



BUDDY & JULIE MILLER

WRITTEN IN CHALK

MADE BY

BUDDY MILLER

RECORDED AT DOGTOWN STUDIO, NASHVILLE, TN -
EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

2009

BuddyAndJulie.com • NewWestRecords.com

Until he paints his masterpiece...

CHAP I.

MALCOLM Gladwell, the brilliant synthesist of the varied research which seeks to explain how our brains work, recently summarized the work of a University of Chicago economist named David Galenson, who has been studying the age at which genius presents itself to the world.

Two paradigms emerge: the precocious Pablo Picasso, who arrived as a daunting and fertile and fully-formed talent in his early 20s, and Paul Cézanne, who did not have an exhibition of his paintings until he was 57. Gladwell also advances the thesis that it takes 10,000 hours to acquire mastery of any given skill.

These are, perhaps, ways to understand Buddy Miller's comparatively late arrival to center stage, though he has worked at the edge of spotlights for most of his adult life. He has been a singer, and the successful co-writer of songs other people sang, most of them country stars, including the Dixie Chicks, Lee Ann Womack, and Brooks & Dunn. He has been a multi-instrumentalist and back-up singer for a succession of stunning singers, beginning with his wife and collaborator, Julie Miller,

and then in prompt succession, Shawn Colvin, Victoria Williams, Emmylou Harris, Steve Earle, Lucinda Williams, Patty Griffin, and, most recently, Alison Krauss and Robert Plant. And he has produced records – in his home – released under his name and Julie's, and their names together (as with this present release), as well as albums by Solomon Burke, Allison Moorer and Jimmie Dale Gilmore.

These are formidable talents he has sought to perfect, each one slowly and sporadically and constantly polished, and occasionally set aside. But the masterpiece Buddy and Julie Miller have been painting since they began recording Julie singing her songs in 1990... since he began putting his own voice on record in 1995 (he was 43 at the time)... their fundamental masterpiece is the body of work they've created throughout their intertwined creativity. It is impossible to separate their work into his and hers, save for the fact that Julie's health issues have made Buddy the more public exponent of their gifts. It is their work, all of it.

For all the grace with which they sing, for all the elegance of their words (Julie's, but theirs nevertheless), even given that they record in their living space, making his own records never seems easy for Buddy.

Fortunately it was not written in stone that



the
↑

Sept. 1959

Charles Howard
Mother's Half Brother



Martha ill
with the Chickens

WRITTEN IN CHALK would emerge when originally scheduled. Buddy attempted finally to finish the album in a small, Spring window in time while simultaneously mastering the extended repertoire of traditional American songs played by Robert Plant & Alison Krauss in support of their award-winning album, **RAISING SAND**.

Something had to give, and, as is usually the case, it was Buddy. We are unexpectedly rewarded by that delay, for it became a collaboration with Julie – only the second formal Buddy and Julie Miller offering – and one or two other voices could be added.

A quick listen, then...

CHAPTER II

ELLIS COUNTY is where Julie Griffin Miller grew up (until the age of 8), in Waxahachie, Texas. “Take me back,” Buddy sings by way of opening, “when times were hard but we didn’t know it/if we ate/we had to grow it.” Leaving aside whether this is an acutely prescient song for the next depression, one thematic key to the album appears amid its first sound, an unfettered laugh, which belongs either to drummer Brady Blade (Emmylou Harris, Steve Earle), or to fiddler Larry Campbell, who used to play with Dylan and now plays with Levon Helm. Larry

Campbell, who Buddy and Julie met long ago in the New York swirl surrounding Shawn Colvin, when they all ate with less confidence.



BECAUSE I am drawn to his darker expressions, to his timely gospel reading of Dylan’s *With God On Our Side* on 2004’s **UNIVERSAL UNITED HOUSE OF PRAYER**, it is sometimes too easy to forget the giddy joy with which Buddy and Julie can unexpectedly cavort. *Gasoline And Matches* – written together – makes a bemused kind of 1964 British Invasion stab at creating the prequel to the story behind *Does My Ring Burn Your Finger?*



AND then Buddy withdraws, leaving Julie to sing atop John Deaderick’s solemn piano, Patty Griffin filling in an understated second voice. Julie’s brother, Jeff, was struck and killed by lightning while mowing their parents’ lawn, and *Don’t Say Goodbye* seems suffused with that memory. This becomes the second theme throughout **CHALK**, for there is much loss to remark upon all around.



