

AN AMERICAN RECORD

This record had its humble beginnings in the dusty living room of a dilapidated Cape Cod-style shack in Wareham, Massachusetts. It was a "sober house" and I was living there with fourteen other wayward souls, all of us trying to find our way back to our lives.

I was talking with a counselor from The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission about embarking on a course of study to become a substance abuse counselor. To my surprise this gentleman, a self-described swamp yankee named Dean Gilmore, owned my records and was a fan of my work. He suggested that I consider getting back to what I did best – writing and recording music. He told me he might be able to obtain some seed money for me to make a new record.

The more I thought about it, the more this opportunity seemed heaven-sent. So with Dean's help, I began the process of making this record. I recorded the first rhythm tracks in October of 2006 and began recording overdubs in January of 2007. The details of life stretched this project into nearly four years—and the record grew and changed as the months went by. I added and wrote new songs and drove many family members, friends, fans and sometimes myself crazy.

But it took as long as it took.

It is a record of places, times, rivers, hills, loves and tides of the heart. This became my path and I am grateful that I was always able to see the light around the bend and finish it.

I still remember that day with Dean, sitting and talking in that house in Wareham, with the faintest ray of sunshine finding its way into the dark gloom of the room.

Sometimes even in the bleakest surroundings the small flame of a dream can be fanned back into life.

- Grayson Hugh, March 8, 2010, Danbury, Ct.

SWAMP YANKEE

ayup
I'm goin' down east
I'm goin' under
gonna fill my boots
with the rain & thunder
from Ammonoosuc
down to Chicopee
I'm gonna ride this river
right to the sea
I ain't no punk (ain't no punk)
just a little bit stanky (a little bit stanky)
I got the funk (I got the funk)
I'm a swamp yankee (swamp yankee)
swamp yankee
yes I am, swamp yankee

Y'see, my grandpa he's a half Pequot scrapin' a livin' from a lobster pot he was raised by the mooncussers Methodist deacons them turkey buzzards grew a family of his own put down roots in a field of stone

He ain't no punk (ain't no punk) just a little bit cranky (a little bit cranky) he got the funk (he got the funk) of a swamp yankee (swamp yankee) swamp yankee ah, yes he is, yes he is swamp yankee hey, ayuh It's been hardscrabble since the mill shut down but I'm a barnacle on the edge of town
I built this trailer (oh yes he did) in the sand so let the tide come in, I don't care I'm a lobster man

I ain't no punk (ain't no punk) just a little bit stanky (a little bit stanky) I got the funk (I got the funk) I'm a swamp yankee (swamp yankee) I got a yard fulla junk (yard fulla junk) ain't nothin' swanky (nothin' swanky) I aot the funk (I got the funk) I'm a, I'm a, I'm a, I'm a, I'm a swamp yankee oh, nothin' but a swamp yankee yes I am, now lookit, baby I got the claw of a lobstermon and when I go to work I get the job done tell ya I got the claw of nothin' but a swamp yankeemon....

Heya ya heya ya, heya ya hey, heya ya heya, hey hey yahey, Heya ya heya ya, heya ya heya, hey hey yahey, Yaya yaya heya ya, hey yaya heya hey, Yaya yaya heya ya, heyhey ya yaya hey, Yaya yaya heya ya, hey yaya heya hey, Yaya yaya heya ya, heyhey ya yaya hey, Heya ya heya, hey heya ya heya, hey hey yahey heya, hey hey yahey

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals,
Hammond B3 Organ, Indian Big Drum
Tom Majesky: Electric Guitar
David Stoltz: Electric Bass
Rob Gottfried: Drums
Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals
Jose Goico: Congas
Bill Holloman: Alto, Tenor & Baritone Sax
Recorded by Rob Ignazio & Stefan Colson
at Wellspring Sound, Acton, MA. Overdubs
recorded by Tom Majesky at Whitney Street,
Hartford, CT & Jim Chapdelaine at Good
Chap Studios, West Hartford, CT.
Mixed by Jim Chapdelaine at Good Chap
Studios, West Hartford, CT.

