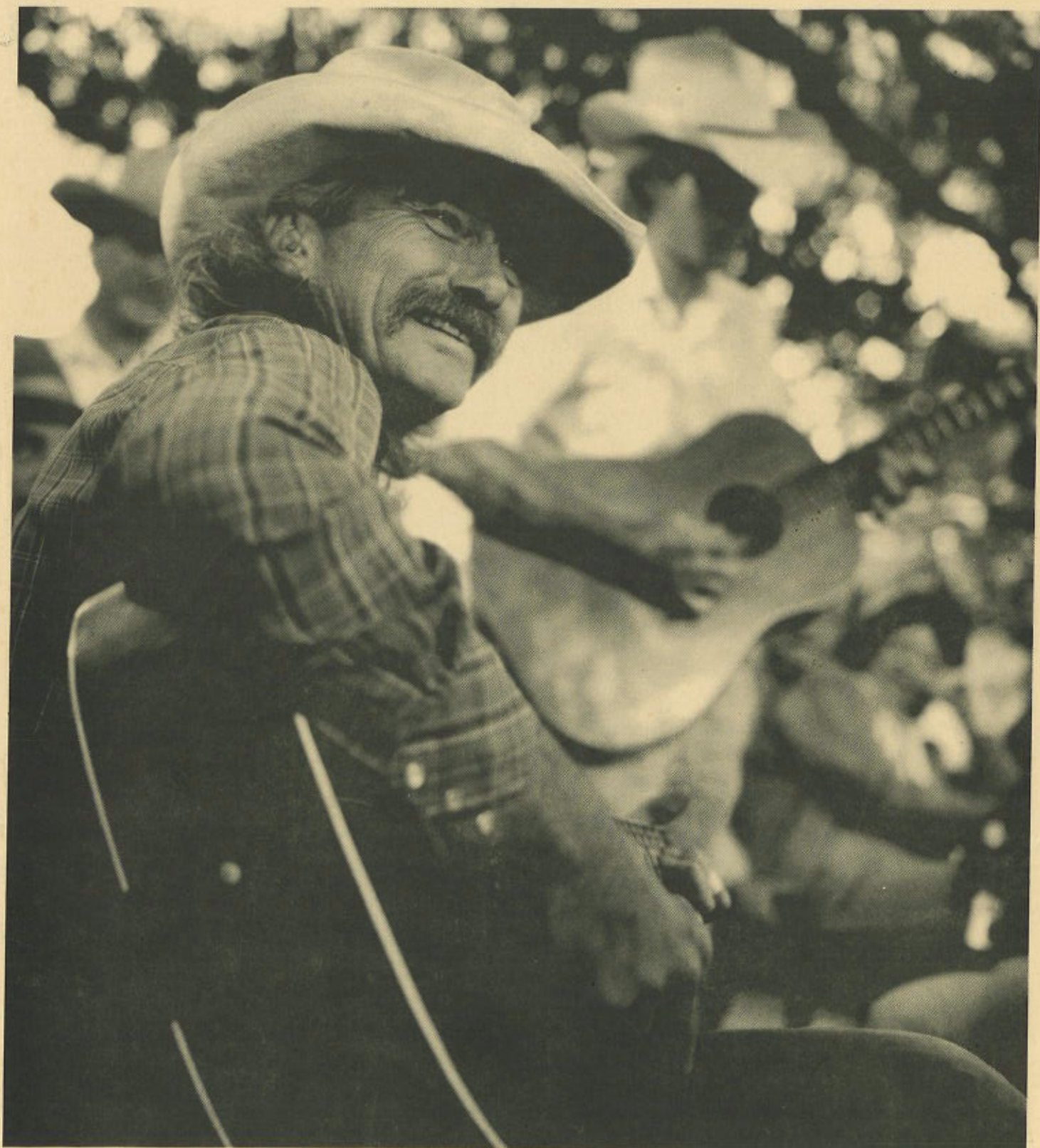


LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Frank Hill



LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Frank Hill

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Frank Hill

The way I was brought up, "cowboy" has at least as much to do with how you go about it as with what gets accomplished. That is, if you don't go about it right in the first place, it probably won't be of much use. Then somebody else will have to finish up, if not start all over. Kind of an over-simplified approach, I suppose. But then, how many things can you name in these times of big government, big corporations, and big portfolios that are generally considered to have been correctly accomplished on first attempt?

Dwight Eisenhower promised that the Interstate Highway System would provide for our transportation needs. But he never said a mumblin' word about so much of rural America being put into isolation to the point where so many of the farms and towns would just dry up and blow away! How long has it been since a major party presidential candidate really gave a tinker's darn about the farm vote? The way I see it, there is precious little difference between, on the one hand, what the U. S. Cavalry and the Railroads did to the open range and, on the other hand, what bankers, oil and industry have done to the water and air.

And what do you think - them boys back in Washington, D.C. didn't know what they were doing? Shoot the buffalo. Cut it up in criss-crossed pieces with railroads and barb wire. Make sure there's plenty o' war so that you don't get too used to things goin' your own way! To the military and bureaucrats, y'know, behavioral control is everything. So what if it don't work right or costs more than they said it would in the first place? Just raise taxes. Then, if there's any serious resistance, just get us involved in yet another foreign conflict. Call up "the boys" and ship 'em out. Give the folks at home something else to think about for awhile.

