

**A LOT TO REMEMBER
(ZERO TO SIXTY)
Music, Eddie Arkin
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

(for Charlie Christian)

He said, "You gotta remember they always come in threes, they always come in threes." But what's the limitation on how far apart? Like, if there's one, and then another one four days later, another one eight days later than that, is it still "in threes?"

He said, "You've got to remember."
But there's a lot to remember.
You've got your mottoes, your maxims,
Your wise little sayings,
Your key superstitions,
Dark admonitions.
It seems there's never a lack of
New information to keep track of.
There's such a lot to remember,
As you're goin' from zero to sixty.

There's a lot to pick up on,
'Specially socially.
In the words of an ancient Assyrian,
"I often regret that I have spoken,
Never that I have been silent."
And you've got to remember,
Don't go fishing for compliments,
But learn to receive them graciously.
A ton to remember,
Fun or not fun to remember,
As you're goin' from zero to sixty.

You've got to remember;
It's easy not to remember.
You've got your nouns and your pronouns,
Your verbs, and your adverbs,
Your adjectives,
Seven conjunctions, 70 prepositions.
Wow, is that it?
There's never a lack of
Old information to keep track of.
There's quite enough to remember,

Sometimes it's tough to remember,
As you're goin' from zero to sixty.

Let's see...

You got your B1, your B3,
Your pantothenic acid...
Your B6, your B12...your B2.
There may be be another B.
If I only knew!

You've got to remember:
Every cloud has a silver lining,
Every silver lining a tiny tear,
And every tiny tear...
Well I don't know where
To go from there.

PECULIAR UNIVERSE
(based on Béla Fleck's
"Circus of Regrets")
Music, Béla Fleck
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather

"It's one peculiar universe."
That's what you would say
Now and again;
Then you'd sigh in the saddest of ways,
Almost silent.
And I of course don't disagree—
Finding, now, that it is only me
Wandering down the alleyways
Of this peculiar universe.
Horns blare, hapless crowds press,
Nickel moon sliding by above
Where we brave Earthlings fall in love.

"This is an awfully funny place."
That's what you would say,
Rather plaintively,
When you'd come to consider its ways
Somewhat crazy,
But after all was said and done,
You could not conceive of a better one,
Counting off the miracles
In this peculiar universe:

Blue sea, lightning flashing,
And the soft thunder of surprise
When I first looked into your eyes.

I never meant—but never mind...
Once again I'm whispering to the air.
Evening's warm and I bring out my chair,
Almost smiling.

I twirl my teaspoon in the cup.
I can see the sky without looking up,
Down here in the checkerboard
Of this peculiar universe.
Phones ring, words fall, eyes fill,
Little stars centuries above.
Where we brave Earthlings fall in love,
Where we brave Earthlings fall.

I FORGOT TO HAVE CHILDREN
Music, Shelly Berg
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather

Did you ever have somethin' slip your mind—
You can't imagine what it is, but you always find
You're so sorry you forgot it,
Sorry you forgot it?
Like a really big deal that passed you by,
You try and you try to remember why
You're so sorry you forgot it,
Sorry you forgot it.
Well, that was me until yesterday;
Woke up and discovered, to my dismay,

I forgot to have children!
Forgot to have 'em,
Soon it'll be too late.

I been workin' like a maniac day and night,
And I'm certainly entitled to an oversight,
But how did I forget it,
How did I forget it?
Maybe the alarm went off and I hit the snooze,
Now I'll never be buyin' those tiny shoes,
Or those cute hats with the animal ears,
Or the economy bottle of No More Tears.
Playin' catch-up, thinking of me,

I didn't get rollin' on a family,
Now see?!

I forgot to have have children!
Forgot to have 'em,
Soon it'll be too late.
I stumbled at the starting gate.

Who will I dress up on all those Halloweens?
How will I pass on my very own set of genes?
I don't know, baby.
You tell me.

I forgot to have children!
Forgot to have 'em,
Soon it'll be too late.

Last week at the airport,
I saw a sweet sight
A mother with toddler,
Pre-boarding my flight.
The mom helped her daughter
To gather her things,
Gently refastened
Her fairy-tale wings.
I thought that they seemed
Like a nice little team.
For only a moment,
I entered a dream.

