But First Do No Harm

1. **Blues Lite, by Joanie Calem © 2003**

Chorus: (echo each phrase)

Today was a good day, I was feeling fine, Today was a good day, and the sun did shine…

Yesterday was stormy, gray clouds everywhere,

Sure was hard to get moving, with that thunder pinning me to my chair.

Chorus

You never know what tomorrow will bring, ‘cause trouble seems to run in packs,

Worries, crises, miseries, knocking us on our back

Chorus

So hard to stay in the here and now, my mind makes run all around

Rat race, fast-paced craziness, I want to slow things down.

Just got to take things one day at a time, No way to plan ahead

I thought I’d have a storybook life, got a few surprises instead

Chorus

I’m not gonna fret about tomorrow, somehow I’ll get out of bed

Pay some bills, play some songs, get those hungry kids fed

Chorus

1. **Motherhood, by Joanie Calem © 2000**

They’re running around, they’re having fun, But it’s the end of the day and I’m tired

Work to do and worries galore, Money’s still tight and I’m tired.

How can it be that now I’m the one with all this load on my shoulders?

I still feel like I’m just one of the kids, but they’re all calling me mom,

They’re all calling me mom!

What should they eat and what should they wear? What do I do when they’re fighting?

How many times do I have to say no? I can’t stand hearing the whining!

How can it be that now I’m the one with all this load on my shoulders?

I still feel like I’m just one of the kids, but they’re all calling me mom,

They’re all calling me mom!

Slowing down enough to hear what you’re telling me

The quiet times without the words are when I really see.

And all I want is for them to be healthy, Strong kids who know who they are

That infinite wisdom they had in them at birth, Just let me not cause hurt.

How can it be that now I’m the one with all this load on my shoulders?

I still feel like I’m just one of the kids, but they’re all calling me mom,

They’re all calling me mom; they’re all calling me mom!

**3. The Deer Know Nothing’s Wrong, by Joanie Calem © 2008**

They stood there quietly, the doe and her spotted fawn

They should have been afraid of us, they should have scampered on.

The other kids were far ahead, shouting their happy songs,

My little one stood next to me, the one with something wrong.

Those deer should have run away, but instead they just stood and stared

He held out his pudgy hand, they weren’t even scared.

We stood that way for a moment or two in the Pennsylvania woods,

Doe, fawn, my son and I didn’t breathe, I didn’t move.

Chorus:

And on the radio I hear the headlines for the day

They think they’ve found a cure, they’re sure they know the way

To fix all these kids who just aren’t “right”

Well the doe and the fawn watch us in the summer light.

He waits at the window for a friend to come and play,

He’s excited, he is happy; he’s been waiting there all day

And finally when the friend arrives he jumps around the floor

He races to let him in, he throws open the door.

The friend isn’t very nice, doesn’t know how to share,

My son with “something wrong” does his best, he really cares

He does all the things that he knows he should, tries to play with this typical boy

The boy complains and whines a lot, then breaks his favorite toy.

Chorus:

And on the radio I hear those headlines for the day

They think they’ve found a cure, they’re sure they know the way

To fix all these kids who just aren’t “right”

Well the doe and her fawn watched us in the summer light.

He’s so much bigger now and lots of times are hard

He dreams of helping to save the world, some days he’s scared to leave the yard.

Reading, writing, arithmetic, all those basic things,

He struggles through the days, but boy can that kid sing.

And then one day as we had a fight, and the house was full of friends,

We stepped outside to talk things through, to try and make amends,

And as I stood there lecturing, my son looked beyond the trees

A doe with four fawns stood there, watching him with ease.

Chorus:

And on the radio I hear the headlines for the day

They think they’ve found a cure, they’re sure they know the way

To fix all these kids who just aren’t “right”

Well the doe and her fawns watch us in the winter light.