Meanwhile, lonesome old cowboys put their last \$25 in their pick-up trucks and drive hundreds of miles to recite and grin. So what if Uncle Sugar still ain't got it figured out? We know wrong from right and we're gonna do it our way, anyhow.

Frank Hill
Songwriter - Poet - Storyteller
Entertainer

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Frank Hill

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LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Granddaddy Trilogy

Frank Hill

Chicken Trimmings

First time I ever went fishin' "all by myself" was while vis'tin' my Grandparents during the summer I was seven. Almost every day, Grandad took me to the park on the edge of town where he and old Mr. Long took care of the lake and fish hatchery. They let me sell bait, and help out when minnows were delivered or when they seined fingerlings to stock other lakes. Between chores, there were tall tales and domino games at the Tackle Shop, and Grandad would take me fishing.

One Friday evening at supper, he and Grandmother were discussin' Saturday chores. Grandad was going to the ranch to help work cattle, and she was going to dress chickens all day, out by the watering trough. While they were being concerned about which was best for me, suddenly, and with a question in the tone of my voice, I said, "I can go fishing?" Grandmother wasn't so sure, but I could see the gleam in Grandad's eye.

Early that morning, I set out with cane pole, bait bucket, and a fried chicken lunch packed in Grandad's tackle box. (I still have that old tackle box). There were two rules: check-in at the Tackle Shop so Mr. Long could keep an eye on me; and be home by dark. Mr. Long was real glad to see me. He even remarked, "Fish bite the best, Frankie, when you sell the bait," and let me have twenty-four minnows for the price of a dozen.

The lake had a narrow spring-fed neck upstream and a wide earthen dam downstream. Near the middle was a wooden foot bridge to the picnic area on the far side. Down by the dam there was a rocky area where Grandad and I had often fished. They usually bit pretty good there.

Starting out on the bridge, I had a little luck catching hand-sized blue gill and bream. But, as the morning warmed up, the fishing slowed down. So, I tied my stringer in one of the fingerling tanks and went back to the Tackle Shop for lunch and a game of dominoes. After the hottest part the day, I climbed down the rocks by the dam. This time, my luck was better: bass up past my wrist and a channel cat almost all the way up to my elbow. Before I knew it, though, Mr. Long came by to remind me that the sun was goin' down. So, it was already a little after dark when I got home. Knowing I was late, I quickly ran some water and un-strung my catch into the trough out by the chicken yard gate.

Lucky for me, Grandad was also just getting home and Grandmother had barely finished dressing her chickens. So nothing was said until we sat down to supper. When I told the story and what I did with the fish, Grandmother remarked, "Oh my stars!" There had not been time to clean the trough - it was still full of "chicken trimmings". But Grandad said there would be plenty of time to clean both fish and the trough, early next morning before church.

That Sunday, when Grandad and I went out back, there was not a single piece of those chicken trimmings left in the trough. The fish had eaten them all up. Those blue gill and bream had grown up past my wrist. The bass were almost up to my elbow. And that old channel cat was almost as long as my whole arm!

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Granddaddy Trilogy

Frank Hill

You Take A Nickel

My Granddaddy taught me all about life,
How to handle the trouble 'n' strife,
Said, "You can pretty much tell 'bout what a man knows
"By the way he handles his dominoes."

Taught me to shuffle them bones face-down,
So you don't know what you're drawin' this round;
'N' all your hustle don't make a damn,
Y' gotta win or lose by the play of your hand.

You Take A Nickel, I'll take a dime;
My down's comin' up next time.
You play the spinner, I'll be the winner;
In this game of dominoes.

Now, your double-five gets you ten to begin,
But my blank-five makes it even again.
Double-blank makes you look like a winner,
But my five-four's startin' to cut off the spinner.

Got the blank-six, five-six in my hand
'N' you gotta try an' score if you can.
But its gonna be increasingly hard,
'Cause you gotta keep goin' to that old bone yard.

You Take A Nickel, I'll take a dime;
My down's comin' up next time.
You play the spinner, I'll be the winner;
In this game of dominoes.

You were thirty-five ahead when I dominoed,
But my Granddaddy taught me somethin' you never know'd:
Said, "Don't try to be the fastest gun in the West.
"Jus' hang-in 'n' out-last 'em 'n' you'll be the best ... Son!"

When I laid that last bone down,
Why, the spots in your hand weighed forty pounds:
Double-six, double-four, six-four 'n' ten more.
Count 'em all up 'n' write down my score.

You Take A Nickel, I'll take a dime;
My down's comin' up next time.
You play the spinner, I'll be the winner;
In this game of dominoes.

*(Published as "The Domino Song" and recorded by Gary P. Nunn And The Sons Of The Bunkhouse Band on his
"For Old Times Sake" album, AO Communications, BMI).*

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Granddaddy Trilogy

Frank Hill

Legacy

My Granddaddy was a cowboy,
He rode that western range.
Drove cattle north on the Chisholm Trail
'Til the comin' of the trains
Fenced-in the plains and the prairies
'N' took the land away from men.
Now, there's freeways, towns and cities -
Ev'rywhere he's been.

