



for the  
**B**rave and free  
slaid cleaves

Produced by Slaid Cleaves

Executive Producer: Greg Nettles  
Recorded and mixed by Eric Blakely at Folk Reels, Austin, Texas, spring 1993  
Digital Mastering by Russ Smith  
Cover portrait by Curtis Harvey  
Cover collage photo by Bryan Peterson  
Windshield photo by Slaid Cleaves

Heartfelt thanks go out to Greg Nettles, Eric Blakely, Russ Smith, The Moxies, the guest musicians, and Karen Paradis, all of whom were instrumental in the successful completion of this project.

Special thanks also go out to Craig and Jenny Cleaves, Kiran Dix, Eric & Liam at Kinko's, and Barbara Roseman for their continuing support and friendship.

2001 reissue credits

Unreleased demos recorded by Slaid Cleaves  
Mastered by Gurf Morlix  
Design by Bryan Peterson, Peterson & Co., [petersonandco.com](http://petersonandco.com)  
Production coordinator: Karen Cleaves





## RAMBLERS

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

I was twenty years old  
We met on the road  
We were looking for a place all our own  
Didn't know what we'd find  
Didn't care at the time  
We were two souls searching for home

We rambled around  
Through cities and towns  
Searching for a place in the sun  
We lived life by the mile  
She said with a smile  
Ain't no trouble we can't outrun

We ran and we ran  
All though this great land  
We'd work awhile just to run some more  
But time has a way  
Of making people say  
It's time to start swimming for the shore

So we settled down  
In a small factory town  
I took a job at a furniture mill  
But it's hard these days  
My work it hardly pays  
And I soon felt the long winter's chill

Now Karina she's selling  
Down at the 7-11  
She says with a whispering vow  
I had what it takes  
But I made some mistakes  
That's why I'm working here now

So all you merry ramblers  
You drifters and you gamblers  
Think twice before you try to settle down  
Selling's good for some  
Others need to run  
Some will fall and some are glory bound

So all you merry ramblers  
You drifters and you gamblers  
Think twice before you try to settle down  
There'll be time to rest  
When they lay you in your best  
And you're lying six feet underground

bass: J Cleaves  
drums: Ron Erwin  
fiddle: Champ Hood  
electric guitar: Charles Rieser  
mandolin: Paul Sweeney  
harmony vocal: Dan Colehour

## BROTHER'S KEEPER

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Frankie and Johnny were brothers  
Sharing chores on their daddy's farm  
Side by side mending fences and pitching hay  
Sometimes you'd catch em' fighting  
Just a wrestling behind the barn  
But a brother's quarrel seldom last  
Til the end of the day

Now the old man retired at sixty  
Said, "Frankie it's all up to you"  
Johnny took it easy, Frank was up at first  
light of day  
He said, "Johnny I ain't your keeper  
There's plenty of work you can do"  
Johnny didn't budge, and that's when I  
heard Frankie say

Love and hate have their own season  
Remember Cain slew Able for a reason  
If I can love you like a brother,  
I can hate you too  
I'm a passionate man, no telling what I'll do  
Watch out brother, got my eye on you

Now there's something between  
two brothers  
Something more than a couple of years  
Johnny rose up and said, "Frankie,  
you can go to hell  
You're the boss cause you're two  
years older  
If you were gone, I'd shed no tears  
I'm tired of being ordered around  
And I've got something to tell:"

Love and hate have their own season  
Remember Cain slew Able for a reason  
If I can love you like a brother,  
I can hate you too  
I'm a passionate man, no telling what I'll do  
Watch out brother, got my eye on you

My patience is worn out, just  
about through  
Watch out brother, got my eye on you

bass: J Cleaves  
drums: Charlie Llewellyn  
electric guitar: Boomer Norman  
harmony vocals: Dan Colehour

## FOR THE BRAVE

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

You got off to a pretty good start  
You were on your way  
With big plans and an open heart  
Working hard every day  
But the storms came one by one  
Big plans come a crashing down  
You started loosing faith  
In everyone around

So you hide your broken heart with a smile  
Pretending that there's nothing wrong  
Brother won't you trust me for a little while  
Listen to my song  
There will be better days  
For the brave, there will be better days  
I know this world moves way too fast  
It's hard to find steady ground  
Life just keeps on slipping past  
It's gone without a sound  
I see you walk with your head hanging low  
You've stopped even wondering why  
No longer trying to win  
You're happy just to get by

bass: J Cleaves  
mandolin: Paul Sweeney  
harmony vocal: Laura Nadeau

## DANGER

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Heaven's no fun  
Without a little bit of hell  
We were built for struggle  
And we were built pretty well  
When life gets too easy  
We all need a little danger

