



## **OWEN TEMPLE RINGS ON A TREE**

*Rings on a Tree* is the ninth released album from Austin, Texas-based songwriter Owen Temple.

The new record is a concept album -- an examination of family history and the way every interaction we have reverberates for generations.

"It's clear that our lives are a distillation and expansion of the lives that have come before us," Temple said. "Every life, every interaction of matter and energy that happens, reverberates through the universe in an ever-expanding field. Waves of behavior that cause other waves of behavior, not just in one life, but in all our lives."

Recorded with producer **Gordy Quist**, the album has the feel of a live performance with stellar contributions from **Josh Flowers** on bass, **Geoff Queen** on pedal steel, and **Rick Richards** on drums (Ray Wylie Hubbard, Gurf Morlix). **Walt Wilkins** and **Kelley Mickwee** lend harmony vocals to the songs.

The project includes songs written by Temple and co-writes with Hal Ketchum, Walt Wilkins, Kelley Mickwee, George Ensle, Nathan Hamilton and Brandon Bolin.

### **For Interviews or Additional Info:**

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### **Praise for Owen Temple and previous projects**

"Owen Temple takes on the job of Texas troubadour with grave intent... One has to admire Temple's focus on his craft, which he continues to burnish in smart and tuneful ways."

-Jim Caligiuri, *Austin Chronicle*

"Temple's songs are sophisticated and enlightening... He writes with a folksinger's eye, observing intimate, interior details of every day life, and painting big, mythological sketches..."

-Eli Messinger, *Hyperbolium*

"Owen Temple sings the truth. In the narrative folk tradition, the Austin-based singer-songwriter pens tunes that tell stories in plain-spoken yet persuasive fashion. His characters could be real, and many times they are. But there's no doubt that Temple is nourishing his muse with the realities of life around him... Musically, Temple keeps to his spacious merger of bluegrass, blues and folk."

-Mario Tarradell, *Dallas Morning News*

### **FOCUS TRACKS:**

- 1. The Song of Us**
- 2. Watch It Shine**
- 10. Are We There Yet?**
- 4. Beautiful Accidents**
- 6. Fork in the Road**



## **Releasing in September 2023**

## Owen Temple Takes a Long Look Forward and Back on His New Album 'Rings on A Tree'

### **The Collection Investigates His Family History and The History of Humankind with His Usual Blend of Humor and Honesty**

Owen Temple's new record, *Rings on A Tree*, is a concept album - an examination of family history and the way every interaction we have reverberates for generations.

"It's clear that our lives are a distillation and expansion of the lives that have come before us," Temple said. "Every life, every interaction of matter and energy that happens, reverberates through the universe in an ever-expanding field. Waves of behavior that cause other waves of behavior, not just in one life, but in all our lives.

"During the Covid lockdown, I wasn't writing much on my own, but when a friend would call and say, 'Let's go to a park and write a song,' I'd always go. These meetups resulted in a reexamination of what's important in life. We wrote songs that looked at the intergenerational interactions that created a certain wisdom, insights that transcend our narrow view of the present."

As the songs accumulated, Temple saw them taking a spiritual, philosophical tone. "I was haunted by the ideas of our great-grandparents. Shadowy photos and mysterious documents from their eight lives give us clues about how these people have major consequence on our lives, even if we don't understand exactly how. If you trace the branches of any family tree back far enough, you can see we're all connected. That inspired the song 'Rings on a Tree' and the entire album."

Temple organized the songs into three five song sets: Big Bang, Pantheon and Tree of Life. "Part 1 - Big Bang is about beginnings, investigating the consciousness we all share. Before any stories are made, there is I AM, my ancestors and yours, the beginning of knowledge, the awareness of being a finite, mortal human. The perspectives on 'Days,' 'Watch It Shine,' and 'Beautiful Accidents' are all perspectives of squinting to see where we first appear on the historical map of space and time. 'Always Becoming' acknowledges the forward motion and the constants of change, growth, and evolution.