BBETTER, for the moment, to dwell upon a different kind of memory. *What You Gonna Do Leroy* was written by Mel Tillis in the early 1960s, before he became a stuttering star. It was never a hit, though both Lefty Frizzell and Burl Ives (and apparently nobody since) cut it. Since **CHALK** wasn’t finished when it came time for Buddy to tour with Plant & Krauss, this track was recorded with Robert Plant in a dressing room one night. This is not a star’s generous nod to a sideman, it is the simple bonding joy of two men who adore all kinds of music.



JULIE has always been far more than a country stylist, although she is certainly that, when she wants to be. Back in the 1990s the famed jazz singer Jimmy Scott unexpectedly covered her song, *All My Tears*. If he were still around, Little Jimmy would do well with *Long Time*. The piano player is Matt Rollings, the long-time Lyle Lovett collaborator.



THEN back to Buddy’s storehouse of American songs. Dee Ervin wrote a goodly handful of tunes, and recorded one solitary album of them back in 1973. From that unwilling obscurity Buddy has plucked *One Part, Two Part*,

though it has the sound of a hit one simply can’t quite recall having heard before. Buddy also repeats one of the triumphs of **UNIVERSAL UNITED HOUSE OF PRAYER** by bringing Regina and Ann McCrary – whose lineage extends into the storied gospel group, the Fairfield Four – in for backup vocals.



JULIE had filled notebooks full of songs and song fragments before and during the recording of **WRITTEN IN CHALK**. The piece that gives this album its title, which she wrote and her husband sings (with Patty Griffin again adding background vocals), is as enigmatic as anything she’s offered in a good while. Buddy’s vocals seem to come from the place at the end of things, exhausted, resigned, the emotion not yet wrung out, but held up before the mirror: “We don’t know all the trouble we’re in/We don’t know how to get home again.” The last words are “Jesus come and save us from our sins.” And then the song decants into two very tuneful moans, subsiding into that space beyond words.



IMAGINE an intense and intensely creative partnership constantly disturbed by the leaving of one partner, and the staying of the other. Julie sings *Everytime We Say Goodbye* against

her own vocal track, just Buddy's guitar and John Deaderick's piano taking simple, quiet paths beneath. Much attention has been paid to Julie's distinctive singing voice, which seems deeper and rounder this time out, and less breathy. But it is her songs to which attention should be paid. Particularly this one.



BUDDY'S turn to mourn comes within *Hush, Sorrow*, though the story within the song this time is more generalized. His vocals are unexpectedly intimate, Regina McCrary's voice just haunting the edges. So directly personifying emotion is an antique gesture, perhaps, but the song resonates as if sorrow were a timeless thing. Which it is, alas.



IF we had guitar heroes anymore, they might spend some time mastering the wry, repeating riff which – even more than Buddy and Julie's voices – carries MEMPHIS JANE. If he would just play it faster and louder and with more treble, it would fit among the Aerosmith/ZZ Top school of raucous restated blues, but, instead, it's this other thing which is uniquely Buddy and Julie (and, it turns out, the riff is Julie's). A sauntering story of a song, a cautionary tale.

JUNE was written and recorded by Buddy and Julie Miller the evening of May 15, 2003, the night June Carter Cash passed away. Julie's note of explanation cannot be improved upon: We had just heard the news...



LONG, long ago George Jones cut a song from deep within the considerable catalog of Leon Payne, the blind former Texas Playboy who wrote *Lost Highway* and *I Love You Because* and died from a heart attack in 1969. That song was called *The Selfishness in Man*. Buddy talked Emmylou Harris into singing the high parts. It makes for a splendid ending.

~ Grant Alden
Morehead, Kentucky
Winter '08



C H A P III.

