



REFLECTIONS - Roland Canning Hollis
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Welcome to Reflections - an album of songs dedicated to my great uncle Roland Hollis - who I never actually met - who gave his life for his country in WW1.

I have created a 'persona' for Roland as the singer and performer - in respect and memory of this brave soldier, Pte Roland Canning Hollis 16547 of the 8th Leicestershire Regiment. Although wounded and returned to battle on THREE previous occasions - on a fourth time he succumbed to enemy fire on the Somme on March 22nd 1918, age 24.

Why 'REFLECTIONS'?

First of all, the lyrics reflect a life's experiences from the rock 'n' roll years to the present - looking back on good times and bad times in a philosophical way.

Second, there are two melodies for each set of lyrics in most cases and it has been difficult to decide one over the other. Hopefully both are 'good' - you be the judge.

Third, the cover image - whilst it is not Roland (for one thing there was no colour photography when he lived, and his dress and demeanour, and the setting, is certainly not early 20th century) - but it could have been - had he lived.

Track 1: Finding Rose/Gypsy Roase

John came home at the break of dawn
The door was open but Rose was gone
A candle burned with shadows tall
Her laughter echoed through the hall

Oh Gypsy Rose where have you fled
Your scarf lies here upon the bed
The wind it whispers your sweet name
But the silence hangs just the same

Her tambourine was left behind
A trace of music and a fleeting sign
Bare footprints led to the forest trail
Where dreams are carried like ships that sail

Oh Gypsy Rose where have you fled
Your scarf lies here upon the bed
The stars still glimmer in the sky
But they hold no answer to my cry

Did you follow the moon or a fleeting spark
Did you chase freedom into the dark
I search the woods as the owls do call
Did I ever know you at all

John roams the roads with a heavy heart
Each marketplace tears him apart
He hears her song in every breeze
But never the sight of her brings him peace

Track 2: Like My Dad/My Dad

My old man, he wakes up early, before the sun begins to shine
He works so hard, hands are calloused, he never seems to mind
Says, "Son, honesty's the best," and he lives it every day
A man of his word, through and through, come what may

Oh, I wanna be like my dad, strong and kind and true
Love my wife my family, in everything I do
Help my friends and my neighbours, lend a hand along the way
And hope my sons grow up like him, someday

I see him with my mom, a gentle touch, a loving glance
He treats her like a queen, a lifelong, sweet romance
He's there for all our soccer games, every school play too
Always our biggest cheerleader, whatever we pursue

Oh, I wanna be like my dad, strong and kind and true
Love my wife and my family, in everything I do
Help my friends and my neighbours, lend a hand along the way
And hope my sons grow up like him, someday

He's the first to offer help when a friend is feeling low
Or fix a fence for Mrs. Henderson, just down the row
He never asks for anything, just gives with open heart
Playing his part, right from the very start

Oh, I wanna be like my dad, strong and kind and true
Love my wife and my family, in everything I do
Help my friends and my neighbours, lend a hand along the way
And hope my sons grow up like him, someday.

Track 3: A Boy and his Dog/Fields of Green

Dust motes danced in the morning light, a heavy silence hung in the air
Two days since the world went dark, since my older brother wasn't there
Just me and Pa in this farmhouse quiet, fields stretched out, endless and deep
A ache in my chest I couldn't explain, sorrow I just couldn't keep.

Through the fields of green, and the long, winding lane
A friend by my side, easing the pain
Bond forged in solace, love true and vast
Memories made, meant forever to last.

Then a scratch at the door, just a timid sound, startled me from my chair
A matted old dog, all mud and forlorn, a lost soul a hopeful stare.
"Please, Pa, can he stay?" I pleaded with eyes, and Pa, with a sigh, nodded slow
He called him Ranger, I called him Blue, our story began to grow.
We hunted for acorns, fished in the creek, built forts in the sycamore tree
Every adventure, big or small, Blue was right there with me.

Through the fields of green, and the long, winding lane
A friend by my side, easing the pain
Bond forged in solace, love true and vast
Memories made, meant forever to last.

One hot summer day, by the river's cold gleam, I slipped on a moss-covered stone
Hit my head hard, and the world went dark, feeling utterly lost and alone.
But then a cold splash, a nudge on my arm, Blue dragged me out to the shore
Shook himself dry, licked my face clean, barked for me asking for more.
From that day on, I grew strong and tall, the sadness began to subside
With Blue by my side, I could conquer it all, nothing left to hide.