Why do folks like a carnival ride, could it be  
They don't have enough danger in their lives  
Things are easy today  
Why does a drunk buy a bottle of booze  
When he knows there's nothing to win  
And so much to loose  
He likes the hard way

My buddies said, "Be careful  
You can see it in her eyes  
If you think you're a free man for long  
You're in for a big surprise"  
Yeah, she knows what she wants  
There's not doubt about it  
She's working her way into my life  
If I'm not careful I'm gonna end up with a wife

She's painted her name on my mailbox  
Put her pictures up on my wall  
The trap is sprung and I know it  
I'm headed for the big fall  
Yeah, she knows what she wants  
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fiddle: Champ Hood  
electric guitar: Charles Rieser  
organ: David Webb  
harmony vocal: Laura Nadeau

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electric guitar: Charles Rieser  
slide guitar: Mark Viator  
harmony vocals: Dan Colehour

## CAREFUL

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Well my heart's been broken so many times  
I didn't think I'd ever love again  
Then I met a little girl who made me feel  
Like I was born to win  
I said let's take it slow and easy  
But she's working her way into my life  
If I'm not careful, I'm gonna end up with a wife

She does all the grocery shopping  
But she's always got my car  
She made me re-arrange my living room  
Now things have gone way too far  
I feel like I'm loosing my freedom  
She's working her way into my life  
If I'm not careful I'm gonna end up with a wife

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You can see it in her eyes  
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## SOMETHING TO LOSE

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Eddie lived a life of crime  
Nobody knew really why  
Could it be that his father was never around  
Or that his mother didn't really try  
Nobody ever seemed

It started out nickel and dime  
B & E and a car radio  
Pretty soon Eddie was dealing  
That's where the money is you know  
Well they called him into court one day  
And the judge said "All right now Ed,  
What's it gonna take to get you  
outta my sight?"

And this is what Eddie said  
Give me something to lose  
Give me something to live for  
After sixteen years of time in hell  
This isn't the life you choose  
Give me something to lose  
Give me something to live for  
I've done the time, and I'll do the crime  
Until you give me something to lose

Now in the land of the brave and free  
You're expected to go for the gold  
The lucky ones take the safe way  
And others take a rockier road  
You know jail don't look too bad  
To a man who's born in hell  
Desperate men do desperate things  
And this is what you hear them tell

bass: J Cleaves  
drums: Ron Erwin  
electric guitar: Slaid Cleaves  
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## THE BALLAD OF NICK AND BETTY

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Well my friend Nick pulled out of town  
Headed out to start a new life  
On the front seat beside a pile of laundry  
Sat his sweetheart darling wife  
Well they loaded that Dodge with pots and pans  
And clothes just like the pioneers  
Then they waved goodbye, said,  
"It's a good day to die

We're gonna chase our hopes and  
leave behind our fears"  
The year was '91 and times were tough  
The recession was going strong  
Nick said to Betty if things get worse  
I don't know if we can hold on  
And on the first day of Fall Betty got her notice  
And Nick said, "It's said and done  
We're gonna leave this tired old town cause  
we're still young"

Let the clutch out baby  
Let those tires spin  
Baby I'm tired of losing  
This time we're gonna win  
We're gonna follow that sun on down  
Gonna find ourselves a boom town  
Gonna leave this town behind and start again

Nick and Betty drove a thousand miles  
And they drove a thousand miles more  
When they ran out of money, the stopped  
And Betty got a job at a convenience store  
Nick was looking for work without any luck  
Hanging his head in shame  
Betty said "Nick, it's making me sick  
We drive all this way and everything's  
just about the same"

Well it looks like this town is all used up  
The baby boomers snatched up all the good stuff  
Trust in me baby and understand  
We gotta keep on searching for the promised land

Nick and Betty drove up and down  
North and South and East and West  
And they never did find the promised land  
As by now you might have guessed  
So they drove on home and told their friends  
It doesn't matter how far you drive  
Ain't no joke, the promise is broke  
Today you just work to survive

bass: J Cleaves  
drums: Ron Erwin  
acoustic guitar: Charles Rieser  
slide guitar: Mark Viator

