

## MY OWN PARTICULAR LIFE

Music, Eddie Arkin/Lyrics, Lorraine Feather

Time to put life in the day,  
My own particular life.  
Downbeat, I'm ready to play.  
We call this one "My Own Particular Life."

Yesterday I said to myself,  
"You gotta try and piece your scene back together."  
Today that sounds mild, feeble.  
There is no try.  
It's crystal clear to me.  
Might be the coffee.

Put another nickel in.  
Let's go. Again I begin  
My own particular life.  
This happened, that happened.  
I told seven strangers  
My tale of woe, woe, woe, woe.

*One day in the life, you rush outside in between two hard frosts,  
and tuck a spectacular variety of bulbs and corms and rhizomes and tubers  
into the ground: daffodils, crocuses, irises, bearded irises, tulips, species tulips,  
Asiatic lilies, Oriental lilies, hyacinths, wood hyacinths. And they might come up  
in a magnificent display, and everybody will drive by your sumptuous garden  
and be all, "Nice landscaping; great job."*

*Or on the other hand, somebody might drive by your garden right when  
the most shoots are coming up at the same time; veer off the road  
and go plowing through the whole area, crushing everything; angle back  
onto the street; continue on their merry way without giving it a single thought.*

Time to put life in the day,  
My own particular life.  
I'm getting carried away with  
My own particular life.

Yesterday I thought to myself,  
"All that was a waste of time."  
Today, I must call BS.  
Do, or do not,  
The thing you think you cannot do,  
Do, do, do, do, do, do.

Some lessons feed your soul.  
Some eat your lunch.  
They're all curricular,  
In my own particular life,  
Particular life, particular life.

Put another nickel in.

Let's go.

**MUSIC FROM THE CEILING**

**Music, Eddie Arkin/Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

*for Tony*

There was a sliver of time  
When you still picked up the phone,  
And followed as best as you were able.

You weren't the same,  
But you remembered my name.  
Now, I'm a stranger at the table.

You are uncommonly young,  
As we consider it now,  
To lose what the Fates are slowly stealing,  
To stare at your hand,  
Complain you don't understand  
Why music is coming from the ceiling.

You stood by the cove,  
And focused far away,  
With the binoculars I'd given you  
On Christmas Day,  
Watching a red-tailed hawk,  
While I poured the wine.  
I'd bring up those moments  
When we were on the line.

"I can't find the word," you'd say.  
"How 'bout we go back," you'd say.

I saw you crumple inside  
From an unspeakable loss.  
You were raking the garden and weeping.  
Years of gladness and pain,  
Desert summers and rain.  
I've gathered our memories for safekeeping,

With all your expressions,  
In a velvet case,  
Like "Some people on this earth  
Should be hurled into space,"  
"Do it to death,"  
"Thanks for the blow-by-blow."  
You were hilarious  
From the word go.

"I love that you call," you'd say.  
"I love you so much," you'd say.

I wish, with all my broken soul,  
I could see you soon,  
In some celestial watering-hole,  
Halfway to the moon.  
Our toast would be,  
"Let's do it to death."  
Your eyes would shine with feeling.  
We'd sing together, under our breath,  
To music from the ceiling,  
From the ceiling.

**EVERYTHING ELSE IS WAITING**  
**Music, Eddie Arkin/Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

Meet my eyes, my love.  
See my smile.  
Don't look down, my love.  
It's only a mile.  
In your deepest heart,  
You have all you require.  
Life is on the wire,  
And everything else is waiting.

The past is roiling beneath you,  
Words you wish you'd never said,  
Truths you wish you never knew,  
But look at you, look at you,  
Look at you, look at you.

You accompanied me  
To the park.  
I was lost in your story,  
Enlivened by your spark.  
Much too much of you  
To admire.  
We've had a taste of  
All we most desire,  
And everything else is waiting.

The crowd is rustling beneath you,  
Voicing dimly heard critiques,  
Fevered adulation too.  
They look at you, look at you,  
Look at you, look at you.