"Part 2 - Pantheon contains songs about connecting with our ancestors and our lineage. 'Fork in the Road' is about the path not taken and the continual choice of our next steps. 'Can't Stop Won't Stop' and 'Virginia and Hazel' are songs about great-grandparents and the concerns and experiences they had when they were young people that then had consequences for us, their descendants, in our lifetimes. 'Are We There Yet' is about the intergenerational car trips in all of our lives - the older people in front, the younger people in the back, wondering where we're going. 'Churches and Cantinas' is anthropological, studying the impulse toward redemption that those two institutions (represented by two people in the story) seek each in their own way.

"Part 3 - Tree of Life presents the connection to nature that is the core of our lineage. 'Wild Seeds' and 'Rings on a Tree' are about the struggle to survive and thrive that we share in common with all life; 'Gentle James' is about an ancestor who was a farmer and the people he influenced, despite being a shy man, uncomfortable with others. 'More Like September' is a love song both to fall and to a love that abides between extremes. 'Twenty Years' ties everything up with a fantasy of meeting with your future self to receive some spiritual guidance."

Temple enlisted the help of producer Gordy Quist to bring the songs to life. “Gordy’s been a songwriting collaborator for a long time. He took over The Finishing School, the revered studio of George Reiff (Band of Heathens, Ray Wylie Hubbard). I love his sonic aesthetic. We took the time to pause, after we played it through for the musicians in the studio, and ask, ‘Is there anything we can do to make it more interesting?’ He approached the arranging in a way that was both comfortable and challenging.”

Temple and Quist played guitar and Temple’s long time rhythm section – Josh Flowers on bass and drummer Rick Richards – laid down the foundation. Other players included Trevor Nealon from Band of Heathens on organ and piano, Geoff Queen on pedal steel, Dobro and guitar and invited guests adding vocal harmonies and fiddle.

The album opens with “The Song of Us,” a mid-tempo country tune, celebrating a world that’s changing fast, but fundamentally stays the same. Baritone guitar and pedal steel bubble beneath Temple’s vocal, as he delivers a mellow benediction uniting earth and the cosmos through the breath of a single human. “If Thich Naht Hahn and Frank Sinatra wrote a song together, would it sound like this?”

Long sustained notes from Geoff Queen’s pedal steel gives “Watch It Shine” a celestial aura. Temple celebrates the light within and the light that surrounds us – the shimmering of the sun, moon and stars. They’re all reflected in the harmonies of the chorus. “Beautiful Accidents” describes the magical moments in life that are often overlooked until years later. Temple and Kelley Mickwee (the song’s co-writer) sketch out a family’s history, from first kiss to marriage and family. Acoustic mandolin and Nealon’s smooth electric piano give the music a nostalgic ambience.

“Fork in the Road” is an up-tempo rocker, with a hint of R&B in its swirling organ, crunchy electric guitar and cool backbeat. The uplifting harmonies of the chorus remind us that every moment changes our lives in profound, if unrecognized ways. “Are We There Yet?” is a bluesy country tune with twanging guitars, sticks on the snare and piano keys clicking like highway mile markers on a long summer road trip. The chorus suggests a ‘50s rock’n’roll hit playing on a radio.

The music on the album flows smoothly, highlighting the journeys of individuals, families and humanity as a whole. “It’s the arc of a hero’s journey that Joseph Campbell identified,” Temple said. “The idea of venturing out of your ordered life to have experiences that will change you for the better. The songs are artifacts from the paths we’ve walked, as individuals and part of humanity. The hope is they’ll forge a connection to the past that will help us make wiser choices in the present.”