Well I’m waiting for the headlines that take a different tack

That realize it’s okay to walk on a different track

All these kids who are marching to the beat of a different drum

A drum that doesn’t scare the deer away, doesn’t make them run…

1. **This Too Shall Pass, by Joanie Calem © 2009**

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

This too shall pass,

Life’s full of changes, some slow, some fast

There are good times and bad, of this you can be sure

Nothing lasts forever,

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

History tells us stories of King Solomon the wise

On matters large and small he was asked to advise

And part of his greatness was his willingness to learn

So listen to this tale of how fortunes turn.

The king’s servant Benaiah was the most loyal in the land.

Whatever Solomon needed, Benaiah was on hand

Quiet and faithful, Benaiah loved the king,

But one day he boasted he’d never failed at anything.

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

This too shall pass,

Life’s full of changes, some slow, some fast

There are good times and bad, of this you can be sure

Nothing lasts forever,

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

So the king made up a story, a task for Benaiah to do

About a ring that didn’t exist, to teach a lesson or two.

He said, “I’ve heard of a ring that is special indeed,

It will make a happy man sad; make a sad man fill with glee,

It will make a poor man smile, and make a rich man frown,

Please bring me this ring, I don’t know where it’s found.”

Benaiah was thrilled to take up this cause.

He eagerly set off; he didn’t even pause.

Up and down he searched in every corner of the land,

Mountains high, valleys low, beaches made of sand.

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

This too shall pass,

Life’s full of changes, some slow, some fast

There are good times and bad, of this you can be sure

Nothing lasts forever,

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

Well he could not find that ring, no matter where he went.

So after a year he started home, tired and spent

He did not know of course this was the king’s plan

Solomon expected him to return a humbled man.

And as he entered Jerusalem, the city of peace,

He walked slowly through her gates, feeling his defeat.

An old man beside him gave him a knowing look,

Handed him a ring, three words wiser than a book…

Well this was the ring, the king’s little trick;

This was the ring, it really did exist.

Both Benaiah and Solomon learned so long ago

You never know what will happen or how the wind will blow.

Yes both Benaiah and Solomon learned in their own way

The lesson that is sounding throughout our world today

Fortunes come and fortunes go, empires fall and rise

It’s not what you have that matters; it’s who you are inside.

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

This too shall pass,

Life’s full of changes, some slow, some fast

There are good times and bad, of this you can be sure

Nothing lasts forever,

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

Nothing last’s forever,

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

Nothing last’s forever,

גם זה יעבור, *Gam zeh ya’avor*

5. You’ll Never Please Everyone © 2010

Chorus:

You’ll never please everyone, No reason to even to try.

Just figure out what works for you, We never all see eye to eye.

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going into town

Little boy rode on the donkey and the old man walked along.

The people on the road, they gossiped and they talked

Little boy should be ashamed to ride while the old man walked.

So they changed things around:

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going into town

Old man rode on the donkey and the little boy walked along

The people on the road, they pointed and they talked

Old man should feel ashamed to ride while the little boy walked.

chorus

So they switched things around again:

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going into town

No one rode on the donkey, they all walked along

The people on the road, they giggled and they talked

With a perfectly good donkey it was dumb for both man and boy to walk.

So they switched things around again, and now:

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going into town

Man and boy rode the donkey, and poor donkey plodded along

The people on the road, they judged and they talked

Man and boy were oh so cruel, poor donkey could barely walk.

Chorus

So they switched things around again:

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going into town

Man and boy carried donkey on their shoulders as they struggled along

But as they crossed a bridge they tripped and fell down

Poor donkey got thrown into that river, sank and drown….

So the old man said to the little boy:

Now our donkey’s gone,

We’ve gotta pick up our burdens and walk.

Instead of listening to myself

I got confused by their all their talk.

Chorus

6. Spirit Animals © 1999

My elephant boy playing games in your head, Where the living room’s clearly a jungle

Tigers stalk and lions hunt and monkeys make lots of noise

But there’s nothing to fear because elephant’s here, And elephants make it all safe,

No, there’s nothing to fear because elephant’s here, And elephants make it all safe.

People are raucous and talking is hard, And the ways of the world are strange

What do you want, can’t you leave me alone, It’s easier here in my games….

