

MY LIFE SO FAR

From the album *Life So Far*

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This is the story of my life, it started 32 years ago in a hospital on the 4th of July, just after midnight (it was actually the 5th); my Daddy was in the waiting room watching fireworks from the window.

I came in with a bang, so to speak;

Mom and Dad took me home, set me on the bed, smiled and said, "Now – what do we do?" None of us knew.

Was not long before I crawled around, into the kitchen where I found the place where they kept the pots and pans.

I pulled them out, the sound was grand.

They let me do that as long as they could stand it then they got me piano lessons but I had no discipline,

I just banged on it like the pots and pans, they never lost their composure, they said there's a word for people like you: they call them composers.

'Cause they knew – you do what you do what you do and the light comes through

On the south side of Chicago in the baddest part of town, there is an Island of urban renewal where there used to be the best jazz clubs the world around.

They tore them down, built little boxes, little boxes made of ticky tacky; we bought one. My best friends down the block were Kyle and Chris, their skin was black.

Their houses smelled like bacon and they drank chocolate milk, and I liked that.

One day I came home and said, "Mom I'm gonna turn brown, like Chris."

She said, "No, you're not. . . ." and I was pissed.

So I began to drink as much chocolate milk as I possibly could.

But all that happened was my skin turned red from the rash I got from peeing in the bed, a problem that lasted years and years, 'til one day it just disappeared and I knew -- you do what you do what you do and the light comes through

Summer Camp in 1974 my counselors were longhaired hippies galore, talking about vegetarianism and transcendental meditation and they did not like Nixon.

But I'd seen him on t.v. and I liked what he had to say; he was making peace with China;

I said, "I think he's okay."

So they put me on horses, and put me in canoes, and said "talk to the trees, they will talk back to you."

I tried with very little success, went back to dirty magazines and cigarettes; I was skeptical and unimpressed, never-the-less the seed was planted.

And sometimes we'd gather late at night in the circle of the village fire light, to tell the

story of ancient kin, and sing to the jet planes blowin' in the wind.
And I knew my tribe in a timeless time, then Watergate broke, and Nixon resigned, and I
knew – you do what you do what you do and the truth comes through

In High School there were 9 of us, wild boys with soccer balls and bikes, and we were
tight 'til the winter of sophomore year when the teachers went on strike, for two weeks
straight, we went out every day to ice skate and discovered girls and drugs, I didn't
want to do either.... I had to say goodbye.

So I went to records and I went to books, and occasionally a party, just for a look; back to
the music sweet and dark, all by myself, I was happy as a lark.

I was not happy, I was lonely; 'til I started making up stuff with my friends Max and
David.

Up on the back porch 'til 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, it sure beat doing
homework, besides my pens always disappeared without warning.

Though Dad said "pens do not disappear," I swear mine did sure as I'm standing here, and I knew –
you do what you do what you do and the light comes through

In College every paper was late, the best thing I did was celebrate the full moon, me and
10 friends put up posters saying where, and when, and then took garbage cans from
every dormitory to use as bass drums for 30 or 40 people; 250 people came.

So we all marched off into the woods, gathered in a clearing, quiet as we could.

Sat in a circle, made up chants, began to sing, and drum, and dance.

The problem was the circumstance: it was cloudy, and there was no moon in sight.

As the fire died so did the drums; the dancing stopped, we all began to hum; put our
hands up to the sky and the clouds parted like a giant eye.

For 3 whole minutes the moon appeared, to say, "hello, I love you, and of course I hear
you" and I knew – you do what you do what you do and the light comes
through

Then I went on this 2 year journey, cross the country (skipped New Jersey), biking and
busing state to state, worked as a lumberjack, a salesman, a maid, a carney a breakfast
cook in a diner, caught a ride from some hippies in a school bus to North Carolina
(nothin' could be finer).

That's where Dido lives and he writes his songs, he said "I'm playin' a festival, come on
along.

" Put me on stage but before I could play my buddy Bill started a rhythm I said, "That sounds okay!
Don't stop – whatever you do" he said "what are we gonna do?"

None of us knew – but there were 2000 people watching so we had to follow through.

We made up a song right on the spot and the rhythm we played was so darn hot that the
drummers from all the other bands came running over to lend a hand.

We held it together and the word all rhymed and we somehow all ended at the same time
and I knew – you do what you do what you do and the light comes
through.

I knew – the music comes from, but mostly through

So Me and Bill started a band, I wrecked his car so we bought a van.

Bangin' and sangin' from coast to coast, got big and famous, I don't mean to boast, but
people actually started calling us, we didn't have to call them first anymore, and that's
a big deal in folk music.

Just wasn't working' for me -- so I had to say goodbye.

And somewhere in there I met a woman so sweet, we knocked each other off each other's
feet.

We almost knocked into eternity, but that chapter remains incomplete, 'cause the timing,
the timing ... and everything.... We had to say goodbye.

So at 30 I went back to summer camp, I had 5 boys in a tent (one bed was very damp). While the
others were away we changed his sheets and I knew the cycle was complete:

3 boys white, 2 boys black, by the end of the summer, they were all trying to be black
and I knew – you do what you do what you do and the light comes
through

This is the story of my life it started 32 years ago, longer if we count my time as an
embryo.

Longer if we count previous incarnations; longer if we count all my relations; it makes
the beginning hard to pinpoint.

This is the story of my life it started 32,000 years ago in a hospital under a thatched roof
hut somewhere way down south of the Congo; my great-great-great-grandmamma was
a dark skinned woman, guess what: she's your grandmamma too.

So here we are and we're all okay on this fine day in February; can't say if my choices
were wrong or right, I just made 'em and what do you know, I'm still white And
sometimes things seem like they'll never change, but just last summer was the first
time the trees called my name

And I knew ... I know ... I know ... I know ...