**Produced by** Gordy Quist  
**Engineered & Mixed by**  
Steve Christensen  
Recorded at The Finishing School,  
Austin, Texas  
**Mastered by** Chris Longwood

## **The Players**

**Owen Temple** – Vocals, Acoustic  
Guitar, Harmonica

**Gordy Quist** – Harmony Vocals,  
Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Bass

**Josh Flowers** – Bass

**Rick Richards** – Drums, Percussion

**Geoff Queen** – Pedal Steel Guitar,  
Dobro, Electric Guitar

**Trevor Nealon** – Piano, Organ

**Noah Jeffries** – Fiddle, Mandolin

**Walt Wilkins** – Harmony Vocals

**Kelley Mickwee** – Harmony Vocals

**Tina Wilkins** – Harmony Vocals

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“Always Becoming” “Wild Seeds” &

“More Like September”

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## **Rings on a Tree**

### **Side 1: Big Bang**

The Song of Us  
Watch It Shine  
Days  
Beautiful Accidents  
Always Becoming

### **Side 2: Pantheon**

Fork in the Road  
Can't Stop Won't Stop  
Virginia and Hazel  
Churches and Cantinas  
Are We There Yet

### **Side 3: Tree of Life**

Wild Seeds  
Rings on a Tree  
More Like September  
Gentle James  
Twenty Years

## **The Song of Us**

When the noise is a bit too much  
There's a way to stay in touch  
Drop the layers of distraction  
Fall into the main attraction

You're the message  
You're the sender  
You're the blessing  
and the receiver

The song of us is in the waves  
always on both night and day  
breathing in, breathing slow  
It's the I Am Radio

Galaxies with open arms  
Records spin on a disc of stars that's  
Flashing with the frequency  
Signals home to you and me

Earth the station, life broadcasting  
Chord progression everlasting  
Groove so deep in rocks and bones  
Spirits singing from the stones

The song of us is in the waves  
always on both night and day  
breathing in, breathing slow  
It's the I Am Radio

the dance is long, the lights are low  
It's the I Am Radio

Touch a tree, touch the earth  
Feel beyond our death and birth  
To rivers, oceans, clouds and rain  
To tears of joy beneath the pain

Loving stillness radiates  
Warm glow, a soft embrace  
That's everlasting, ever true  
Connecting all to me and you

The song of us is in the waves  
always on both night and day  
breathing in, breathing slow  
It's the I Am Radio  
the dance is long, the lights are low  
It's the I Am Radio

### **Watch It Shine**

I am one more pilgrim  
on this road low and high  
Through this land of miracles  
I've been traveling all night

I tangled with the darkness  
I swear at moments I was blind  
Til the dawn came up around me  
And I could see the way unwind

I am the road behind me  
I am the road ahead  
Lifted by this rocky ridge  
Cradled by the river bed  
A harmony of motion  
Through the wide expanse of time  
Sunlight through the heavens  
Watch it shine  
Watch it shine

They say there's iron in these mountains  
In bone and skin and mud  
They say iron can only come from stars  
So stars are in my blood

Red and blue and purple  
Shadows grow then fade  
Spread in all directions  
From where it all was made

I am the road behind me  
I am the road ahead  
Lifted by this rocky ridge  
Cradled by the river bed  
A harmony of motion  
Through the wide expanse of time  
Sunlight through the heavens  
Watch it shine  
Watch it shine

## Days

A place to start and a place to go  
A mind, a heart, and an open road  
It all can go a million ways  
Highs and lows - days

A fire at home and work to do  
Some hard seasons to get through  
Some fly like arrows,  
    some feel like a maze  
A path wide and narrow - days

Sunrise, sunset  
What's behind and what's not yet  
The chance to ride the light before  
it fades  
And they're all gifts - days

You turn around, you grow and change  
Everything around you will do the same  
Cause life moves in circles and it  
moves in waves  
Blessedly simple, you get days

Sunrise, sunset  
What's behind and what's not yet  
A chance to ride the light before  
it fades  
They're all gifts - days  
The chance to ride the light before

it fades  
They're all gifts - days  
They're all gifts - days

## Beautiful Accidents

He had the smell of tobacco smoke  
    on his clothes  
Didn't look a day over seventeen  
    years old  
She had the smell of magnolia on her hair  
And a southern drawl that stretched  
    from here to there  
They didn't know what they were doing,  
    but they knew it felt good  
Turned out they didn't care about the  
    why or should  
He took her to the movies,  
    she took his name  
They moved to Texarkana when  
    the baby came