1. **ELLIS COUNTY** (3:51)*(Julie Miller)*

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

Brady Blade - drums**Chris Donohue** - bass**Larry Campbell** - fiddle**John Deaderick** - keyboards

For Momma

Take me back when times were hard but we didn't know it • If we ate it we had to grow it • Take me back when all we could afford was laughter • And two mules instead of a tractor • Take me back again • Take me back where there was nothing left to throw out • There was a light that wouldn't go out • Take me back when we had swollen fingers we'd gotten • When everybody helped pick the cotton • Take me back again • Take me back to places where my memory carries • Take me back to precious things that my heart carries • Take me back when daddy led the singing on Sunday • Nobody had to plow until Monday • Take me back when I could feel the kiss of my mother • And I had all my sisters and brothers • Take me back again •

2. **GASOLINE AND MATCHES** (3:14)*(Buddy & Julie Miller)*

Julie's Freakin' Out Music (ASCAP)/West Bay Music Inc (ASCAP)/My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

Bryan Owings - drums**Chris Donohue** - bass

Baby, baby, baby, baby, listen what I say • Baby, baby, baby, baby, let me have my way • I'm gonna keep on knockin' till the door unlatches • You and me are gasoline and matches • Baby, baby, baby, baby, when it's cold and dark • Baby, baby, you make me make me feel a spark • Yeah I feel a spark and the fire catches • You and me are gasoline and matches • You pull my pin and you trip my wire • You come in and set my heart on fire • You knock me out, you rock me off my axis • You and me are gasoline and matches • Baby, baby, baby, baby, when you make your move • Baby, baby, baby, baby, I can feel your groove • The resistance of a strong willed man's in ashes • You and me are gasoline and matches • Baby I'm incarcerated and I don't want out • Baby we should get related cause there ain't no doubt • When your heart and my heart attaches • You and me are gasoline and matches •

3. **DON'T SAY GOODBYE** (5:09)*(Julie Miller)*

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

Patty Griffin - vocal**John Deaderick** - piano

I'm drinkin' rain and taking pictures in the dark • With some flowers in my hair and a hole inside my heart • And the hole you left in me is so deep and it's so wide • If you look I think you'll see through right to the other side • Take the stars down that I wished on • Take the stars down from the sky • Take my heart and leave me here but when you go don't say goodbye • I used to wait for trains that never come • I would wait for yesterday but I was waiting for no one • So now I don't look for you to come walking through my door • Those were just the longings of a child • Who doesn't live here anymore • Take the stars down that I wished on • Take my tears so I don't cry • Take my heart and leave me here but when you go don't say goodbye • So say a prayer for the ones love left behind • 'Cause a broken heart grown cold is the hardest burden you can find • There's a bottle where God keeps all our tears saved up inside • But it's gonna take a river for all the ones I have cried •

4. **WHAT YOU GONNA DO LEROY** (3:44)*(Mel Tillis)*

Universal Cedarwood Publishing (BMI)

Jay Bellerose - drums**Dennis Crouch** - bass**Stuart Duncan** - fiddle**Gurf Morlix** - lap steel**Robert Plant** - vocal

Recorded July 14th, 2008 between soundcheck and supper in the band's dressing room in The Molson Amphitheater - Toronto, Ontario.

5. **LONG TIME** (4:15)*(Julie Miller)*

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

Matt Rollings - piano**Brady Blade** - drums**Byron House** - bass**Kami Lyle** - trumpet

Cards and letters meant to bring cheer • Now bring me sorrow, now bring such tears • The words fell off the paper • So I'm gonna sweep away each line • But it's gonna take a long, long time • Streetlight standin' alone all night in the rain • Shinin' for no one, shinin' all in vain • I'm gonna stop wasting my love like this because it's a crime • But it's gonna take a long, long time • Call the doctor when your body hurts • But when the pain is in your soul, hey man nothin' works • Smoke from

a cigarette coming underneath my door • Just like your memory sneakin' up on me some more • I'm gonna be all right and leave this heartache behind • But it's gonna take a long, long time • Lipstick on a glass • Somebody wants to look pretty • And wants to forget the past • Someday these tangled thoughts are gonna all unwind • But it's gonna take a long, long time ••