He was born in Hanibal, Missouri
In 1849.
Grew up on the Miss'ssippi River
In those compromisin' times.
Fought for the South in the Civil War
In the years o' his early teens,
Then blew that steamboat whistle
Right on down to New Orleans.

I heard tales o' nights in jail;
He was a rounder in those days.
'N' it's been said that a man is dead
'Cause of his rough 'n' rowdy ways.
So he lit out west for Texas
T' try and find hisself that claim.
But he never would-a made it if he hadn't got a stake
From Frank and Jesse James.

Hooked-up with them longhorn ranchers,
Punchin' cattle for his keep.
Bustin' ponies 'n' breakin' phonies,
Never losin' a wink o' sleep.
Rode from Texas clear to ol' Cheyenne;
'Least, that's how the story goes.
Said, "Since Custer fell, ain't nothin' for a man
""Cept t' plow them furrowed rows."

'N' he was already old when I come along
In the deep years of Depression.
But the songs that he sang and the stories he told
Etched lifelines of impression.
Showed me that rifle that he won in Dodge
'N' made me a rubber gun.
We'd go vis'tin' some ol' Indian lodge,
'N' I played with Lone Wolf's grandson.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Granddaddy Trilogy

Frank Hill

Legacy

We'd ride all day an' camp all night;
Catch a big catfish for breakfast.
He'd tell me 'bout them Cajun Queens down in New Orleans
Used t' get 'im arrested.
Played dominoes and picked guitar, pitched horse
Shoes 'n' nearly always won.
But sometimes the look in his eye asked, "Why,
"Is ev'ryone on the run?"

'Course, he's been gone a long time now,
Since the summer I was 'leven.
One day it jus' come his time, almost 99,
In 1947.
'N' through the years as I recollect
All the mem'ries and the dreams,
I gotta follow that trail where a man must fail
With his highfalutin' schemes.

My Granddaddy was a cowboy.
I always thought he'd win.
Now there's freeways, towns and cities -
Everywhere he's been.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Hill Country Quartette

Frank Hill

In springtime and in fall, I like to take a drive through the Texas Hill Country. There's many a backroad route: Texas State Highway 29 from Burnet to Mason, The Willow City Loop; and U.S. 83 from Junction to Uvalde; just to name a few.

Two of my favorites include one that is short and simply gorgeous; and another that takes a little explanation. The short one is Blanco County Road 410 south from U. S. 290 (just east of U.S. 281) to Texas State Highway 165 which heads on into Blanco. This gravel road is not for expensive luxury sedans or your self-contained RVs. But, oh my! It is beautiful.

The other favorite starts in Blanco. Go west on Ranch Road 1623 five miles, then turn left on Ranch Road 1888 following the Blanco River up past its headwaters and on to Ranch Road 1376. Then drive south through Sisterdale and on to Boerne. If you ever find a road with more serenity, please let me know.

Goin' To Sisterdale

Catfish swimmin' on the Guadalupe, I'm
Fishin' 'round the bend.
If I don't catch him, you can bet your boots,
I'm goin' fishin' again.

Ol' tom turkey jus' standin' in the field
Contemplatin' the weather.
If he don't watch out, my new straw hat'll get a
Brand new turkey tail feather.

Goin' on down to the Hill Country,
Got the world by the tail.
Goin' on home to see my babe, I'm
Goin' To Sisterdale.

Old cowpoke, sore and broke,
He ain't got no money.
Mosey on down to the Sisterdale Store, try t'
Find hisself a honey.

Eat my breakfast in Comfort Town, drink my
Whiskey in Kendalia.
Goin' down the road maybe 90 miles an hour, 'n' there
Ain't nobody to jail ya!

Goin' on down to the Hill Country,
Got the world by the tail.
Goin' on home to see my babe, I'm
Goin' To Sisterdale.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES
Hill Country Quartette
Frank Hill

Texas Star

You can paint a picture
You can snap a photograph
You can chisel it in stone
You can mold a plaster cast.
But, you can't capture the color,
You can not draw the line,
You can't reproduce the beauty
Of a Texas springtime.

From the southern green valley,
Where the Rio Grande flows,
To the northern panhandle
'Neath them Colorado snows;
From the eastern Big Thicket,
Where the Dog Wood blooms,
To the western diamond desserts
Where they still got lots of room.

You can celebrate your birthday
As you age another year.
Throw a big ol' party, yeah
An' drink that Lone Star beer.
Remember the Alamo
And the winnin' of the west;
But the Texas Hill Country,
That's the part I love the best.

You can count up all the round notes:
Eighth, quarter, half, or a whole -
And rest at ev'ry roadside park
From here to Mexico.
Save up all your money, boys,
And buy some old guitar;
But you gotta have a fiddle
To dance that Texas Star.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Hill Country Quartette

Frank Hill

Sweet 'N' Mellow

These lines are dedicated to the ever-lovin' spirit of life embodied in the soul of Mr. Street Life Brown - and his Granddaddy's ranch, hard by Turkey Creek, where I was first introduced to the Texas Hill Country.

Laid back 'n' feelin' mellow, blue sky up above.
High 'n' wide o'er the meadow with the one I love.
Got no plans, no responsibility;
Goin' it alone, workin' to keep it free.