‘Cause there’s nothing to fear when elephant’s here, And elephants make it all safe,

No, there’s nothing to fear when elephant’s here, And elephants make it all safe.

I jump like the monkeys and I run like a cheetah, And I leap like the frogs in the pond,

The forests are friendly, the jungle’s my home, And trees always understand…..

And there’s nothing to fear when elephant’s here, ‘Cause elephants make it all safe,

No, there’s nothing to fear when elephant’s here, ‘Cause elephants make it all safe.

People are raucous and talking is hard, And the ways of the world are strange

What do you want, can’t you leave me alone, It’s easier here in my games….

7. Gotta Be Wiser © 2008

Gotta be wiser than a serpent, gentler than a dove

Smarter than a fox with a heart of love.

Mommy you taught me that I must be kind

To treat others with respect, and still to speak to my mind

But I see all around me no one follows those rules.

Why are there still stupid wars, why are people cruel?

Yes my son you’re right, what you see is true

But don’t let sadness stop you, just keep walking through.

Gotta be wiser than a serpent, gentler than a dove

Smarter than a fox with a heart of love.

Daddy you taught me to walk lightly where I go

To take care of the earth to nurture and help grow

But I see all around me folks don’t live that way

Why can’t I just be like them? Don’t make me think just let me play.

Yes my son you’re right, we don’t all think the same

But our love will help you learn, as you figure out life’s game.

Gotta be wiser than a serpent, gentler than a dove

Smarter than a fox with a heart of love.

Mom and Dad you’ve taught me the road is full of turns

Some days are easy, some just hurt and burn

It’s all an adventure, surprise round every bend

I won’t let anyone tell me where I’ll get to in the end.

Son we are with you as you move through your days

You can trust life’s plan for you ‘cause you will find your way.

Gotta be wiser than a serpent, gentler than a dove

Smarter than a fox with a heart of love.

8. The Lamedvavniks © 2001

And we just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

We just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

There’s a story told in whispers about a little plan,

All through time there’ve been the wise ones found throughout the land

A group of angels spread around in secret near and far

Not just one, not two or three, thirty-six there are.

And we never know who they are, and they’re not who we’d expect

Not the leaders, not the loud ones, the famous or elect.

Maybe they’re a little odd, the ones with eyes we won’t meet:

The sweet woman no one’s got time for, the old man up the street.

And we just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

We just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

Sometimes they are children, often they are poor.

They work in humble silence, no spotlights, no rewards.

And as we hurry through our lives, so busy in our days

How many angels do we pass along the way?

And if you’re wondering why that number, it’s all a little math trick.

Eighteen is the number of life, times two that’s thirty-six.

The thinking was we needed help, and that’s what these folks do.

But they don’t even know themselves; it’s a secret to them too.

And we just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

We just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

And by the time we’ve understood what might be going on

We turn around in quiet awe, but they’re already gone…

And we just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

We just never know, we just never know, who the angels are.

9. Everybody’s Good At Something © 2013

Back in the day, when critters went to school

They learned to run and climb and fly and swim in the pool.

Everyone was good at one or two things

But there was no one that was good at everything.

Duck was good at swimming, and could sort of fly,

But she just couldn’t run, though she really tried.

Instead of letting her swim, and do what she does best

They made her work on running and she failed every test!

Eagle was best at flying up high,

But he just couldn’t climb, though he really tried.

He got punished when he flew to the treetop

They called him “cheater” and made him stop!

Rabbit was great at running and she won every race.

But she was forced to go swimming and she couldn’t even place.

In fact it was so bad she kind of broke down,

And after that she couldn’t even hop across the town.

Squirrel could climb and run real well

But flying was harder, he just couldn’t excel.

If he started in the tree, he could kind of fly down

But they made him try starting from the ground.

The prairie dogs parents complained to the school

Lessons didn’t include digging or tunnel tools.

So they went and found a teacher on their own

Badger was glad to teach the pups at home.

Now it’s the end of the year; everyone feels bad

‘Cause they spent all their time trying to do what they can’t.