There was a guy I knew at B.S.U;
He was a real smart cookie and a looker too,
Had eyes to be a daddy.
Me, I wasn't ready.

I met a silver fox at the Jersey Shore.
He'd had six with his ex but he wanted more.
"Just not my scene, Mr. Epstein."
I got dogs and cats and ferret kits,
All cute as corn, I love 'em to bits,

But I forgot to have
Pretty little children!
Forgot to have 'em,
Soon it'll be too late.
I stumbled at the starting gate.

Who will I write down on my living trust?
Who will I teach how to make my cracker crust?
I don't know, buddy,
I'm comin' up empty.

I forgot to have children,
Forgot to have `em.

*I've lost my keys, my grammy's locket,
Left my phone in the
seat-back pocket,
Forgotten that perfume I hate,
And the names of guys
I used to date,
Proving repeatedly
What a terrible scatterbrain I can be,*

And I forgot to have...
Ooh wee,
Silly, absent-minded me,
Soon it will be
Too late!

**OLD AT EIGHTEEN/
DOG BOWL
Music, Eddie Arkin
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

(for Lynne)

My first sunrise
Over the East River...
Course, I can't really see it,
But the river's not far away.
Could this walkup be any smaller?
Could my heart possibly be fuller?
How can I feel old at eighteen?

Toothbrush, hairbrush,
Ready for the cattle call;
Promise you your mama's
Gonna wow them all.
Flat broke, what the heck,
Write another rubber check,

'Cause I eventually gotta eat.
Chew toy, good boy,
Back around eleven.
Takin' the city by the tail, that's the goal.
We're gonna be just fine, don't whine—
I got you covered,
Bebop on the radio,
Water in the dog bowl.

Oh, they told me
I must be so careful.
I am not all that careful
But I'm under some lucky star.
Walking crosstown well after midnight.
Whiskey sours...burning out my love light,
Wondering why I feel old at eighteen.

Toothpick, lipstick,
Waiting for you-know-who—
He'll never be a friend like you.
I keep searching for affection
In the general direction of the rhythm section.
Here's a Kong,
Won't be long, I promise.
A little romance, good for the soul!
That was a nice run, big fun,
So take a load off!
Bebop on the radio,
Water in the dog bowl,
Water in the dog bowl.

We'll go rambling
Down by the East River.
You are the dearest of boys.
Lick your dog bowl clean.
Tell me I'm not old at eighteen.

PERUGIA

**Music, Russell Ferrante/
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

Based on Felix Mendelssohn's "Venetianisches Gondellied"

(for my father)

The streets of steps
Are everywhere,
In dreams I have about the place.
Some seem to end
In empty air.
They are all I recall of Perugia—
The steps, and your fragile face.

When I was young,
You'd raise me high,
A world away from harm.
It broke my heart,
The way you clung to my arm
In Perugia.

I told you what was fading fast,
Was not, and had never been you.
You met my gaze, and
smiled at last,
Because you adored me,
Because you believed it was true.

The dreams are all the same.
I watched as you became a child,
When you smiled,
You smiled.

**THINGS I LEARNED
IN HIGH SCHOOL
Music, Shelly Berg
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

Sometimes,
Someone you held in
High regard, or low,
Isn't quite who you thought
He or she was at all.
The apparently mighty can fall,
And they will,
Or the humbly mousy
Wake a slumbering skill.
Life's funny that way.

The highly cool can be uncool.
Yeah, that's one of the

Things I learned in high school.

Sometimes,
What you see as the
Real world, is not,
But it sorta resembles
The much larger one.
We may pay for an excess of fun—
Through the nose.
You can skimp on your shuteye;
Do it much and it shows.
You really should sleep.

Fluorescent lights are unduly cruel.
Yeah, that's one of the
Things I learned in high school.

Spacing out with pad and pen...
It's 1964 again.
There were moments,
Truth be told,
I was also sharp and cold.

I was one of them,
None of them,
Ages ago.

Sometimes, in the thick of the
Sickening competition,
You crawl into a tunnel
Of your own design,
You believe it'll never be fine;
You despair,
Till you all of a sudden
Throw your cap in the air,
Suddenly cheer with the rest.