ZOE ON THE T TRAIN

On the trail of a hundred T trains going 'round this cold harbor town as the October afternoon was falling we met up and started talking in the crowd and as the feet were shuffling to the rail beat we spoke of Georgia and mountains secrets of wood and soft southern light and ghosts in the fountains

I call your name I call it out like a sweet refrain I call your name I remember the day I went riding with Zoe on the T train

You reminded me of a cat perched forward with your deep brown eyes looking into mine as I looked back in my shy mountain lion disguise and when we walked out on the street I remember you were so near to me and I felt the hush all the people vanished and I want to feel that cold October thrill again so much

I call your name I call it out like a sweet refrain I call your name I remember the day I went riding with Zoe on the T train

All those afternoons of the harvest moon come on and climb the sky with me full of blue sky and bright yellow trees in that college town of boulevards and bridges with the cold wind blowing off the nearby seas I captured you like a runaway fawn you harbored me when I was ocean-tossed I can't believe that I ever found you I can't believe that you were ever lost

I call your name I call it out like a sweet refrain I call your name It's been a while but I still feel the same And I call your name I call it out in the snow and rain I call your name I remember the day I went riding with Zoe on the T train

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano Tom Maiesky: Electric Guitar Robert Hugh: Acoustic Guitar David Stoltz: Electric Bass Rob Gottfried: Drums Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals

Recorded by Rob Ignazio & Stefan Colson at Wellspring Sound, Acton, MA. Overdubs recorded by Tom Majesky at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

NEVER TO COME DOWN

Pretty baby dry your eyes pretty baby dry your eyes come on and dry your eyes for me everything'll be alright don't you want to learn to fly fly with me

Tears come running down on the table I'll come running fast as I'm able we'll go high above the ground never to come down never to come down oh no

When you want to run all night there's a thunderstorm in sight the future's too far away to see when you're sitting by the candlelight wondering what's wrong or right close your eyes and call to me there I'll be

Tears come running down on the table I'll come running fast as I'm able we'll go high above the ground never to come down

never to come down oh no

Waiting for the rain to come waiting for the morning sun baby you're the one for me when the night is moving way too slow and you're waiting for the moon to show I know of a place where we can go you and me

Tears come running down on the table I'll come running fast as I'm able we'll go high above the ground never to come down never to come down oh no high above the ground never to come down never to come down never, never, never high above the ground never to come down never to come down

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Synthesizer, Mellotron Tom Majesky: Electric Guitar Robert Hugh: Acoustic Guitar Jim Chapdelaine: Electric 12-String Guitar David Stoltz: Electric Bass Rob Gottfried: Drums Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Recorded by Tom Majesky & Russell Kleinknecht at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT & Jim Chapdelaine at Good Chap Studios, West Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

SWEET SUMMER RAIN

Sweet summer rain put out this fire that burns deep down in my chest put out these flames of my desire wash away my dreams and let me rest

Sweet summer rain give me my freedom before the sky has turned to rust unlock these chains 'cause I don't need 'em help me leave 'cause leave I must

Take me down down to the river take me far away from here for my love she's gone forever the love that I once held so dear

Sweet summer rain for you I'm thirsting come with your thunder come cry for me 'cause my heart it feels like bursting and this grief is killing me

Take me down down to the river take me far away from here for my love she's gone forever the love that I once held so dear

Sweet summer rain put out this fire that burns deep down in my chest put out these flames of my desire wash away my dreams and let me rest wash away my dreams and let me rest wash away my dreams and let me rest sweet summer rain

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Synthesizer, Keyboard Accordion Tom Majesky: Tremolo Guitar Andy Mayo: Mandolin David Stoltz: Kydd Electric Upright Bass Rob Gottfried: Drums Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Ralph Rosen: Harmonica Solo Recorded by Tom Majesky & Russell Kleinknecht at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

BLUEWHITE

Here we are now driving through these small stick towns on a winter day thin trees on the hill snow grey wood bone stumps and driftwood on the frozen pond crow stands on a pine top shall we follow this falling of winter light? and go where it takes us into the late day where the snow in the shell of the afternoon

is a cold bluewhite then toast the twiliaht pale indigo

Up in the cornstub fields grey hulls of barns sleeping leaning old owls know where the moon is the pale iris imprint bloom the town is melting pull our windows down hear the tires whisper black wet smooth the brook is rising up the stone mill wall and deep in the forest where the dirt road goes by the high cliff banks the moss is showing beneath the snow

I look at you you you you baby my heart starts to bloom bloom bloom bloom bloom baby cold bluewhite

To the distant fields our eyes travel over the valley to those bruegel woods where the worn light's blurring the candle glow of a fox's fur by the stone wall spine stars are growing to where shall we go in the shadow of the night? somewhere foreign and far away at four o'clock in the morning by the lake hill shapes we're wide awake

just our small voices snow brume pines

I look at you
you you you baby
my heart starts to bloom
bloom bloom bloom bloom bloom baby
I love you
you you you you you baby
I love you
you you you you you baby
cold bluewhite