Left turns and right turns get us here  
All the beautiful accidents  
over the years  
Look good on you  
They look good on you  
They look good on you

Right on the line,  
    you grew up like a weed



Swimming in the Red River all elbows  
and knees

Ten years later and a few states away  
My first job got me down the interstate  
I stopped into a place,  
I didn't know what for  
Hands in my pockets,  
both feet on the floor  
I was headed for the door,  
sick of standing around  
Somehow I saw you so I cut through  
the crowd

Left turns and right turns get us here  
All the beautiful accidents  
over the years  
Look good on you  
They look good on you  
They look good on you

And when you said I do  
I said I do too  
Beautiful accidents  
Beautiful accidents  
Beautiful accidents  
Look good on you  
They look good on you  
They look good on you  
So good on you

## **Always Becoming**

Always becoming  
Rolling and running  
We're to and from-ing and round  
back again  
Grinding and grooving  
Everything's moving  
Always becoming not just what  
we've been

Just at the threshold  
With the thinnest of toeholds  
Mining for fool's gold, shining for you  
Rocking and reeling  
Just barely dealing  
Still always becoming searching  
for true

Hearts, eyes, and wings  
Were gradual things  
Every spring brings something new  
Bright green leaves  
Grow to branches of trees  
Always becoming is all you can do

Good times and bad times  
Ringing like wind chimes  
These are the stories we tell late  
at night  
While the campfire is burning  
Slow stubborn learning

Always becoming a part of the light

Hearts, eyes, and wings  
Were gradual things  
Every spring brings something new  
Eternally guessing  
Knowing and yessing  
Always becoming  
- that's what we do

Always becoming  
Rolling and running  
We're to and from-ing and round  
back again  
Grinding and grooving  
Everything's moving  
Always becoming not just what  
we've been

### **Fork in the Road**

There never was a greater man than  
the one that just died  
All his flaws and failings get swept  
to the side  
Oh the tender mercy of a bad memory  
That let's us forget what we don't  
want to see

In the garden of Eden,  
God made a mistake

He shoulda said to Adam,  
don't eat that snake  
Now you read in the news all that's  
wrong with the world  
Pay a dollar to the boys,  
seventy cents to the girls

CHORUS:

People gonna do what they gonna  
to do till they don't  
Sometimes folks will let you down,  
most times they won't  
You might get hot or left in the cold  
Every single moment  
- a fork in the road

You don't miss a lover that you've  
never met  
It's easy to quit smoking unless you  
smoke cigarettes  
Thousands of people that you've  
never known  
Are walking down roads that cross  
over your own

I got a half a mind to leave,  
half a mind to stay  
Go on flip a coin,  
let chance choose the way  
Maybe I can love you best,  
by not loving you at all  
When you phone doesn't ring it's me

who didn't call

## CHORUS

If you're so rich,  
how come you ain't smart  
You've got a fast horse  
but no wheels on your cart  
I've been in the woodshed,  
I've been through basic training  
Don't piss on my leg  
and tell me it's raining

All your addictions tap on  
your shoulder  
Getting your attention, pulling you over  
I got a head full of pictures of  
places I've seen  
I'm a creature of habit,  
I need new routine

## CHORUS

Some folks say "this life ain't enough  
I deserve more than the days I used up  
It's got to go on forever to be  
worth the trouble"  
Given one gift their demands more  
than double

One hour of life is more than I expected  
But somehow I'm here cause many

lovers connected  
Matter, life, mind, culture grow  
like a tree  
The universe keeps going through  
you and me

## CHORUS

### **Can't Stop, Won't Stop**

A roadster driving down a railroad track  
Only one damn fool crazy enough  
to do that  
Yeah that's T.L. laying on the horn  
Laughing at the squares since the  
days he's born