You hardly rank, and then you rule.
Yeah, yeah, yeah,
That's one of the
Things I learned in high school.

TWO DESPERATE WOMEN IN THEIR LATE 30s
Music, Russell Ferrante

Lyrics, Lorraine Feather

(for Linda)

Hard times in California—
One year was especially bad,
And sometimes
I grew tired of trying.
It saved me that I always had
My best girlfriend.

We were bold, we were youngish,
And we did what we knew we had to do;
We were two desperate women
In their late 30s.
We'd been wheels with record deals,
Opportunities that we maybe blew.
We were two desperate women
In their late 30s.

One day we would again have it made,
Sip fine wine on the mountain,
Tally up our successes,
Dressed in hand-beaded dresses.
But for now we'd swill hard lemonade
By the fiberglass fountain,
Each ignoring the oncoming train
That was otherwise known
As Our Fortieth Birthdays,
To be desperately feared.
Ever closer it neared.

Bruised a bit from the business,
With our old self-esteem a tad askew,
We were two desperate women
In their late 30s,
Two desperate women.

We were hip, we were hottish,
Not the same, though, as being twenty-two,
To be two desperate women
In their late 30s—no, no.

You'd say:

"Down the line, tell you what
We might head up some entertainment conglomerate—

Call it 'Two Desperate Women
In Their Late 30s.'

In December your dashing young prince
Had decamped with his chariot.
Though it felt pretty funky,
You stayed focused and spunky,
Madly booking your band ever since,
Country rock at the Marriott.
As for me, I spent most waking hours
Hawking ink on the phone,
Never using my real name,
Is was too déjà vu, ooh, ooh...
Somehow we soldiered through.

I was Jewish, you were WASPish,
But in all things that mattered, I was you.
We were two desperate women
In their late 30s,
Two desperate women.

Ai yai yai yai
Ai yai yai
Ai yai yai,
Two desperate women.

THE GIRL WITH THE LAZY EYE
Music, Russell Ferrante
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather

We must have a chat with the parents
Of the girl with the lazy eye.
Her grades have been mediocre.
We simply can't fathom why.
We know she's as bright as a button.
There's a lot in that funny head,
But don't try and coax her out of it!
She pulls farther inside instead.
She shuffles down the halls,
And hugs the plaster walls.
She has an odd way,

The girl with the lazy eye.

Mrs. Dell found a book of her poems,
More than every third word crossed out.
They showed a disturbing morbidity.
We've no clue what that's all about.
While the others are biking or skating,
She lies belly-down in the grass.
She talks more to the ants and caterpillars
Than the kids in her homeroom class,
Who mock her bunchy socks,
And hide her pencil box.
Not easy as they,
The girl with the lazy eye.

We fear a grave mistake was made
In skipping her that extra grade.
She isn't "with it" socially.
She tested at 153,
A gifted but a lazy child.
Her doodles are profuse and wild:
The Coliseum, a ghostly ship,
The cosmos with a cosmic rip,
And if you praise her one small bit,
She can't begin to handle it,
Goes flying away.
Flying away.

We need to arrange for some counseling
For the girl with the lazy eye.
She had a close friend
one semester.
Ana's now back in Paraguay.
At times I feel sure we're connecting—
That her thoughts, as I pass her by,
Wander sideways and catch my compassion,
But it's only her lazy eye.
If I could have her ear,
I'd hope that she would hear
What I need to say
To the girl with the lazy eye.

"I think you'll like the world you'll find
When grammar school is far behind;
You'll blossom in your destined place,

Be sure of step and bright of face,
At least, that's how I picture you,
Not suffering, as I sense you do,
Through listless days, and restless nights,
And rude remarks, and callow slights.
They'll give up trying to pull you down,
When you escape this petty town,
Go flying away,
Flying away.

"Oh, honey...
You mustn't care that
You don't seem to fit.
Someday you'll laugh
When you remember it."

HOW DID WE END UP HERE?
Music, Eddie Arkin
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather

(for Tony)

How did we end up here,
Out on this island
That was a mountain many centuries ago,
The water cold and clear,
The winter gothic,
The spring intense as any anyone could know?