Grayson Hugh: Lead Vocal, Piano, Synthesizer Tom Majesky: Electric Guitar David Stoltz: Electric Bass Rob Gotffried: Drums Polly Messer: Angel Vocal Recorded by Tom Majesky & Russell Kleinknecht at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

EVANGELINE

It's winter up on the mountain ain't no money in the till if it hadn't've been for Evangeline I'd be hangin' round there still stuck down in the holler in that chicken shack with no love to comfort me now I ain't ever goin' back

Oh, Evangeline, Evangeline prettiest girl I ever seen she fell on me just like a dream don't you know I love her talkin' bout my Evangeline oh yes I do, oh yeah Well I left there in a hurry
I left that one horse town
packed my things in the middle
of the night
as the snow was falling down
took the train to Charleston
to be with Evangeline
left the mountains for the ocean
where the grass is growing green

Oh, Evangeline, Evangeline prettiest girl I ever seen she fell on me just like a dream don't you know I love her talkin' bout my Evangeline oh yes I do, oh yeah

Oh it's winter up on the mountain no money in the till if it hadn't've been for that woman I'd be hangin' round there still

Oh, Evangeline, Evangeline prettiest girl I ever seen she fell on me just like a dream don't you know I love her talkin' bout my Evangeline oh yes I do, oh yeah Evangeline talkin' bout Evangeline sweet Chicora queen Evangeline my Evangeline

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Keyboard Accordion, Rub Board, Footstomps, Synth Bass Steve Baldino: Electric Baritone Guitar Jim Chapdelaine: Banjo Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Recorded by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT & Jim Chapdelaine at Good Chap Studios, West Hatford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

NORTH OHIO

I've returned to north Ohio leaves are falling and the sky is grey I crossed that bridge on the Maumee River come to see my grandmother's grave high on a hill the rain is gently falling in the grass by the stone that bears her name life comes and goes and flickers like a candle still the spirit of love forever stays the same

Tonight in my dreams I ao back to linger in a life not long ago that I once knew to a girl I loved and rooms I remember just like a ghost who is lost I'm wandering through my heart is aching with a thousand joys and sorrows in my sleep in my dreams I call her name life comes and goes and flickers like a candle still the spirit of love forever stays the same

Tonight I felt the summer ending in the darkness, ever softly she slipped on by down in the field at the four roads crossing I watched the flashing last blue stars of the fireflies I stood there on the ground where my ancestors lay sleeping in this land they lived and loved now they dream in the rain life comes and goes and flickers like a candle still the spirit of love forever stays the same oh Lord, yes it does forever stays the same oh yeah

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Keyboard Accordion Jim Chapdelaine: Taro Patch Ukulele Recorded by Tom Majesky at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT & Jim Chapdelaine at Good Chap Studios, West Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

ANGEL OF MERCY

She's an angel walking down the street cool and romantic everyone that sees her just has to stop and stare to the rhythm of her own two feet is a song she's writing plucking words like flowers right from the air

The star of a movie all she passes can see

ain't no doubt about it she's got the eager attention of me oh yeah

The room was full of smoke and light and the fall was rising through it all her eyes were flashing blue all the towns had lost their names gone and forgotten all the roads that it took me just to get to you

The star of a movie all she passes can see ain't no doubt about it she's got the eager attention of me oh yes she does

Like a dream I've forgotten such a long, long time didn't think that I'd ever find her just look in her eyes and see

In the middle of the darkest night miracle of moonlight falling down like a star right next to me

The star of a movie all she passes can see ain't no doubt about it she happened to me it's not just a movie I've been waiting to see my angel of mercy she's real as real as an angel can be

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Vox Continental Organ, Church Bells Tom Majesky: Electric & Acoustic Guitar David Stoltz: Electric Bass Rob Gottfried: Drums Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Recorded by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

LONG & LONELY NIGHT

The early morning light comes creeping 'cross the room to your hair out on the sea the sun is coming up without a care It's gonna be another perfect blue up and down the pure and perfect sand nothing much to say or do everything that we want at our command

And it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night yes it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night

Watchin' you baby
I'm wonderin' what we're doin'
here like this
I've been thinkin' so hard about it
there's something missing when we kiss
your eyes are still the deepest blue
but the spark is so far away
I don't know just what to do
but I wish this feeling would go away

And it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night yes it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night Well there used to be a time I'd call you up excited on the phone sneak out together and wait until the dawn to go home lately baby I'm feelin' lost and you tell me you don't understand somewhere baby that point was crossed I can't get enough of you now I wanna find my own way home again