Gettin' back to the country, livin' slow;
Sweet 'N' Mellow feelin' down in my soul.

Red sunsets, glowin' yellow, colors of my dreams;
Down beside the weeping willow, shadows all in greens.
Warm and real are the good times we have found.
Takin' it easy, both feet on the ground.

Gettin' back to the country, livin' slow;
Sweet 'N' Mellow feelin' down in my soul.

Golden days 'n' country livin' keep me goin' strong.
No black clouds, no evil sinnin'; I know I can't go wrong.
Down to Earth, all my ramblin' days are o'er;
It ain't perfect. But, y'know its peaceful, Lord.

Gettin' back to the country, livin' slow;
Sweet 'N' Mellow feelin' down in my soul.

One-eyed jacks 'n' wild red ladies; draw a pair, then trips.
Pass that bottle of Old Hornitos, its a game of tag, you're it!
Indian mounds, broken arrow heads;
Turkey Valley put all my fears to bed.

Gettin' back to the country, livin' slow;
Sweet 'N' Mellow feelin' down in my soul.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Hill Country Quartette

Frank Hill

Many people know about Gary P. Nunn and his song, "London Homesick Blues" - Goin' Home With The Armadillo. How many of you remember back before about 1975 - before the armadillo became any kind of a symbol for Texas and what it means to be a part of this great state? Just think about all those commercials; all that publicity; all the jewelry, trinkets and souvenirs sold everywhere from department stores to ice houses. Somebody owes Gary. Maybe this helps. Yeah, and he keeps comin' to Luckenbach every year, which is a whole lot more than Waylon and Willie.

Luckenbach Goodtime Saturday Night

It's fifteen years since Hondo died and we laid his soul to rest.
That song Waylon and Willie sang, we turn down that request.
The Good Lord knows how the Sheriff cried; now, she's back tendin' bar.
And through it all we kept our pride, dancin' beneath the stars.

Goin' to Luckenbach Saturday night and dance with Gary P.
Sing them "London Homesick Blues," they're as blue as me.
Two-step my lady all around that hundred year old hall.
Luckenbach Goodtime Saturday Night, 'n' I'm bouncin' off the wall!

Pull-in early in the afternoon, so I can get my fill.
If Ken won't play no dominoes, Armin Engle will.
Just a friendly game, no championship like they have in Hallettsville.
Drink a few beers and sing a few songs, 'n' brother, that's a thrill.

City life in San Antone sure can be a drag;
'N' them lawyers over t' Austin ain't got much room to brag.
Some peace of mind while I unwind on those Farm-To-Market roads.
Hey! This is it. No micro-chip! The best I've ever know'd.

These fifteen years since Hondo died and we laid his soul to rest.
That song Waylon and Willie tried, we deny that request.
Got a Lady Sheriff tendin' bar - Number One in all the west.
Circles of love and fam'ly pride 'n' cowboy ways are best.

Goin' to Luckenbach Saturday night and dance with Gary P.
Sing them "London Homesick Blues," they're as blue as me.
Two-step my lady all around that hundred year old hall.
Luckenbach Goodtime Saturday Night, 'n' I'm bouncin' off the wall!

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Austin Trilogy

Frank Hill

There probably isn't too much interest left in Austin for cowboys. The yuppies, lawyers and frat brats done took over. Of course, the homeless situation in Quitaque or Goldthwaite isn't as severe. None too many poets left, neither.

The Dead Armadillo Preservation Society Of Texas

I had occasion the other day to ask an ol' boy if he was a member of "The Dead Armadillo Preservation Society Of Texas?" He said, "Frank, am I a member of what?" I said, "Are you a member of "The Dead Armadillo Preservation Society Of Texas?" He said, "Frank, is that some kind o' 'vironmental organization?" I said, "Oh no! You know what I'm talkin' about. You played upon that stage!" An' he said, "No, Frank, I'm not sure I understand at all."

Well, it was one of those cold and cloudy misty moisty nights in Austin. I was on my way back to San Antone when, not being able to help myself even a little bit, I drug the drag, crossed the South First Street Bridge, and took that hard left turn onto Barton Springs Road. O'course, they had already tore it down. Wasn't nothin' left but a big ol' hole in the ground.

Later, as I headed on down I-35, I got to thinkin': there must be someway, somehow, some little thing we can do to try and get even. Oh, I know. I've read all the posters; I know ev'ry slogan. But, if we handle it just right, why, we'd be the only ones who know.

So. You too can be a member of "The Dead Armadillo Preservation Society of Texas." There aren't any dues. But we do ask that you spend the first six months on what we call the "Scoop And Plastic Bag Crews." Y'see, just in your ordinary everyday travels around the highways and byways, the backroads and Farm To Markets, it's...well...it's not gonna be every one o' them little critters you come across what's in good enough shape to suit the purpose. But, ever once in a while you will run across one - either just so far off the shoulder, or just that much onto the black top, prob'ly turned up on it's back with its paws stuck up in the air just to let you know it ain't been crushed. So, you hauls down your truck, get out your plastic bag, scoop it up, wrap it tight and rush home 'n' stick it in the freezer 'til it's good 'n' solid.

