



RULERS OF THE SEA

Words & Music © Josh Joffen

We are sailing, we are sailing
We are masters of the ocean as we ride beneath the wind
We are rising, we are falling
As we crest a wave, then hit the trough, then crest a wave again
For a moment we're the buccaneers who used to ply these shores
But baseball caps and bathing suits were not their uniforms
Have a cool rum punch and toast the memory
Of the day we were the rulers of the sea

We are sailing, we are sailing
There's a storm on the horizon, there's a haze upon the bay
But it's a hot day, it's a high sun
That would bake us all like fishsticks if it wasn't for the spray
That comes up in sheets to drench us, till our skin is glistening wet
Then we sail right through a squall, but how much more soaked could we get
Have a cool rum punch and toast the memory
Of the day we were the rulers of the sea

We put in at an island and we swim out to the reef
With masks that pinch our noses and snorkels in our teeth
One more school of tropic tourists bobbing gently on the bay
Trying not to hurt the coral, or to scare the fish away

Then we are sailing, we are sailing
When the captain turns the boat around the sun hangs in the west
We are laughing, we are singing
We are trying to do the limbo, that's the part the crew likes best
But one final gift awaits us, there are flying fish to port
And then dolphins off the starboard bow, King Neptune's own escort
Have a cool rum punch and toast the memory
Of the day we were the rulers of the sea

There's time for one last snapshot as our harbor comes in view
Then we leave a tip and shake hands with the captain and the crew
Then we're slipping on our sandals, we say goodbye and then
We step down on the sand, and we are land-lubbers again

Then we are walking, we are walking
Up the beach and past the palm trees that lead back to our hotel
We are sunburned, we are wind-burned
And our salty skin, it prickles, and our t-shirts feel like hell
We were masters of the ocean, we were rulers of the waves
But right now I'd trade my kingdom for a shower and a shave
And a cool rum punch to toast the memory
Of the day we were the rulers of the sea.

This is the second song coming from the Caribbean. It pretty much describes a day we spent out on the water...it only omits the jellyfish, the presence of whom kept a number of fellow-tourists staying on the beach. Wimps.

(Designer's note... That's because 'jellyfish' is even harder to rhyme with than 'orange'.)

THE WALL

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It's two thousand years ago, where the Jordan cools the land
And a people rise in pride against a Cæsar's hand
Rome sends her legions in,
Casts the people to the wind
And back in Jerusalem
Leaves little standing but a wall

Many homes in many lands, many times the lesson learned
Always strangers at the feast, to be used then to be spurned
Easy mark for evil aims,
First the rack and then the flames
Cast out to wander once again, with faith sustaining like a wall

And the land gains great renown,
A jewel for every crown
On the hill above the town a crescent moon gleams in the morning
But the people still recall
How the Holiest of all
Stood in grace before the fall, and their prayers are filled with yearning

From the ashes of their lives they cross the open sea
With little more than hope and bitter memory
They set foot on the sand,
Take freedom in their hands
And they vow to make a stand and live or die before the wall

And now a nation once again,
With ancient stones and modern men
Who climb the hills to comprehend the panorama of the ages
Where every nation built to last
On the ruins of the past
But each one's day was gone so fast, in a land where nothing changes

In this cradle of belief, where love has turned to stone
And those who'd understand are left to stand alone
Where the desert water's sweet,
Where the blood runs in the street
Where faith and reason meet, they stand before a wall

Where the past and future meet, they stand before a wall

THE FOOL

Words & Music © Josh Joffen

You can call him Jack of Hearts, you can call him Prince of Knaves
From the suits he has discarded and the cards you think he saves
But his face is hard to read, he's grown open as a grave
And now you just can't guess his hand until he makes it
And the judge says he is dangerous, and crazy, like a fox
As he walks into the courtroom with his favorite paradox
And says 'You cannot hope to catch this boy if you nail him in a box'
And he takes the judge's hammer, and he breaks it

And they say that he's a joker, they say he is a fool
Like the ones in caps and bells, like the ones who break the rules
But he's always standing ready to fly or take a fall
And the Fool could be the savior of us all

The diplomats and princes of that world they think is real
Are served by those with broken hearts and shoulders on the wheel
They see the Fool in his ragged dance and they don't care how he feels
When just by his simple steps he seems to tell them
You say your days are wasted, you tell me they're too tough
For you to lead the lives you'd like, but you know that's just your bluff
Because you have all the time there is, who never have enough
But they never seem to buy this dream he is selling

And they say that he is crazy, they say he is a fool
Then they dream of their caps and gowns and the years they spent in
school
Till they're haunted by the wisdom born of that freedom they recall
That the Fool might be the wisest of us all

