision, my friend
Look to the future and then realize
As you tug on your heartstrings and tears fill your eyes
Compassion will carry us over the hard times
And miracles find us while we're asleep

And we'll wake up together with hope in our pockets
And wonder what took us so long to believe

Peace will come later, at best
Find yourself comfort, and rest for awhile
As you empty your pockets again with a smile
With hope that you'll manage to win the world over
Believing in miracles time and again

And we'll wake up together with hope in our pockets
And wonder what took us so long to believe
And you sit back and hope that the world will keep changing
But it never changes, just people do
Beginning with you

We Go Together

Words and music by Elwood Donnelly, BMI ©2010

Aubrey Atwater: vocals, banjo

Elwood Donnelly: lead vocals, guitar

Cathy Clasper-Torch: vocals, violin, piano

John Cerrigione: bass

Kevin Doyle: djembe, tambourine

Elwood wrote this song after a funny conversation with Aubrey one evening when she turned to him and said, "If you ever leave me, I'm going with you."

Chorus:

Wherever you go; that's where I go
Whenever we go; we go together
Wherever you are; that's where I am
Wherever we are; we are together

There are many years and roads behind me
Ask me and I'll tell what I recall
But only when we met did I find me
And sure as I can breathe, you're the best of all

Do you remember what you told me, darling
That if I ever left you- you'd want to come along
Well, like the chick-a-dees and the starlings
We'll share sunflower seeds and sing each other's songs...Chorus

I just knew that we would one day marry
You've been generous and thoughtful through the years
Your love for me is what I carry
To somehow help me manage to drive away my cares

Break - Chorus

If there was ever any doubt of our devotion
It vanished like the waning of the moon
If we continue in this state of motion
What we don't have yet will surely turn up soon.

Do you remember what you told me, darling
That if I ever left you- you'd want to come along
Well, like the chick-a-dees and the starlings
We'll share sunflower seeds and sing each other's songs...Chorus

Tag: Wherever we are; we-are together