Years spun by swift, like leaves in the wind, my childhood dreams started to fade
Blue's fur grew grey, his steps grew slow, the games less often played.
One morning I woke, to a silence profound, too heavy for me to bear
Found him lying still, by my brother's stone, a silent goodbye laid bare.
Another soul lost, a heart torn in two, tears streamed, blurring my sight
The lessons they taught me, Blue and my brother, will shine on forever so bright.

Through the fields of green, and the long, winding lane
A friend by my side, easing the pain
Bond forged in solace, love true and vast
Memories made, meant forever to last.

Track 4: Potwash Blues/Silent Promise

St. Ives called, a whispered plea, to a heart that felt so bare
Left the old life, wild and free, for a hope beyond compare
Hotel job, just scraping by, washing dishes and pouring tea
Watching all the world walk by, wondering if she'd come to me.
Evenings long, ocean's sigh, a lonesome walk along the sand
Underneath a fading sky, a stranger in a promised land.

The tide was low, air was cool, a couple passed, a silent pair
She caught my eye, like skipping school, a fleeting moment in the air
No words said, no reasons known, a flicker, pure and deep
Then they vanished, and I walked alone, secrets that the shadows keep.
'She is the one' my heart proclaimed, the one that I've been waiting for

I wonder does she feel the same, just one look, I wanted more
And I lay awake, the moonlight streamed, her face was all I could see
A silent promise, softly dreamed, was she thinking, too, of me?
A fleeting glance, a question born, in the quiet of the night

Next evening came, same misty haze, same old beach, same old view
Walked the path through endless days, still wondering would my dreams come true.

Then a shape, against the light, a silhouette, so clear and true
She walked towards me, pure and bright, her eyes fixed, only on me, too.

My heart beat fast, a hopeful tune, sand beneath my weary feet
Under the St. Ives moon, was this the moment, bittersweet?

And I lay awake, moonlight streamed, her face was all that I could see

A silent promise, softly dreamed, was she thinking, too, of me?
A fleeting glance, a question born, in the quiet of the night
Will I ever see her face again? Just a memory, burning bright?

Track 5: Dusty Roads

Dusty roads and fading signs, another day, same old grind
Flipping burgers, same old fries, a hollow ache behind my eyes
My mates are gone, chasing dreams, or so it always seems
No steady girl, no gentle touch, boredom building up too much.

Packed my bag, a guitar case, left that quiet, sleepy place
Headin' west, the engine hummed, felt the freedom, finally come
No nine-to-five, no future plan, just open road, a restless man
The salty air, a brand new start, a longing deep within my heart.

Oh, the ocean calls, a wild frontier, washing away every doubt and fear
Searching for laughter, a sun-kissed face, finding my soul in this coastal space
Just a boy and the sea, wild and free, where I'm meant to be.

Found a room, just off the sand, casual work with willing hand
Washing dishes, serving beer, no steady path, no future clear
Met a girl with eyes so bright, dancing under pale moonlight
No need for rings, no heavy vows, living in the here and now.

Oh, the ocean calls, a wild frontier, washing away every doubt and fear
Searching for laughter, a sun-kissed face, finding my soul in this coastal space
Just a boy and the sea, wild and free, where I'm meant to be.
Summer nights and sun-drenched days, lost in freedom's hazy maze
West Country wind, it whispers low, telling tales of long ago
No ties that bind, no rigid goal, setting free my wandering soul
A coastal town, sweet release, a lifetime of pure, simple peace.

Track 6: To Live a Life/

Mix 2 Tracks 5 & 6: Chasing Dreams/Westward Bound

City lights were dimming low, a life I couldn't understand
Chasing shadows, feeling slow, just a cog in a concrete land
Packed my bags, no looking back, traded suits for sturdy boots
Headed down a different track, chasing down country roots
Cornwall called, a distant hum, of salty air and ocean breeze
Left the rat race, feeling numb, hoping for a bit more ease.

First job found, a dusty site, the motorway, a ribbon new
Sun beat down with all its might, sweat and grit, the whole day through
Hauling beams, digging deep, muscles sore and hands all raw
Every evening, promises to keep, breaking every city law.

Oh, the Cornish nights, they set me free, from the dust and the heat of the day
With my work mates and a beer for me, we'd laugh the city blues away
Chasing dreams, chasing girls, beneath a moon, a hopeful sign
In this simple, sun-kissed world, hoping far love that's mine.

Yeah, the work is tough, the sun is strong, but there's a rhythm to this life
Singing out a country song, forgetting all the urban strife
Waiting for that special face, a smile that shines, a gentle hand
Finding my own rightful place, in this wild and rugged land
Could be tonight, could be tomorrow, the girl I'm searching for will see
Labourer's heart, erasing sorrow, waiting here for her and me.

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