And it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night without your love yes it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night without your love, baby and it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night can't do it, baby yes it's gonna be a long, long such a long, long and lonely night oh yeah long and lonely night, baby I keep thinkin' about you don't want to live without you such a long, long such a long, long and lonely night hey baby such a long, long such a long, long and lonely night

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Fender Rhodes Electric Piano, Synth Bass, Synth Chords, Dobro & Drums Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Recorded by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

GIVE ME ONE GOOD REASON

Lately I've been goin' to bed hungry and wakin' up hungry too I think I know the reason Well I know I know we've got our problems but that ain't ain't no cause to stop

Give me one good reason to give it up we can't stop believing in what we've got it ain't just a little it's alot yes it is now hold on, pick it up baby now don't let it drop

I don't think that we should worry or argue anymore we're quite a ways from perfect but not so far from sure we're aonna drive we're gonna drive ourselves crazy just thinking thinking what it's not

Give me one good reason to give it up we can't stop believing in what we've got it ain't just a little it's alot ves it is now hold on, pick it up baby now don't let it drop

Oh come on with me one more time goin' round, around, around, around

And on this road we've chosen there's many a twist and turn and many sights of beauty and so many things so many things to learn we've come so far already and we still ain't still ain't reached the top

Give me one good reason to give it up we can't stop believing in what we've got it ain't just a little it's alot don't let it drop baby we're so lucky girl give me one good reason give me one good reason give me one good reason give me one good reason

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Synth Strings, Vibraphone, Electric Bass & Horn Pad Tom Majesky: Electric Guitar Polly Messer: Lead & Harmony Vocals Recorded by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT, Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

TIME IS LIKE A RIVER

Sometimes when the light is almost gone and it feels like summer is movin' on thoughts of you are tremblin' up in the trees fallin' down on me

like a million leaves and I know that time time is like a river I said time time is like a river

And when the blue twilight is turnin' black and I'm drivin' down the road that don't look back and the chill of autumn is in the air and I'm headed off to someplace but I don't know where but I know that time time is like a river yes it is I said now time time is like a river

And I'm sittin' up here on Chestnut Hill it's been ten long years but I go back still I can smell the pines and see the clay and I can feel the loneliness of the long dark highway

Oh I know that time time is like a river it ain't nothin' but a river and I'm goin' on back back to where we used to be just you and me you and me together and we went walkin' on down walkin' on down those dark and empty streets oh time is like a river yes it is I said now time

ain't nothin' but a river ain't nothin' but a river

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Wurlitzer Electric Piano, Second Line Snare Drums, Bongos, Synthesizer Bleeding Chords Tom Majesky: Electric Guitar Ralph Rosen: Diatonic, Chromatic & Bass Harmonica David Stoltz: Electric Bass Rob Gottfried: Drums Recorded by Rob Ignazio & Stefan Colson at Wellspring Sound, Acton, MA. Overdubs recorded by Tom Maiesky at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT & Jim Chapdelaine at Good Chap Studios, West Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

WHAT IT'S ALL AROUT

I just want to see you down by the beach where the reeds grow wild and tall where the lonely roads have lost their reach and the songs of thunder fall there's a mist down by the rocks and sea comes climbing up the pines and the stars and ships are shining distantly and it's so dark here on the borderline

And we keep ourselves free and we keep ourselves free and the moon is shining for you and me that's what it's all about that's what it's all about

Now we've come to the edge of the ocean

and the night goes on and on and our lives like stones are breaking free all our goodbyes all our goodbyes they have gone (down to the ocean) and all our time apart has turned to leaves (down to the ocean) in a thousand unsung rains (going down to the ocean) and we go floating we ao floatina on through the cypress trees (to the ocean) with the moonlight in our veins

And we keep ourselves free and we keep ourselves free and the moonlight is shining for you and me that's what it's all about that's what it's all about I want you to play it

And this is the moment of our singing this is the story that we hold and this is the heartbeat that we come bringing these are the things all the things of young and old (down to the river) this is the sound of the future falling (down to the river) and the full moon it does not hide (going down to the river) and this is the rhythm of the wild river calling (to the river) as we go tumbling in the tide

And we keep ourselves free yeah we keep ourselves so free and the moonlight is shining for you and me that's what it's all about that's what it's all about 'cause we've always known each other yeah, we've always known each other and here we are again just you and me in the darkness and way far off all the boats are shining and all the whales are dreaming for us, baby and the dolphins are wandering right here to the island where we are just you and me, you and me you and me together that's what it's all about what it's all about