I have known you all my days.  
I'm hip to the way

You use a phrase two different ways,  
Your deadly focus.  
I've savored your wicked wit.  
You're like a laser,  
When it comes right down to it.

You were born to walk the wire,  
And everything else is waiting, waiting.

**"Life is on the wire, and everything else is waiting."  
—Said to wire-walker Nik Wallenda by his great-grandfather Karl.**

### **ARE YOU UP?**

**Music, Eddie Arkin/Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

*Send me a keyboard angel, angel.  
Find me an endearment  
In the alphabet bar.*

Empathy, attitude,  
Longitude, latitude,  
*Are you up?  
Are you up?  
Are you up?*

Hyperreality,  
Stinking mortality.  
*Are you up?  
Are you up?*

I had a dream.  
I was with you.  
You floated by my window,  
And out I flew.  
A minute passed.  
You typed, at last,  
"Me too."

Let's meet somewhere.  
I'm down.  
I like your voice,  
The name of your town.  
It would be nice  
To be together  
*On the ice,  
On the ice,  
On the ice,  
On the ice.*

You had a dream,  
More like a snapshot.

"OK," I say,  
"Gimme whatcha got."

*"There were words."*

*"Were they written?"*

*"No."*

*"Were they spoken?"*

*"No.*

*They went,*

'Breathe deeply,  
Chill completely.  
Enjoy the journey.  
There will be much  
You don't understand.  
Dinosaurs.  
Lights in the ocean.  
It will be grand."

Let me travel  
Into your head.  
*Are you up?*  
*Are you up?*  
*Are you up?*

Let me unravel you  
Thread by thread.  
*You up?*  
*You up?*

*Walking far enough apart,  
We share a common heart,  
Glide along the path of no resistance.  
We turn to face each other,  
Reach out to one another,  
Nearly touch ten fingers,  
Glove to glove.  
We're making love.*

Empathy, attitude,  
Longitude, latitude.  
Are you up?

I like the way you write to me.  
It's a little bit formal.  
I like your wee mistakes.  
I like your paragraph breaks.  
*I like you.*

Turn off the light.  
Turn off the phone.

Imagine the rush  
If we were not alone.

### **A HOPEFUL NOTE**

**Music, Dave Grusin/Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

One of my friends grew furious on my behalf.  
One used a morbid metaphor that made me laugh.

A dozen hands were keeping me afloat.

Thank you, my friend,  
For sending me your hopeful note,  
For every kindly word you wrote.

One of my friends offered me a place to stay.

One poured me a glass of Grand Marnier.

Last night you called,  
To read me an inspiring quote.  
It started dark, but ended on a hopeful note.

I know so many mortals,  
In person and online,  
Who have awful troubles,  
Much worse than mine,  
They wake up every morning,  
Unable to forget  
That they are sick, or out of dreams,  
Or deep in debt.

How potent are the memories  
That consume the human mind.

He found me at the party,  
Embraced me from behind,  
Said something far too eloquent  
Not to seal the deal.

How was I to understand  
It wasn't real?

One old friend suggested lunch,  
Paid the tab and blew a kiss.

One friend gave me her clinical hypothesis.

And In this morning's mail,

The subject line was  
"That's not all she wrote."

Thank you, my friend,  
For reading me that poignant quote,  
For sending me your hopeful note.

### **A GRAND INVENTION**

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

*The word “diorama” can either refer to a 19th-century mobile theatre device, or, in modern usage, a three-dimensional full-size or miniature model, sometimes enclosed in a glass showcase for a museum.*

*The word originated in 1823. It literally means “through that which is seen.” The diorama was invented by Louis Daguerre and Charles Marie Bouton, first exhibited in Paris in 1822.*

Look through the eyepiece. You’ll see  
A little you, a little me.  
We’re laughing recklessly,  
Or are we yelling at the heavens?  
Upstage, a tiny train,  
A curving mango sky.  
Around us, inch-high people,  
Saying goodbye.  
“Goodbye, goodbye, my dear.  
I cannot let you go,  
Nor keep you here.”