And romantics turn to cynics when the fiery leaves are gone
And the trees stand cold and naked, unprotected from the dawn
They are stripped of all illusion with no dreams to carry on
And life is only a series of departures
But it takes as great a leap of faith to deny as to believe
And you are the looms and the guiding hands and the patterns that you weave
And his is just a gypsy soul with no intent to deceive
When he tells you he sees arrivals in your future

I've heard that love is treacherous, I've heard it's not for fools
That it's only for the cunning thieves, like ancient treasured jewels
But he has no need to hide his heart behind the unseen walls
And the Fool could be the richest of us all

THE GIRL FROM THE GREAT DIVIDE

Words & Music © Josh Joffen

She was tall and dark and slender, and she said that she loved the dance
There was something unspoken between us, but I dared not take the chance
We were something more than strangers when the hour of parting arrived
And she went west to her new life, she was bound for the Great Divide

Word came that she had married, and we all did wish her well
I swore to profit from my mistake and to heed the tolling belle
If a girl should capture my fancy, not to let that girl go by
And I raised a glass in a sad salute to the girl from the Great Divide

Now fruits are for the picking and I picked till I had my fill
But alone I'd find her photograph, and her face it stayed with me still
Till the night in the crowded tavern, where I made ready to play
She stepped up to me smiling, and the years just fell away

Then later, over coffee, we talked of the things we'd done
She threw back her head in laughter, it was like she never had gone
Then she spoke about her marriage, and the ways of compromise
And I saw how time had touched her face and the sadness around her eyes

We talked the moon down from the sky and I brought her to my home
I laid a pallet down on the floor for her to sleep upon
But in the silence that followed our singing, she came into my arms
And the dawn was sweet and quiet, and the morning sun was warm

The sea was cold at sunset and I pressed her to my side
We could not speak so we looked away, our feelings for to hide
Her hands were strong and her lips were soft and her eyes a smile did pass
But the rising tide, it drowned our steps, and the sand was smooth as glass

And her dark hair hid her face from me as I saw her to her plane
That would carry her west to her husband, to whom she would explain
She'd decide if she wanted her freedom, she would write if she wanted to stay
And I dream at night of the Great Divide, and her voice so far away

She was tall and dark and slender, and she said that she loved the dance

Into your garden fall the wayward seeds
Beyond the walls which you have fashioned
Where every line is drawn to serve your needs
So your pleasures and your pains are safely rationed

But the seeds fall there, in the light and air
To disturb your careful concentration
And the wild flowers rise to the open skies
With perfumes of strange anticipation

It is the wind, it is the rain, it is a heartbeat once again
It is a dream you only find when you stop dreaming
Like a bird in flight through the wond'rous night
It is a mystery of darkness turned to light

In conversation fall the wayward words
Sparked by some fire you're not aware of
You could pretend that they were never heard
You've got your garden to take care of

But they've dropped like jewels in some quiet pool
And the ripples rise till they surround you
And you're tempest-tossed, though your harbor's lost
You have no fear that it will drown you

It is the wind, it is the rain, it is a heartbeat once again
It is a dream you only find when you stop dreaming
Like a bird in flight through the wond'rous night
It is a mystery of darkness turned to light

At the garden door, you look back once more
Then you turn to face tomorrow
There are paths to choose, you will win and lose
But there'll always be a sign to follow

It is the wind, it is the rain, it is a heartbeat once again
It is a dream you only find when you stop dreaming
Like a bird in flight through the wond'rous night
It is a mystery of darkness turned to light

It is a dream you only find when you stop dreaming
Like a bird in flight
It is a mystery of darkness turned to light.

Come Saturday night, we'll be making the scene
With Friday a mem'ry and Sunday a dream
The dance hall is packed but we really don't care
We move through the crowd as if no one was there

When I waltz with my baby the world holds its breath
The room fades away, just the two of us left
She's as light as a dream, I get lost in her gaze
I could waltz with my baby the rest of my days

Doesn't matter how old or how corny the tune
By a chandelier's fire or a midsummer moon
With her in my arms and our hearts beating time
We move to the music; I feel like I'm flying

When I waltz with my baby the world holds its breath
The room fades away, just the two of us left
She's as light as a dream, I get lost in her gaze
I could waltz with my baby the rest of my days

There's a light in her eyes that only I see
There's a smile on her lips that is only for me
There's a ring on her finger and one on my own
With her arms around me I know that I'm home

And if one stays behind and one is set free
I'll be waiting for her as she will for me
And when we're reunited on that far-away shore
We will dance like we parted but a moment before

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