6. ONE PART, TWO PART (3:39)

(Dee Ervin)

Sweet River Music Inc (BMI)

Brady Blade - drums

Chris Donohue - bass

John Deaderick - keyboards

Russ Pahl - steel guitar

Regina and Ann McCrary - vocals

7. CHALK (3:40)

(Julie Miller)

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

Brady Blade - drums

Chris Donohue - bass

John Deaderick - keyboards

Patty Griffin - vocal

I always pretended for your sake • So you wouldn't know how you made my heart

break • I tried so hard to save you from yourself • But I never could cry out loud for help •• All I did was help you tell a lie • You never even knew it when I said goodbye • I ran so far and I don't know why •• You never even knew who I was • You saw about as far as a blind man does • I carried you with me everywhere I went • I carried everything till my back was bent •• All I did was help you tell a lie • You never even knew it when I said goodbye • It keeps on raining and I don't know why •• All our words are written down in chalk • Out in the rain on the sidewalk • If all our heartaches were in a stack • They'd go all the way up to heaven and back •• We don't know all the trouble we're in • We don't know how to get home again • Jesus come and save us from our sin ••

8. EVERY TIME WE SAY GOODBYE (4:38)

(Julie Miller)

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

John Deaderick - piano

Baby we don't know where to go • We can't find anywhere to hide • You can't come in out of the rain when the storm is on the inside •• Close the windows and the doors • And take shelter from the sky • But the rain inside still pours every time we say goodbye •• Love holds

a seed of tragedy • You must lay down your life to live • Seems you become the very thing that you will not forgive •• We were children too afraid to look sorrow in the eye • We're just children in the rain every time we say goodbye •• Silence is the loudest sound • Like the whole night wants to cry • But my heart just lets me down every time we say goodbye ••

9. HUSH, SORROW (4:03)

(Julie Miller)

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

John Deaderick - keyboards

Larry Campbell - mandolin

Russ Pahl - steel guitar

Regina McCrary - vocal

Memories, moments you try to keep • Like photographs that your heart takes • You hold them so close & so down deep • To comfort you when your heart breaks •• Hush, hush sorrow don't say my name • Please go your way without speaking • Hush, hush sorrow - you are to blame for all of this pain in my heart •• The day that he left, that's the day that you came • And we left everything like he had it • Yeah, we left it like it was, but nothing's the same cause you're the one here with us now ••



10. MEMPHIS JANE (6:15)*(Julie Miller)*

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

Bryan Owings - drums**Chris Donohue** - bass

This is a true story. She just came running across a field, opened my door, as if we were known friends, and got in and said "drive!" I did, of course.

I don't know where she came from but she wanted a ride • Before I could say anything she just got inside • She said, "You got a cigarette?" I said, "What's your name?" • She said, "I'm Josephine but in Memphis I'm Jane" • The tattoo that read s-m-o-o-t-h was crooked • Guess that was my first warning and I should've took it • She said, "I been clean 8 months now, hey you got some money?" • I just started laughin' cause it was so funny • She wants to ride, she ain't going nowhere • She wants to ride, she don't even know where • She's just ridin' around • She said, "My old man split and left me here all alone • I just need twenty dollars to get back home" • I smiled and she said, "Friend every word I said is true" • And I said, "Why in the world would I not believe you?" • She's Josephine and she's Jane • She just wants

twenty dollars • She's got smooth on her arm • She wants to ride • "I used to live in Spring Hill but I got relocated • Now I'm at the come-and-go motel but I hate it" • She said, "I got a new job now at Hair-World and Market" • I went 65 and she said, "Drive it or park it" •

11. JUNE (4:15)*(Julie Miller)*

My Blind Driver Music (BMI)/29 Cove Road Music (BMI)

We just heard the news. Even the sky wept all night so nobody could see the eclipse. This was one of those songs that comes in the rain. Her departure felt palpable, like the whole earth suddenly was lacking the weight of her bright and beautiful goodness. Heaven must have got happier, though. Thank you, God, for June. Recorded the night of May 15, 2003.