## ANOTHER MAN'S WEALTH

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Sam Nolan's a rancher in Llano  
Where he succeeds or he fails on his own  
Dependent on only the sun and the rain  
To pay his monthly mortgage loan  
Nolan watches his hungry cattle  
Sometimes he curses the hand he's been dealt  
But he never once thinks of giving up  
To go to work for another man's wealth

Now there will always be nights and days  
And we'll always have free men and slaves  
'Cause some will work hard for themselves  
And others will be content  
To work for another man's wealth  
I drive this 20 year old car  
No insurance, so benefit plans  
Always one step ahead of disaster  
But my time is my own and no other man's  
And this is the life that I've chosen  
As long as I've still got my health  
I'd rather sleep on the street  
Eat my dinner from a dumpster  
Than to work for another man's wealth

On a rolling Texas prairie  
The sweet smell of crude in the air  
Over a long lonesome horizon the sun  
Shines down on the wicked and the fair  
In this land of dreams and heartbreak  
There's no one to blame but yourself  
If you've got the strength to find your freedom  
You'll never work for another man's wealth

Now there will always be nights and days  
And we'll always have free men and slaves  
'Cause some will work hard for themselves  
And others will be content  
To work for another man's wealth  
And others will be content  
But I swear I'll never work for  
another man's wealth

bass: J Cleaves  
slide guitar: Mark Viator  
mandolin: Paul Sweeney

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drums: Ron Erwin  
acoustic guitar: Charles Rieser  
slide guitar: Mark Viator

## THE DAD SONG

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BM)*

I don't know why I like to play guitar  
Driving round the country from bar to bar  
I'm just living the dream that I've always had  
I guess I must've got it from my dad  
You see my daddy bought a Gibson,  
I was one year old  
I'd listen to the songs and the stories he told  
I picked up that guitar when I was just a lad  
I guess I must've got it from my dad

In the spring of '57 he turned 18  
Playing Elvis, Hank, Buddy and Gene  
I found his old records in the attic one day  
My daddy was a rocker in the USA

Well I grabbed that guitar, and I left  
home one day  
Daddy never seemed to play it  
anymore anyway  
Said, "Take it son, I can tell that  
you want it bad"  
Guess I must've got it from my dad

Well I ain't young, but I still ain't old  
I've yet to make my fortune in  
diamonds and gold  
A little silver in my hair, but just a tad  
Guess I must've got it from my dad

People say that I'm crazy, and I'll never win  
Gonna keep on rockin' til my ship comes in  
It's a life long dream, not a passing fad  
Guess I must've got it from my dad  
I'm just living the dream that he's always had  
Guess I must've got it from my dad

bass: J Cleaves  
drums: Charlie Llewellyn  
electric guitar: Boomer Norman

## YIPPIE-I-O

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

In the hill country of Texas  
I sat strumming my guitar  
In the land of the armadillo and the deer  
As the twilight turned to darkness  
There I saw a shimmering star  
And the crickets and the wind  
Was all that I could hear

Yippie-I-O  
I'm going where the whispering winds blow  
Yippie-I-O  
This land is the best friend I know

Where the pines whisper a tale  
That's as old as heaven and earth  
That's where a soul forever longs to be  
You can never put in dollars  
What the wilderness is worth  
For a man who can't be alone  
Is never free

A little silver in my hair, but just a tad  
Guess I must've got it from my dad

People say that I'm crazy, and I'll never win  
Gonna keep on rockin' til my ship comes in  
It's a life long dream, not a passing fad  
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## DESERT DREAMS

*Slaid Cleaves, Magic Rat Music (BMI)*

Come with me darling, hold my hand  
And we'll ride through this used up  
forsaken land  
We'll find a place for us, and we make our stand  
In this desert of broken dreams

There's a bad moon rising through the  
crack in our door  
There's blood on the streets, there's  
fire in the store  
Cause the American dream won't  
come true anymore  
We've lost this land to the schemers

This world isn't ours baby, you know it well  
We're left with nothing but a story to tell  
And a freedom, pure, I swear I'll never sell  
So let's sing now with all our might

We've got freedom to spare, forever nineteen  
As long as there's highways and  
cheap gasoline  
We can drive just as far, as far as our dreams  
Forever without a home  
All the homes have been bought, the jobs  
have been sold  
The bounty of the land has been turned into gold  
And stuffed into the safes of the privileged old  
There to sit til death scatters all

But baby be patient, there will come a day  
We may be old, bent over and gray  
Then the powers that be will slip away  
There'll be a chance for goodness again

(Demo lyrics available at [www.slaid.com](http://www.slaid.com))