It’s true it’s good to learn new things

We need to realize no one’s good at everything!

We gotta remember no one’s good at everything!

And it’s just fine that no one’s good at everything.

10. The Emperor’s New Clothes © 2009

Oh once there was an emperor who dressed real fine,

Thought linen, silk and satin simply divine.

He spent all his money on his clothes,

Dressed up real fancy from his head to his toes.

And though he was rich he was a bit of a fool,

Tried to pretend he was cooler than cool.

Well that’s the type of person that often gets conned,

And sure enough two strangers came and led him on.

Chorus:

He should have listened to the children, they usually tell the truth.

Listen to the children; they will usually see a spoof.

The kids will say what adults won’t. The kids will see what adults don’t.

The tricksters said that they could make magic cloth,

And only the wise would see its beautiful swath.

If you couldn’t see it, it meant you were unfit

For any job you had: you were probably a dimwit!

Well the emperor thought this was an excellent game,

He’d get new clothes and see who had no brains.

But then he realized a small problem with his plan,

What if he was the one who was a sham!

He could have listened to the children, they usually tell the truth.

Listen to the children; they will usually see a spoof.

The kids will say what adults won’t. The kids will see what adults don’t.

So first he sent his top aide to look at the loom,

But the aide saw nothing when he entered the room.

Of course he didn’t let on that he saw only air,

He pretended to see pretty cloth right there!

He reported to the emperor the cloth simply glowed,

He talked about the colors that blended and flowed.

So then the emperor went to take a look,

But of course he saw an empty loom with nothing but hooks.

He should have listened to the children, they usually tell the truth.

Listen to the children; they will usually see a spoof.

The kids will say what adults won’t. The kids will see what adults don’t.

Then the tricksters told him he should lead a parade,

And wear the new clothes they had specially made.

They had him strip down to his underwear,

Pretended to dress him with clothes that weren’t there!

So instead of admitting what was plain as could be,

That there simply were no clothes, there was nothing to see,

The emperor kept up the silly charade

And went marching in his underwear leading a parade.

He should have listened to the children, they usually tell the truth.

Listen to the children; they will usually see a spoof.

The kids will say what adults won’t. The kids will see what adults don’t.

Along came a little boy watching the parade,

He wasn’t like the adults, he wasn’t afraid

To say what he saw, to say what was there,

He wasn’t following the crowd; he didn’t care.

So of course he asked with the voice of a child,

Not angry, not mean, just simple and mild.

If the emperor was naked except for underwear,

How come didn’t they tell him, why’d they just stare?

He should have listened to the children, they usually tell the truth.

Listen to the children; they will usually see a spoof.

The kids will say what adults won’t. The kids will see what adults don’t.

11. The Horse © 2004

Long ago and far away lived a simple, modest man,

He owned a great, fine stallion, the prettiest in the land.

All the neighbors envied him, thought he must be blessed,

He was wise enough to know to wait and see what’s next.

Well, one day that horse took off, just up and ran away.

The only thing he owned disappeared that day.

All the neighbors pitied him, thought he might be cursed,

But he was wise enough to know it might be the reverse.

 ‘Cause sometimes a blessing is a curse in disguise

Sometimes a curse changes right before our eyes

Is it a good thing, is it a bad thing?

Gotta wait and see what life will bring.

Well, soon his horse came back, with a herd of wild mares

Now his paddock was full, there were horses everywhere.

All the neighbors envied him, thought he must be blessed,

He was wise enough to know to wait and see what’s next.

His son was a brave, young man, tried to tame a wild horse

The horse threw him off, and he broke both legs of course.

All the neighbors pitied them, thought they might be cursed,

They were wise enough to know it might be the reverse.

Chorus

‘Cause sometimes a blessing is a curse in disguise

Sometimes a curse changes right before our eyes

Is it a good thing, is it a bad thing?

Gotta wait and see what life will bring.

Well, the very next day, the king declared a war.

All young men must go to fight, his son was just one more.