Then, in a completely different type of situation, one with it's own timing- y' can't rush it, y' can't rush it...let's say you're goin' to...well, let's say you're goin' ... Houston. Yeah, let's say you're goin' to Houston. So. It takes thirty minutes to get from where you live to the airport. Forty minutes on the airplane. And a hour and a half to get from the Houston airport to where you're gonna stay that night. So, y' see, y' ain't lost nothin'.

Then, you stay wherever you're gonna stay that night. And the next day...don't rush it...this one's tough, Jack...the next day, y' calls up the local Ramada Inn, make yourself a reservation, check in and sneak that little sucker into the air conditionin' system.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Austin Trilogy

Frank Hill

Ain't No Rock 'N' Roll

(Jez love dem ol')

Greezy and Asleep are the kinds o' wheels that keep on
Truckin' down the back roads of my mind.
Commander's lost in space, Planet Earth is losin' the race,
Soon there won't be room for our kind.

Aint' No Rock 'N' Roll at the Armadillo
World Headquarters of Texas music sound.
Hardly nothin' left but sweet dreams of Jerry Jeff
And ghosts of our Lost Gonzos haunting ground.

You could not write them all on the bricks of City Hall -
The names of the pickers who played your fav'rite song.
They took the deepest part of my Lone Star Texas heart,
And ev'ry Cosmic Cowboy knows that's wrong.

(But we had)

Ten good strong years; now there's nothing we're bound to fear;
Makes no diff'rence if you lose or if you win.
Our time is yet to come, it won't matter where you're from;
Together, we'll all be found in the ozone again.

Aint' No Rock 'N' Roll at the Armadillo
World Headquarters of Texas music sound.
Hardly nothin' left but sweet dreams of Jerry Jeff
And ghosts of our Lost Gonzos haunting ground.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Austin Trilogy

Frank Hill

Asleep On The Sidewalk

Lonesome old cowboy, out ridin' the range,
Checkin' his fence lines, it all seems so strange:
Posts are all upright, barb wire drawn taut.
But, still he supposes, its partly his fault.

Read in the paper, seen on T.V.
Homeless and hungry, they live on the street.
Oughta be some way t' find 'em a home.
But he just keeps a-ridin', 'cause, he loves to roam.

What is the diff'rence? He can't figure that.
Some with no bed roll, some with no hat!
Cold ol' blue norther whips snow at his feet,
Little children are hungry with nothin' to eat.

Big city party, about to begin:
Guests are arriving for champagne and gin;
Fur coats and top hats, check'd at the door;
No food and no warmth on the street for the poor.

Networks and cable: the national news;
People ignoring the live interviews;
Homeless and hungry in terror each night;
Ain't no big issue; this terrible sight!

What is the diff'rence? Can you figure that?
Some in their fur coats, some in top hats!
Cold ol' blue norther whips snow at their feet,
Little children are hungry with nothin' to eat.

It's hard to be brave when you're all alone.
It's hard to be free when you have no home.
Whatever the season, the reason ain't right,
Asleep On The Sidewalk the bitter long night.

Down a live T.V. church pew, the plate has been passed.
(Homeless and hungry await the prime task).
Money to buy some more satellite time
And pay for salvation. Lord, I pray for mine.

What has become of America's heart?
Rich and forgiving, it's been torn apart!
Lonesome old cowboy, keeps ridin' along,
Checkin' his fence lines and singin' his song.

What is the diff'rence? Still can't figure that.
Some orbit space ships, some on their back flat!
Cold ol' blue norther whips snow at my feet,
Little children are hungry with nothin' to eat.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Three Love Songs

Frank Hill

Three songs; two loves.
First for one I lost,
Then two for the one I found!

Faded Love Letter

You wrote me a love letter,
Promised you'd be mine forever,
You even quoted certain reasons why.
Now your love for me has faded,
Broken promises you stated
Are the reasons why I sit alone and cry.

It's been a year or better
Since you wrote that Faded Love Letter.
Darlin', I still miss you ev'ry day.
Though my life goes on without you,
I love ev'rything about you
And count the hours 'til you come home to stay.

Southwest of Wichita Falls

Coyotes cry when the full moon calls,
Early blue northers mean springtime will be mild.
Roustabout, cowboy and roughneck,
Jack o' three trades, love's a stacked deck.
Ain't no joker when the Queen O' Hearts is wild.

Ridin' them high west Texas plains,
Competin' with high flyin' jet planes.
My freedom's not compatible with your success.
Red River south to the Rio Grande,
Open range, is where I'll take my stand,
But in my dreams, you're the one I remember best.

It's been a year or better
Since you wrote that Faded Love Letter.
Darlin', I still miss you ev'ry day.
Though my life goes on without you,
I love ev'rything about you
And count the hours 'til you come home to stay.

I'll count the stars 'til you come back again.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Three Love Songs

Frank Hill

Gallatin Girl

In southwestern Montana, the rivers all flow north. At the town of Three Forks, three of those rivers converge and become the mighty Missouri. The names of those three rivers are the Madison, the Jefferson, and the Gallatin.

Summertime in South Texas slowed down my reflexes
Like the flow of the ol' Rio Grande.
Up yonder, behind her, a constant reminder
My promise that I'd return one day.