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Piano, Pennywhistle, Synthesizer Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Recorded by Rob Ignazio & Stefan Colson at Wellspring Sound, Acton, MA. Overdubs recorded by Tom Majesky at Whitney Street, Hartford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

TELL ME HOW YOU FEEL

Well now if you're lonely sad and blue well just call me up, call me up and I'll come to you, baby won't you please tell me please just tell me won't you tell me won't you tell me how you feel oh yeah

Don't let the nights and the days go by don't keep me wonderin' don't keep me wonderin' why it is you cry won't you please just tell me please just tell me won't you tell me tell me how you feel oh yeah

'Cause I'm sittin' up here here in Buzzard's Bay and you're way down there way down there and so far away, baby won't you tell me please just tell me won't you tell me now won't you tell me how you feel please tell me, baby listen

Well you know I've been livin'
I've been livin' all by myself
and I put true love
I put true love up on a shelf, baby
won't you tell me
please just tell me
won't you tell me how you feel
won't you tell me
please tell me
won't you tell me that's it's real
tell me how you feel
tell me how you
tell me how you
tell me how you
tell me how you
feel
tell me how you feel

tell me how you feel tell me how you feel give me your lovin', your sweet lovin' I need your lovin' in the early mornin' and late at night, in the full moon in the darkness in night time, in the moonshine in the dream time give it to me, I need you I want you. I love you (I need your love, I need your love...) I need your lovin' every single day I need your lovin' every kind of way won't you give me your lovin' don't you hesitate please, please, please now, baby

Grayson Hugh: Lead & Harmony Vocals, Church Basement Piano, Footstomps Robert Hugh: Acoustic Guitar David Hugh: Electric Bass Kevin Hugh: Drums Polly Messer: Harmony Vocals Recorded by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT. Mixed by Bill Ahearn at Tapeworks, Hartford, CT.

SWAMP YANKEE REPRISE

Grayson Hugh: Vocals, Synth Snare Drums, Coffee Can Diddley Bow, Pennywhistle, Synth Flute Recorded and mixed by Grayson Hugh at The Hawk Nest, Newton Centre, MA. All songs written & arranged by Grayson Hugh.
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This record is dedicated to the memory of Dean Gilmore. Without him, it never would have happened. It was his belief in me as an artist that convinced me to start this project, back in the summer of 2006. He was a true friend. He passed away in June of 2008, way too young, but I know that somewhere he's smiling that wry smile of his as he listens to these songs.

THANKS to our many patrons for their incredibly generous support: David & Robin Hugh, Robert Hugh & Lola Elliott-Hugh, Ivor & Beth Hugh, Suzy & Bill Mockovack, Lisa, Tony & Patrick Kronkaitis, Patty Messer & Dennis Ross, Teresa & George Pesce, Joe, Marie & Caelan Cardello, Bob "Saranzeni" & "Delta" Dawn Spano, Rick Mariner @ Haywire Custom Cuitars, Lisa & Richard Ahlstrom, Leesa Sonnichsen, Philip & Mary Anne Rapuano, Carol Gaulin-McKenzie, Dana DeWindt, Diane & Bill Ray, Carmita & Chuck Baker, Leonard Pitts Jr., Nancy Urban, Rick & Diane Eades, David "Deke" James, Arleen Ashjian & Olivia Ashjian James, Kathi & Gary Heering, Dean Basilio, Rick "Steelman" Schwolsky, Don "Kona" & Judy Sue Kandarian, Gail Anderson.

THANKS ALSO to my good old friends Tom "Master Of Sound" Majesky, Dave "Fury Fingers" Stoltz (Dave Stoltz plays DR Strings) and Rob "The Drummer" Gottfried for being the band once again for this project. You guys did a great job, as usual, and we had a lot of fun doing it! And a hearty nod of gratitude to Suzanne "Tatiana" Langlois for her waist-dooming, incredible feasts on all those weekend sessions. To The Hugh Brothers (David, Robert & nephew Kevin) for their soulful playing on "Tell Me How You Feel". To Ralph Rosen -"Young Master" of all things Harmonica! To Collin Tilton for his generosity both in and outside of the studio. To my family for their unending belief in me. Finally, thanks to my wife Polly Messer for her incredible singing, production ideas and artistic vision. Who could have known that one vocal overdub would lead to a marriage? Well, Tatiana knew, right away, but she's a gypsy after all...

Visit Grayson at graysonhugh.net