Love is a grand invention  
Of the ancient kind,  
A flare of inspiration  
In some fertile mind  
Who sketched a Hallmark heart  
Across the sky.  
A grand invention,  
You and I.

Love is a grand invention  
Of the genius kind,  
A daily affirmation  
Easing the daily grind,  
Fashioned with care before  
This world began,  
A grand invention,  
More wondrous than the

Locomotive, telephone,  
Or various gadgets like  
The kaleidoscope, zoetrope, stereopticon—  
Fill in the name of any grand invention.  
Why not mention the Jumbotron,  
And those holograms we saw in Helsinki?  
The departed rock on, rock on.

*“Did you know that most of what you are seeing on the screen is nothing at all? Just a blank screen? When a film goes through a projector, it is in constant motion until it reaches the gate—the area where light hits the film. At this point, the film is held for a brief moment in front of the light source, which projects the image through the lens and onto the screen. 24 frames in the film are shown every second in this manner.”\**

Stay strong, stay strong, my sweet.  
Without you, how I grieve.

With you, I am complete.

Love is the grand invention  
Of an overtaxed creator,  
Who tucked the notion in their pocket  
Like a candy bar for later,  
The “falling” part  
A luscious compensation  
For strife and pain, the food chain.

Today, I started trembling  
From the words you’ve yet to say,  
Felt my struggles and my sadness  
Vanish into air, away!  
You invited me tonight  
To this most glamorous of spaces,  
Where the galaxies grow dim  
Beside the joy upon our faces.

\*Sheri Smith, projectionist/manager of the Dryden Theatre in Rochester, NY

### **SWEET LITTLE CREATURE**

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

*for Albert*

Sweet little creature,  
Dear little cat,  
We’re going to move  
From a house to a flat,  
But for now, you’ll be safe  
In this kitty hotel,  
Across from Our Lady of Sorrows.

These people seem kind.  
You’ll be petted and fed.  
Soon we’ll have a new home.  
You can sleep on the bed.  
I’ll keep you in mind  
Every step of the way,  
As I map out our brighter tomorrows.

My mom once told me,  
“Animals are wise.  
They can sense things,  
Like secrets, like lies.”

I had one eye on the exit,  
Too terrified to speak.  
From the shadows,  
You let out a most peculiar mew,



More like a strangled squeak,  
As if you knew,  
You tender spirit, you.

I said I'd be back,  
And guess what, here I am!  
I hear you did well  
On your wellness exam.  
They mentioned your docile, affectionate ways,  
Which, of course, I am proudly aware of.

My life hasn't been free  
Of folly, or sin,  
But I stood with the angels  
When I took you in.  
A duty to cherish,  
A glorious gift,  
Having one precious life to take care of.

Sweet little creature,  
Dear little guy,  
Don't be worried if sometimes  
I cry and I cry,  
In our cozy new place,  
On a friendly old street.  
We'll be happy together.  
We'll be happy together.  
We'll land on our feet.

#### **ARBITRARY DRAWERS**

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

One adrenalized hour  
Since I learned what gave.  
One assumption jumped  
In an early grave.  
No time for tears,  
Though they flow like no one's business.  
(You'd call a dozen times a day.)

The ghosts of love,  
Seen dimly through the snow,  
Are peering through the windows,  
Rattling the doors,  
As I pile your utensils on the cobalt countertop,  
And put them all back in arbitrary drawers.

I make a gratitude list  
When the world goes whack.  
There are quite a few people  
Who have my back.  
Close friends check in,

As I paw through my belongings.  
(You never cared to meet my friends.)

I won't plod on,  
Like some automaton,  
Working up a sweat  
Wet-Swiffing the floors,  
Only gather what you so elegantly organized,  
And put it all back in arbitrary drawers:

The pizza peel, the pastry wheel,  
The slicers, the ricers.  
I pause, admire for a minute  
The shiny cheese knife with the three holes in it,  
Ungroup, with a lightening heart,  
The serving spoons I could never tell apart.