Savin' my money and writin' my honey,
"Come spring I'll be in the mountains."
Her sweet reply put a twinkle in my eye,
"I'll be here and the days I'll be countin'"

She's a Gallatin Girl with a Yellowstone curl,
A deep forest green in her eyes.
We met by chance and knew at a glance
We'd fall in love under Montana skies.

Wintertime in South Texas, all my reflexes
Are off by two thousand miles.
Hard work and scheming and all of my dreaming
Remind me of her Gallatin smile.

So I packs my ol' truck, adios and good luck
I'm bound for that far northern mountain;
Summer nights are cool and I'd be a fool
To refuse the days she's been countin'.

In my cowboy bandana, I'm bound for Montana
And the girl with the mysterious surprise.
Bustin' my buttons, my ol' truck is cuttin'
This interstate back down to size.

The very next autumn, she went out and bought 'em
A cabin and some acres of land;
Says, "It's a mystery, part of Montana hist'ry,
"Gettin' started down south by the ol' Rio Grande."

She's a Gallatin Girl with a Yellowstone curl,
A deep forest green in her eyes.
We met by chance and knew at first glance
We'd fall in love under Montana skies.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Three Love Songs

Frank Hill

Montana

She came down from the mountain trackin' north along the river.
She came down to the valley before the pass was closed
By the hard snows that fall through the middle of the winter.
She came down to love me, ev'rybody knows.

There's an old yellow farm house by the gateway to the mountain
Where the gold finch builds her nest in the cottonwoods in spring,
And the laughin' babblin' brook crosses by the gravel road to town
And the breeze in the trees sing a song that calls me home.

Montana, Big Sky Country!
How I love your amber wavin' fields of grain.
Montana, Big Sky Country!
This cowboy fell in love on your Continental Divide.

Your friends over to Livingston made me feel so right at home.
There was an easy east wind blowin' from Bridger Bowl up high.
The beads you wore at dinner put that twinkle in your eye,
And the moon on the mountain brought a lonesome cowboy's coyote cry.

Through the cut glass on the back porch to the kitchen table round,
Bounding up the stairway where the wild flowers bloom,
There's a midnight bedside candle glowin' in the mem'ry of my heart,
And your sweet smilin' face keeps singin' a song that calls me home.

Montana, Big Sky Country!
How I love your amber wavin' fields of grain.
Montana, Big Sky Country!
This cowboy fell in love on your Continental Divide.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Four Laments

Frank Hill

I suppose the lament is the most poignant of American Cowboy artistic expression. Certainly there are still things about that period of romance between Reconstruction and World War I which call to mind greater degrees of freedom and the "rough and tumble" than one usually experiences in our modern society. This seems to be true whether talking among folks in older generations, headstart kids from big city ethnic neighborhoods where most of the households get by from below the poverty line, or Eastern European college students who have just begun to be able to legally express their alter egos in the aftermath of the old world order. Lots of people still want to be cowboys. It doesn't even matter if you're not a boy! Like a lady friend of mine once said in the ghost town of Terlingua, TX, "Womens' Lib ain't makin' no cowperson out o' me!"

But what do they really want? Do they want to be in the movies? Do they want to chase after outlaws? Do they want to put up with hard days and long nights; bad water and short pay; plain food and treeless plains; wild mean critters and bitter weather; high feed, high seed, gallopin' prices at the gasoline pump; trains and planes that's runnin' late, rates of interest calculated to guarantee you cain't never afford a proper education for your children while the bank gets rich? Oh, No! That's not what they really want? All they ever really want in the whole wide world is enough freedom just to have a few hours of privacy and comfort ever once in a while. All they ever really want is just to ride out someplace where the air has that crisp clean penetration right down into the molecules of your lungs and makes you feel like, after all, maybe there's somethin' workin' like its supposed to for a little while.

Y'see, laments don't weep so much for the way things are as they do for the way things are supposed to be. People are supposed to be free. The only thing worse than never having had any, and the main difference between the American Cowboy and most of the rest of humanity, is that will o' the wisp which we once had hold of at the end of our rope and let slip away.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Four Laments

Frank Hill

Call Him A Man

You can call him a cowboy, sodbuster, or plowboy;
Any handle that fits when you work on the land.
Cash crops 'n' cattle, homesteads 'n' saddles,
He's the last of his kind, so just Call Him A Man.

Nineteen-seven, when the range was still Heaven;
Grasses so deep, horizons so wide,
A man built his dreams on his visions of springtime;
A home in the valley for himself and his bride.

Through sunsets 'n' cactus 'n' lifetimes of practice
He'd ride through the pages of time.
Rich in tradition with a poor man's condition,
Lucky if he owns a dime.

Years of depression left a blazing impression,
River banks and bankers both ran dry.
Dust got all his dreams, and the summer sun screams,
"You're too young to be old, too proud to wonder why."

His pickup replaces dirt road ruts 'n' traces,
Buckboards 'n' singletree wagons.
But he still keeps his horses, they help him, of course,
Whenever he goes to braggin'.

His autumn years find him all alone, and behind him
Are the dreams he'll never fulfill.
But, he always enjoys a beer with the boys -
Their lies reinforce each others' free will.