There's a girl jumping fences on a  
pony bareback  
She borrowed from the circus never  
gave it back  
Daddy buys what she wants,  
she gets her way  
When her daddy say whoa,  
he gonna hear her say

## CHORUS:

Can't stop, won't stop  
You slow down  
You've been hearing her name all  
over town

Can't stop, won't stop,  
that's for sure  
Somebody else will have to mind  
the store

He's got a brass nameplate on his door  
He's got a one and some zeros,  
six or more  
But banks and debits and credits  
and such  
Nah, interest didn't interest him too much

The girl's walking with her folks on a  
downtown street  
His dad said, "that's the kind a girl you  
ought to meet"  
So he drove to her house and  
brought his violin  
Played Schubert's Serenade to reel her in

#### CHORUS

There's a baseball game between  
rival towns  
Ours is full of pro ringers from all around  
They were hired by T.L. with the  
payroll cash  
With odds of ten to one,  
he paid it back

There's a boy in St. Louis, her fiancé  
"Ah forget that guy," she heard T.L. say

"Let's run off to Texas get  
married tonight"  
The news was rockin St Louis by  
the morning light

#### CHORUS

She got so tired before the baby came  
But saloons and casinos still called  
his name  
Now he was jumping fences,  
riding bareback  
When she called from home he just  
hollered back

#### CHORUS

Now she's divorced and remarried  
out in L.A.  
The last she heard he's down  
Mexico way  
In her head, when a violin plays  
He's smiling in a roadster and she  
hears him say

#### CHORUS

### **Virginia and Hazel**

Virginia Kelley played the phonograph,  
it was Mamie's Crazy Blues

"Getting all dolled up," she said,  
"my gams look good in these shoes"  
A car pulled up and honked,  
it was a breezer '24  
She laid a kiss on her daddy's cheek,  
scrammed on out the door  
It was Hazel in the hayburner and she  
pulled out the hooch  
"Whattaya think, new Chaplin? Or the  
juice joint on the loop?"  
Oh, Virginia!

"To the gin mill!" cried Virginia.  
Hazel said, "you're on the trolley now"  
And they'll spend the next 4 decades  
living this night down  
The girls turned every head in the  
speakeasy saloon  
"She's the berries, she's a bearcat"  
were the whispers in the room  
Most were hard boileds and hoodlums  
but two Jakes pulled up two chairs  
They bought a couple rounds together,  
then they all headed out the stairs  
Oh, Virginia!

They peeled out of the parking lot  
in a '28 Model A  
and they parked down by the river,  
it was a struggle buggy you might say  
Cause both pairs were neck and neck  
when a knock came on the door

A strange man pulled a shiv and said  
"Get down on the floor"  
He said "Get out of the car,  
give me all of your jack  
If you do just what I say,  
ya'll might live to walk on back"  
Oh, Virginia!

The stranger stole the Model A,  
they had to ankle back to town  
The sheriff pinched the pickled crew for  
walking drunk around  
Virginia called her mom,  
Hazel called her dad  
Forty dollars bail was set,  
things were looking bad  
She never forgot her father's face  
when he saw her through the bars  
They didn't speak a word on the  
ride home in the car  
No, Virginia!

The light of Sunday morning showed  
the shame on Virginia's face  
at the Mineral Wells Baptist Church  
where she sang Amazing Grace  
That was Granny in the twenties,  
now she's pearls and powder blue  
Secretary at the Baptist church  
and that's Hazel in the pew  
That was Granny in the twenties,  
now she's pearls and powder blue

Secretary at the Baptist church  
and that's Hazel in the pew  
Oh, Virginia!