All the neighbors pitied them, thought they might be cursed,

They were wise enough to know it might be the reverse.

Because of those broken legs, his son couldn’t go to fight,

All that pain and agony probably saved his life.

All the neighbors envied them, thought they must be blessed,

They were wise enough to know to wait and see what’s next.

 ‘Cause sometimes a blessing is a curse in disguise

Sometimes a curse changes right before our eyes

Is it a good thing, is it a bad thing?

Gotta wait and see what life will bring.

12. The Elephant In The Room © 2011

Hey there’s an elephant in the room; no one wants to talk about it

We’re all really hoping that it won’t ruin our day!

Yeah there’s an elephant in the room, maybe if we ignore it

And shut our eyes it will just go away!

Along comes one of those kids who doesn’t get it:

Doesn’t seem to understand what we should and should not say

The kid asks blunt questions, points to the elephants,

Everybody shushes him, tries to get him to obey.

But there’s an elephant in the room; no one wants to talk about it

We’re all really hoping that it won’t ruin our day!

Yeah there’s an elephant in the room, maybe if we ignore it

And shut our eyes it will just go away!

Somehow the elephants are really grateful

That someone’s noticed them and isn’t afraid.

After all when we ignore an elephant inside a room

It seems to grow bigger and smellier by the day!

Oh there’s an elephant in the room; no one wants to talk about it

We’re all really hoping that it won’t ruin our day!

Yeah there’s an elephant in the room, maybe if we ignore it

And shut our eyes it will just go away!

The kid can’t quite figure out why adults just don’t see

How very exciting that an elephant’s come to play.

He doesn’t mean to be rude, doesn’t mean to disobey,

It’s just hard to figure out what you should and should not say!

When there’s an elephant in the room; no one wants to talk about it

We’re all really hoping that it won’t ruin our day!

Yeah there’s an elephant in the room, maybe if we ignore it

And shut our eyes it will just go away!

13. Mystery Boy © 2000

Oh my little mystery boy I look at you and sigh

How I long to find the key, turn the lock and let you fly.

Let you soar like the birds as they fly away free,

Let you know that the sky has no ceiling,

Let you see in the end you will outfly them all,

But the trip’s gonna leave us all reeling.

Oh my little mystery boy I look at you and sigh

How I long to find the key, turn the lock and let you fly.

You are closed up inside of your own little world

And when I join you I admit I agree

That this place that I’ve brought you to makes no sense at all

There’s no way to play the game and stay free

Oh my little mystery boy I look at you and sigh

How I long to find the key, turn the lock and let you fly.

All the experts who say they know just what to do

Pushing tests and statistics, little pills too

They look at you and they shake their smart heads

You just don’t fit all those big books that they’ve read

But out here in the desert as you dance to the drum

You whirl and you stomp to the rhythms

The moon and the sand and the waves on the shore

Are thankful for the spirit you were given.

Oh my little mystery boy I look at you and sigh

How I long to find the key, turn the lock and let you fly.

14. Prayers © 2004

May we find stillness, for the days we walk in pain,

May we find acceptance, of all that comes our way.

May we find welcome, when we stretch out our hands.

May we find wisdom, as we walk this land.

Wishes for the hard times, prayers for these days,

May we all forever grow, stronger on our way.

And when it’s stormy, and we can’t find the road,

May we hear that still, small voice, calling us home.

And when there is a flood, dove goes out a-searching,

Dove goes out a-searching for a tree.

So fly away my dove, fly into the heavens,

Fly away my dove, and be free.

May we find stillness for the days we walk in pain,

May we find acceptance of all that comes our way.

May we find forgiveness for what we should not do,

May we find simplicity for the days we are confused.

Wishes for the hard times, prayers for these days,

May we all forever grow stronger on our way.

And when the it’s dark and the sun has set and gone,

May we all remember that after dark comes dawn.

And when there is a flood, dove goes out a-searching,

Dove goes out a-searching for a tree.

So fly away my dove, fly into the heavens,

Fly away my dove, and be free.