His body is sun burnt, he's bawdy 'n' unlearn't;
His wisdom is that of the sage.
Wears chaps on his legs, but his thoughts never beg
To undo the losses of age.

His "Whoopie-ti-yi-yo", its a-gettin' kind o' slow
As it blends with the wrinkles and the gray.
But, his visions of Freedom and outlaws who cheat 'em
Are still clear as the crystals on his winter's day.

With spirit, unbroken. Heard, but unspoken;
Like wind that comes from the cold.
With smoke from old chimneys 'n' shadows of mem'ries;
Blowin' South, toward Old Mexico.

So, just call him a cowboy, sodbuster or plowboy;
Any handle that fits when you work on the land.
Cash crops 'n' cattle, homesteads 'n' saddles,
He's the last of his kind, so just Call Him A Man.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Four Laments

Frank Hill

Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol

Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol,
Cracked his whip an' he shot from the hip, but he
Couldn't keep it under control.
When they searched his car, they found pot;
Said, "Lash, you 'n' your stash been caught!"
An' that's how Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol.

Lash La Rue was an' ol' time cowboy hero o' mine.
I used to watch him in the picture show
Back when it only cost a dime.
With Tex 'n' Gene an' the Cisco Kid,
I used to get off on the things they did
Before Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol.

Lash La Rue said to the judge, "Please hear my alibi.
"Your Honor, I don't smoke marijuana;
"I've never even been high!
"But I picked up a hitchhiker on the road,
"Never asked her bag, never checked her load,
"And that's why Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol."

Last Chance Sue was a-talkin' to herself as she hung out her thumb.
She was scared ol' Lash would flash,
But leavin' that stash was dumb.
The ol' fart's eyes got wet 'n' blinky,
But the trip with the whip was jus' too damn kinky.
So, Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol

When Lash La Rue got busted, he sort o' lost control;
His pride no longer trusted, he stared into his soul.
Was it marijuana that almost did him in?
Or did he only wanna get his kicks again?

Lash La Rue's last movie was in 1946.
The black hat he wore was groovy,
But his horse didn't do tricks.
With his trusty side-kick, Fuzzy St. John,
They could really get it on
Chasin' bad guys to the settin' sun Like Buster Crabbe and Tom Mix.

Yeah, Lash La Rue got busted, but the judge let him go.
Last Chance Sue hitched another ride
With a biker down to Mexico.
When they set him free, he showed 'em trick shots,
Made that bullwhip crack and pop,
After Lash La Rue Got Busted By The Highway Patrol.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Four Laments

Frank Hill

Native American History, 201

This was written in the fall of 1988. Jane was in Nicaragua, photo-documenting ravages of U.S. low intensity warfare on the rural population there: mostly old men, women and children. There are very few young-to-middle-aged men left in the camp; a direct result of U.S. foreign-policy backed Contra kidnapping, pillage, rape and murder. Still, I was telling Jane that although the problem might be worse where she was working, the solution can only be achieved here at home.

Then we spent the summer of '89 in Montana, Jane's home. While there, we attended Crow Fair on their reservation next door to Custer Battlefield National Monument. From early in the afternoon on into the wee hours, the cool clear northern prairie air was filled with drumming and chanting by a dozen or more tribes representing Native American traditions from all over the Western U. S. Jane taped several sessions with her Walkman and a couple of cuts are really quite clear.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Four Laments

Frank Hill

Native American History, 201

Take a little pinch of Italy, a cup or so of Spain:
Ancient bitter enemies, seeking shelter from the rain.
Reign of terror by the Inquisition you know is yet to come:
Beached on windward islands, it won't matter where you're from.

Amerind and Aztec, Inca and Iroquois:
Projections from the astrolabe of British bully boys.
And the cursed Treaty Of Utrecht with its demarcation line:
Exporting power politics, shipping Bibles o'er the brine.

Exploration of the old world by men from new world towns:
Five-hundred years of history (black, yellow, red, white, brown).
Still bound in chains of violence, continents north and south:
Drifting slowly westward; greedy mind, open mouth.

Things are getting sticky in the land of the free:
Independence never was what they meant for you and me.
The two-party system only has one guarantee:
Choose your slate, cast your vote, ain't no equality.

When Jesus comes to your house, will he knock on your front door
With the glad hand of salvation, what is opportunity for?
Or will he get fundamental and accuse you as the fool
Who let the money changers sell shelters from the Golden Rule?

Can you compute the difference? Can you analyze the facts?
Alcohol and aspirin, no wonder you can't relax!
You plowed the grassy plain, you shot the buffalo.
When you holler that last "Timber!" Where can a free man go?

Deep inside the synapses of my hypnotic dreams,
A mystic spirit growing to be born again; it screams:
"Power to the people who live by Nature's Law,
"Getting ready for the winter, 'cause its already fall!"

Things are getting sticky in the land of the free:
Dependance on the system defines democracy.
And the system demands profit for bankers and the G. N. P.
Even at the price of individual liberty.

Take a little pinch of Freedom, a cup or so of pain:
Ancient holy allies, self-reliant in the rain.
When the storms are on the ocean, guard your shoreline, guard your bay:
Violence and greed may come from the new world any day.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES

Four Laments

Frank Hill

Freeways A-Plenty

I rode with your cowboys, hoboed your trains;
Chopped your high cotton, and I reaped your winter grains;
Fished your coastal waters, and drilled for your black gold;
Watched your cities prosper, and your open ranges close.