### **Churches and Cantinas**

She said a prayer to the virgin,  
crossed herself and sighed  
Blew out a single candle, she held her  
loneliness inside  
One early April morning,  
so tired of being alone  
While walking through the market,  
she saw a man who worked in stone  
Churches and cantinas

He was chiseled from the finest flesh  
she had ever seen  
She longed to lay down in his arms  
with no prayer in between  
At the church upon the scaffolds,  
he carves the hours away  
She walks by and looks to heaven  
a dozen times a day  
He builds churches and cantinas  
He builds churches and cantinas

He pretends he doesn't see her,  
he guesses for her it's just a game  
But he'd give this whole cathedral just  
to hear her speak his name

Later on at the cantina in a crowd  
but all alone  
While she's praying to the virgin,  
he's just praying for a home  
He builds churches and cantinas  
He builds churches and cantinas

Gather your granite,  
sharpen your tools  
You may know your craft,  
but God knows the rules  
He builds churches and cantinas  
not so far apart  
Both offer some redemption  
and soothe a lonely heart  
Churches and cantinas  
Churches and cantinas

### **Are We There Yet?**

Sitting in the back seat, Roy on the radio  
Antique roadtrip, 120 miles to go  
Quanah Texas Panhandle  
Saturday night  
Motel 6 parking lot, they left on the light

You're twelve years old,  
all summer long in a car with your  
parents, singing old songs  
Windows barely cracked,  
daddy's cigarette burning

You're reading paperbacks in  
a used suburban

CHORUS:

Are we there yet?  
Are we there yet?  
Are we there yet?  
All summer long

Blue lit swimming pool end of the day  
Pretty girl with her folks looking your way  
Game room with Pac Man,  
Donkey Kong too  
Pocket full of quarters  
and Big League Chew

Big green sign says it's still a long way  
100 miles from Dallas at the  
end of the day  
Passed up the Dairy Queen  
twenty miles ago  
It was on the wrong side so your  
Daddy said no

CHORUS

Thirty years later down  
the same old roads  
It's crazy how fast these kids have grown  
Now you're the driver  
you don't cut 'em any slack

You're trying to do it over while they're  
yelling from the back

CHORUS

**Wild Seeds**

Parking lot poured out flat and gray  
Crack in the middle showed up one day  
Dirt and the rain had just enough room  
One week later a flower bloomed  
From a wild seed on the wind  
Found a way to grow again

We don't know where we're from  
Where to aim, what to become  
Drift and spin and settle down  
'Til the next strong wind comes around  
A wild seed on the wind  
Trying to find a home again

Well you fall someplace hard  
and tough  
Put some roots down, start looking up  
Grow something beautiful,  
try to bloom  
Cause a strong wind will be  
blowing soon

We're all wild seeds on the wind  
Find a way to go and then

Fly and land and grow again  
'Til you find you're home again  
We're wild seeds on the wind  
We're all wild seeds on the wind  
We're all wild seeds on the wind

### **Rings on a Tree**

The cottonwood taught me how to  
listen to the wind  
The willow showed me how to bend  
The mighty oak showed me how to  
stand strong in a storm  
And all that can become of an acorn

The cypress tree taught me how to  
hold on through a flood  
Keep my roots deep and I won't budge  
The pine tree taught me how to  
reach for the sky  
And the cedar showed how to lay low  
and get by when its dry

How I've grown, who I've come to be  
These lessons learned, my history  
Reads like the rings on a tree

Mother Nature's been my  
teacher all along  
The rosewood on this guitar  
wrote this song

And the sweet magnolia brought me  
love on a southern summer breeze  
And the giant redwood brought me  
to my knees

How I've grown, who I've come to be  
Lessons learned, my history  
Reads like the rings on a tree

And I've learned what's lost in the fall  
brings new beginnings in the spring  
and one more ring

How I've grown, who I've come to be  
These lessons learned, my history  
Reads like the rings on a tree  
Feels like rings on a tree

### **More Like September**

Spring is all show biz, goes off like a riot  
A season of passion that just  
won't be quiet  
A chaos of color, flowers, and weeds  
All the poets rave on and on about spring

And summer's a trail by fire, by furnace  
Test of your faith  
and of dogged endurance  
Sweat and black pavement  
and sunburned skin