Did I wipe the shelf?  
Should I close the flue?  
My hair's on fire,  
My reality askew.  
I imagine that  
In a year, or three,  
You will speak to her similarly,  
But wishing it would be unseemly.

I'm a one-seater plane  
That's taxiing through the fog,  
On an uncontrolled field.  
I'm an audience unsettled  
When the rabbit is revealed.  
I'm a rower blindly reaching  
For imaginary oars.  
I'm about to leave for good,  
With several uncompleted chores,  
After heaping your utensils on the Corian countertop,  
And putting them away in arbitrary drawers.

*In the literal blink of an eye, I find myself in another state, another town, another space,  
with wedding-cake ceilings and battered floors; where the thermostats are only for show,  
and the dishwasher cannot remain silent. I'm drinking my coffee in a different light, that filters through colored glass;  
contemplating the generous loan of it all; balancing what I don't have that someone else does, against what I do have,  
which is, oh my God,*

It's just what I wanted.  
It's just what I wanted.

#### **LIFE STORY**

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

If you can bear to tell

One more woman  
Your life story,  
Won't you tell me?  
I'm interested,  
To the nth degree,  
In anything and everything you've got to say.  
You may as well.  
You've come all this way.

Start early, or begin  
In the middle  
Of your life story.  
Amble around.  
There's no great rush  
To cover ground.  
You have a radiance, a darkness too.  
What history  
Has made you you?

Clearly, you've never shirked  
At following your purpose.  
There's a bliss and a discomfort  
That goes with it.  
One threat has always lurked,  
And it means to do you in.  
On any moonless night,  
You could come nose-to-nose with it.

You tell me there are times  
When you're quite taken with yourself,  
Or at least, certain you matter,  
Other times, you fear you're not all that.  
I feel the urge to heal you of the latter  
In a lifetime flat.  
You think you are too studious.  
You're not. I think it's hot.

You ask if I might tell  
One more man  
My life story.  
I can go on at length!  
I hope you have the strength.  
You softly joke,  
"What else have we got to do?"  
And I am sure  
The loveliest event of my life story  
Will be you.

#### **JACKET WEATHER**

**Music, Eddie Arkin/Lyrics, Lorraine Feather**

You go grab some firewood.  
I'll turn back the clocks,  
Put evergreens and pine cones  
In the window box.  
We'll chill out our outlook,  
Let the thrill begin.  
We're younger than springtime,  
Older than sin.  
Ooh, It's jacket weather.

It's a tad too soon to need your puffy coat,  
Or muffler-ize your throat.  
It's jacket weather.

A yen to be courageous  
Trembles in the air,  
And thank you, Universe,  
I don't hurt anywhere, so there.  
I've broken down the tent  
That was living on the lawn.  
The annuals out back are looking woebegone.  
Ooh, It's jacket weather.

The ginkgo's yellow as the yellow star above.  
Grab your gloves, my love.  
It's jacket weather.

Why stay inside  
When the outside  
Is epic like this?  
Our immediate future is a kiss.  
Trees are at full saturation  
All over town,  
But there's a wind on the way. They say  
You gotta look up when it all comes down,  
Gotta look up when it all goes down,  
Gotta look up when it all comes down,  
Gotta look up when it all goes down.

Something changed when I was sleeping.  
I believe I recollect  
Someone whispering in my ear  
About the butterfly effect,  
The whispering intermingled with  
A banging in the eaves.  
The swirling by the driveway  
Wasn't cardinals, but leaves.

It's way past time for needing the A/C.  
Come take a trip with me.

It's jacket weather.

I could walk to San Antonio  
And never feel a twinge,  
Shed the preconceptions  
On which all my worries hinge,  
Sleep for an eternity,  
Then gingerly arise,  
To find the swirling by the driveway  
Wasn't leaves, but butterflies.

*The trees were naked, boom, like that,  
In 15 seconds flat.*