The night that you left the sky started crying • The moon's face was hiding just like mine • When I was thirsty and lost • Like a true heaven's daughter • Darlin' you brought me water for my soul • I know someday I will see you again • But the love you gave me will last until then • I never thought I'd lose you or that you'd go ahead of me • But now you rode instead of me on their angel wings • Did

C H A P I V .

All other playing and singing by *Buddy and Julie Miller*

Emmylou Harris courtesy of Nonesuch Records
Robert Plant appears courtesy of Esparanza Records
Patty Griffin appears courtesy of ATO Records

A&R: *Peter Jespersen*Management: *Vector Management, Kathi Whitley & Ken Levitan*Booking: *Frank Riley at High Road Touring*Art Direction and design: *Paul Moore*Painting: *Brian Kershishnik*

Brian Kershishnik - Our Ancestors Kissed HIS ART - to experience his whole portfolio - moved me as only music had! The Spirit I feel in his art goes through your eyes, through your mind, past your soul, to your very heart, the place where you hear God. The place that is the original you. Gentle and deep, like God's touch. And the titles of each painting are an inseparable part of them. Brian is a true poet. Find him.

Many thanks to *James Pennebaker, Tim Shaw, Ron K. and all the good folks at Fender/Gretsch Musical Instruments, Kevin Walt and M-Audio, D'Addario Strings, Vox Amplifiers, Colin at McDSP, Phil Garfinkel at Audix Microphones, and Dusty Wakeman at Mojave Audio for their faithful support.*

the Lord call your name and did you take his hand • To join that family band once again • On a night in May all the sky cried for June • And an eclipse of the moon said that you were gone •

12. THE SELFISHNESS IN MAN (4:20)*(Leon Payne)*

Sony/ATV Acuff Rose Music (BMI)

Brady Blade - drums**Chris Donohue** - bass**John Deaderick** - keyboards**Russ Pahl** - steel guitar**Emmylou Harris** - vocal

Buddy thanks: *Cameron Strang, Peter Jespersen, Jeff Cook and everyone at New West for their encouragement, understanding, and long suffering. Kathi Whitley and Ken Levitan for sticking with us. The very generous Robert Plant. Elaine and Stan Pilshaw, Bernie and Ruth Miller, Nina, Dana, and Bob Miller, Jim Lauderdale, Emmylou Harris, Steve Earle and Allison Moorer, Patty Griffin, Nicola Powell, The Americana Music Association, the great Maple Byrne, and the best companions on the road: Bryan Owings, Chris Donohue, Rick Plant, Phil Madeira, and Brady Blade.*

Julie thanks: *Dolly Edwards, my mom - the girl with the beautiful voice and the crush on Hank Williams. The girl with memories treasured inside her, so beautiful and painful, so funny and so profound, in whom God makes His Treasure of Gold. The valedictorian, between a crazy mom and a crazy daughter. "The May Queen" (who we later recognized as "The May or May Not Queen"). The heart whose prayers God made to be a river for me to ride home when I was lost, the one through whom He always speaks loudest and sweetest and deepest and most comforting, even without words. Who has given me all that was ever hers. I make you a crown out of my heart. (Can you say, "incomprehensibility"?)*

Thank you and much love -
Jeff, Giles, Buddy, sister Nina, Vic, Emmylou (whose love spills out of her heart all over the place),

Beautiful Genia and Abigail, and all this family who have taken us in as their own. Patty, Larry and Teresa and Maggie, Regina ("my partner") and Caitlin and David, Emily, Ashley, Lindsey, Merry, Darlene, Julie, Don, Laurie Lee, Jane Tulane, Pastor Whitsey, Pastor Griffin, Gretchen, the Posties, Julius, Leslie and Jeff.

And of course, most of all to God Almighty, Author of Compassion, Giver of Song, Friend who sticks closer than a brother, my hiding place, lover of my soul. Thank you for each breath, each moment. May we ever ride shotgun with Jesus. Bless the beasts and the children, Talitha Cum.

See PONETTE

Read My Vision of Heaven. The Hiding Place and Opal: The Journal of an Understanding Heart

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We support World Vision (WorldVision.com) and Compassion International (Compassion.com)



THE END