I picked fruit in the valley and I shelled your pecans;
Painted your streets and alleys with billboards and neon;
Passed out in Aransas, with nothin' but a song;
Runnin' from the Federales in Nuevo Leon.

Freeways A-Plenty, so many I can't decide
Which way to rattle, guess I'll run and hide
Out on some lonesome prairie where the coyotes cry;
Go ahead and bury me, ain't a horse left fit to ride.

Ain't a town left in Texas a man on the road can trust;
Your sons and daughters are "Exes", your rose has turned to rust.
Found a woman south of Alice, first she spat and then she cussed.
But it beats hidin' out in Dallas with the righteous and the just.

Your ranches have gone to ground and the dogs of real estate,
And the chances for a turn-around are a day and a dollar late.
"Freedom" is a high-rise, reaching for the sky.
Ain't a candidate down in Houston who knows the reason why.

Freeways A-Plenty, so many I can't decide
Which way to rattle, guess I'll run and hide
Out on some lonesome prairie where the coyotes cry;
Go ahead and bury me, ain't a horse left fit to ride.

I rode with your vaqueros, hoboed your trains;
Chopped your high cotton, and I reaped your winter grains;
Fished your coastal waters, and drilled for your black gold;
Watched your cities prosper, and your open ranges close.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES
Three New Pieces (for the Second Edition)
Frank Hill

(Lord, How I Love) A Hillbilly Song

There's songs about the honky-tonks, and the pickups cowboys drive
Sung to ev'ry slap and lick from Broadway Shows to Jive.
Goodness knows, ol' Rock 'N' Roll's gonna eat your kids alive.
So let's scat back down over on home, an' maybe we'll survive.

I still sing songs about hobos and freight trains,
'N' radios can't sell their time without songs of love and pain.
Texas even has a song for kicking hippies and raisin' cane.
But, I'm just a good ol' country boy and I like my music plain.

(Lord, How I Love) A Hillbilly Song.
Makes me feel like God above is a-keepin' me from all wrong.
Scat right back to the music I love; it's waited for so long.
(Lord, How I Love) A Hillbilly Song.

Ernest Tubb's still "Walkin' The Floor" up where the Angels sing.
Out on them high west Texas plains, Bob Wills is still the king.
Kitty Wells will always be my country music queen.
Then Elvis and the Beatles started changin' ev'rything.

I play Jimmie Rodgers' 78's from 1929;
Hank Williams, Senior's "Lovesick Blues" a million, million times;
Carter Family gospel licks straight 'n' narrow down the line.
Hillbilly music is a-comin' back if only in my mind.

(Lord, How I Love) A Hillbilly Song.
Makes me feel like God above is a-keepin' me from all wrong.
Scat right back to the music I love; it's waited for so long.
(Lord, How I Love) A Hillbilly Song.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES
Three New Pieces (for the Second Edition)
Frank Hill

All Over, Texas

All Over, Texas, the Roe Brothers Band:
Pickin' 'N' Grinnin' all over this land;
Terlingua to Orange, from the Red to the Grande.
From All Over, Texas, the Roe Brothers Band.

All Over, Texas is a mighty small town.
Ev'rything's lookin' up because we're always down
Over on some ol' honky tonk, singin' out loud.
From All Over, Texas and we're rightly proud.

We play guitar and guitar and guitar,
Makin' up songs where ever we are.
Not the kind you can play on your radio dial,
But as long as we're here, gonna play for awhile.

In All Over, Texas, your dollar an' dime
Can still earn a living in three-quarter time -
Live 'til you're ninety and never grow old.
The bed's always warm and the beer's always cold.

All Over, Texas, the Roe Brothers Band:
Pickin' 'N' Grinnin' all over this land;
Terlingua to Orange, from the Red to the Grande.
From All Over, Texas, the Roe Brothers Band.

LINES, LYRICS 'N' LIES
Three New Pieces (for the Second Edition)
Frank Hill

“Slower Traffic”

Born in the city,
Guess we both grew up bad.
Inflation closed the factory,
Only job I ever had.
Sunk my whole life savings in this
2nd hand Chevy Van -
Findin' some satisfaction,
Just rattlin' through the land.

They call me “Slower Traffic”,
'Cause I'm in the right-hand lane:
Truckin' down the highway,
No fortune, no fame.
I don't hurry, I won't worry,
Just a steady get-along.
One o' these days, gonna figure it out,
'Til then, I'll sing this song.

My Igloo and this ol' Gibson
Are the only load I tote.
I don't carry no gas card,
I don't wear no winter coat.
I don't need no tax break,
Let Congress have it's way.
The open road relaxes me, and I'll
Fight to keep it that a-way!

You gotta watch out for fallen rock,
Never let a dollar roll by.
Life gets tough and the road is rough,
But you can make it if you try.

We all know some people who
Shove it up against the wall,
Puttin' metal to the pedal like ol' Ma Kettle,
But they never make last call.
Sometimes I ramble, sometimes I gamble,
But the Heavens are my hall.
Give me elbow grease, a little world peace,
Let me snowbird in the fall.