Somehow we made it  
through August again

To a bouquet of pencils,  
sharpened and yellow  
The first autumn leaves  
falling from high  
A breath of cool air,  
there on your pillow  
From a window that's finally  
opened up wide  
May all of these things  
help you remember  
That I love you more,  
more like September

And winter's a bore, slow and cold  
Nights are too long with  
too many clothes  
A still life picture all white and grey  
Stuck locked inside, not like today

A bouquet of pencils,  
sharpened and yellow  
Red and orange leaves  
falling from high  
A breath of cool air,  
there on your pillow  
From a window that's  
finally opened up wide  
May all of these things  
help you remember

That I love you more,  
more like September  
Yeah I love you more,  
more like September

### **Gentle James**

Hours before the dawn,  
James opened up his eyes  
Cotton bursting from the soil from the  
moment he would rise  
Apple trees dropped their fruit and  
bowed before his gaze  
Harvesting and growing crops was  
how he spent his days  
Gentle James

His wife Ada hugged him close  
and so she bore a child  
For each hour of the daylight,  
eight kids were running wild  
They were angels, they were devils,  
they worked kitchens and in fields  
Abundance and fertility his  
progeny would yield  
Gentle James

### **CHORUS:**

If you praise his name,  
"big deal" he'll say  
He'll give the credit all away

Humility, fertility will  
multiply and grow  
Sprouts spring up from his footsteps  
everywhere he'd go

Green thumb? He had green  
everything, that's how his bounty grew  
All his neighbors saw his barns full so  
that's how they knew  
Lord knows it wasn't bragging 'cause  
James barely spoke a word  
Who knows how the grand prize judge  
at the county expo heard  
Of Gentle James

So when his name was in the papers,  
his voice grew softer that day  
Now he spoke like a summer breeze,  
"aw shucks" is all he'd say  
He'd wave his hand, deflect the praise  
and reflect the Texas sun's rays  
Gentle James

CHORUS

The more famous that he got,  
the more soft spoken he would be  
"I don't like folks' attention" so he'd  
stand still as a tree  
The kids grew up and had more kids -  
cousins, brothers, sisters  
Clouds of children turned and swirled

like tornado alley twisters  
Around Gentle James

You can call him father, you can call  
him old grandpa  
Newspaper called him patriarch that  
was the final straw  
The doctor called it cancer, cells grew  
so fast they hurt  
James walked into a wheatfield and  
laid down in the dirt  
Gentle James

CHORUS

Into the fertile land that fruitful man  
had gone to seed  
Humble happiness he harvested with  
hardly any weeds  
Patient cultivation if a husband you  
would be  
And keep your arms spread out wide  
like branches of a tree  
Like Gentle James

CHORUS

Gentle James

## Twenty Years

If yourself in twenty years was sitting  
with you here  
what would she say?  
Would she tell you not to worry,  
that there's no need to hurry  
the direction you were going anyway

With her hand on your shoulder, gentle  
touch of growing older  
would you ask her how a couple  
chapters end?  
Knowing you she wouldn't tell and  
you know its just as well  
'cause the fun is finding out along the way

But I bet she'd understand if you  
reached out for her hand  
and asked for just a hint of  
what's to come  
She'd say your fears are overrated  
and what you have created  
will lead you to a sunny porch  
with friends

Now you might be waiting  
on specific situations  
and the chance to talk with her  
won't come again  
So you ask of love and riches and

question your decisions  
of divorces and the choices  
that you made

She will smile and softly say that all  
along the way you follow the hunches,  
though it's strange  
You'll do things you like to do for folks  
that care for you  
though exactly who and where and  
when will change

Yes there's only love and fear  
though it all becomes more clear  
as you see the past and future  
slowly bend  
Your fears are overrated and what  
you have created  
will get you to a sunny porch  
with friends

So if you ever you find your future self  
on your mind and you wonder what  
you would say to you  
The future might reveal if you trust in  
what you feel  
that was all you really ever had to do  
The future might reveal if you trust in  
what you feel  
that was all you really ever had to do