How did we end up here?
Why, it's a mystery,
As is each moment in this life of yours and mine,
Walking in joy, my dear,
Struggling with sorrow,
Shrieking with laughter when it's truly out of line.

Pileated woodpecker,
Big as any raven,
Tree frog of blazing lime,
Little as a dime,
How did we end up here,
Sharing your haven,
Where night comes waltzing in
Round ten in summertime?

This is a rainless day;
We go exploring.
That vegetation there is hostile, so beware.
Somehow we make our way,
A little dizzy,
Intoxication born of drinking in the air.

How did we end up here,
Still with each other,
From where we started, playing shy and harmless games?
Last year the hardest year,
Tending to Mother—
She practiced all day long but still forgot our names.

Gathering the tumbling time
in constant conversation:
"I love you more than life," and rarely, "Go to hell."
We weathered many moves,
One renovation.
Once in the thick of it, I swung at you
And fell over backwards.

A shaft of autumn light
Pierces the grey here...
Bright threads of silver in the chilly morning sun.
How did we end up here?
Why can't we stay here?
Why was it me instead of any other one?

SCRABBLE

Music, Dick Hyman
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather
(based on Dick Hyman's
"Barrel of Keys")

I need a, I need a, I need a D.
I need a, I need a, I need a G.
My baby is a whiz at playing Scrabble;
Compared to where he is, I merely dabble.
Oh how I wanna defeat him now,
Whip his Mensa fanny somehow;
Might seem like pie-in-the-sky,
But I'm gonna try.

I got a, I got a, I got a Q,
Could use a, could use a, could use a U.
He knows the full array of U-less Q words;
Every time we play I pick up new words.
Really, I feel a, I feel a fool.
Big shot went to a Connecticut prep school!
Lord knows I'll tell the town
When I bring him down.

Though his body isn't awfully sturdy,
And his manner is incredibly nerdy,
Conversation often overly wordy,
He's a heck of a brain.

Monday night we played our landlady Dushka
While we listened to the score of *Petrouchka*;
Dushka put a double O in "babushka."
You could see his pain.
It was just a joke that sank like lead!
She's been known to mess with his head.

I gotta, I gotta, I gotta think;
I'd love a, I'd love a, I'd love a drink.
My baby has the game of Scrabble mastered,
His mastery the samewhen he's half-plastered.
Damn it! How can I be such a dunce?
I long to clobber Einstein just once.
I'll find a joy divine
When that win is mine.

Playing Scrabble,
Seven letters, not one more,
Playing Scrabble,
When you pass 500, *that's a score.*

These tiles look pretty good! Oh yeah. Now we're talkin'!

I'm in it, I'm in it, I'm in the zone.
Rememb'ring some words I have never known.
Tonight I have a certain way of playing Scrabble;
No longer will I say I merely dabble
Winning the battle with every square,
Hardly notice Hotshot's over there.
My world is not the same.
What a glorious game!

Happy day!
Got a major play.
Am I doing it? Yes I am,
I'm spelling out OXAZEPAM
(That's a tranquilizer).
392 points!

**I ALWAYS HAD A THING
FOR YOU**

**Music, Shelly Berg
Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

If I could write,
I'd write you a song;
It'd be about the secret
I've been keeping so long.
In the song's refrain,
I would say it plain:
I always had a thing for you.

In simple words,
I'd let you know why
I grow careful of myself whenever
You are nearby,
'Cause I want you so,
And I doubt you know
I always had a thing for you.

I love the way your mind works,
And I love your eyes.
Your laughter kinda does me in.
When I hear it start,
I get a catch in my heart.
I'd tell you all about it,
Only where would I begin?

You've got a quiet manner,
And a sweet old soul,
Don't need women
Beating down your door.
If they only knew
About the fire in you!
It's been melting me forever.
I can't take it anymore.

If I could write
I'd write you a song;
It'd be about the secret
I've been keeping so long.
In the song's refrain,
I would say it plain:
I always had a thing for you.

And I would sing
That song of mine,
And hope you liked the turnaround
In the very last line,
The one that says
How glad I'd be
To find you always had a thing for me,
Always, always...
How glad I'd be
To find you always had a thing for me.