

Lyrics for the CD and cassette

COW IMAGINATION

by Lou and Peter Berryman

Recorded in 1990

All songs © L & P Berryman
Words by Peter, music by Lou

- 1 Cow Imagination
- 2 Why Can't Johnny Bowl
- 3 Here's To Mother Nature
- 4 Similes
- 5 Spring Chicken
- 6 Gilda Gray
- 7 When The Moon Is Your Pillow
- 8 Pass the Pepper
- 9 Talk About Luck
- 10 Forget Me Not
- 11 Handyman
- 12 Earth Anthem
- 13 When It Blows It Snows
- 14 State Of The Art

**CLICK ON
SONG TITLE
TO GO TO
PAGE, or just
scroll down.**

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1 COW IMAGINATION

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Cow imagination on an average afternoon'll run to cud
Pig imagination on the other hand'll tend to run to mud
Slug imagination if it doesn't run to slime'll run to goo
My imagination if it isn't on the blink'll run to you

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Cat imagination is an ugly thing to picture for a bird
Hip imagination is an awful thing to have if you're a nerd
Your imagination I imagine is a lovely Shangri-La
Let me recommend a rendezvous with an imaginary moi

Honey is a factor in the big imagination of a bear
Tick imagination has a cottage for the summer in your hair
Flea imagination is involved in exploration near your knee
Evidently I possess the same imagination as a flea

BRIDGE:

Is that a letter, a letter from you
Is that the phone that rings
Who's at the back door, is that really you or
Am I imagining things?

Mother Nature left her own imagination in your chromosomes
The typical tornado his imagination runs to mobile homes
The bolt of lightening lies around imagination a golfer on a green
I imagine calling you without I have to talk to your machine

2 WHY CAN'T JOHNNY BOWL?

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Mama stop your knitting turn the TV down
Poppa drop your paper take a look around
Listen all you parents, open up your soul
Ask yourself the question, why can't Johnny bowl?

Have you ever told him how much it can hurt
To bowl a fifty when your name is on your shirt
Or how the night is magic, when you're on a roll
Mercy mercy mercy, why can't Johnny bowl?

When you mention bowling does he fain fatigue
Don't you ask him why he never joined a league
When the world comes under communist control
It's too late to wonder, why can't Johnny bowl

BRIDGE A: There are no easy answers in the world, you know
Some do say the questions are improving, though
Who will win the series, do we have a soul
What's in tortellini, why can't Johnny bowl?

When he is a grownup with a bowling wife
Will she have to pick up his 10/4 splits of life
Will he spend his Sunday sleeping off the booze
Or will he be outstanding, in his bowling shoes?

BRIDGE B: There are no easy answers in the world, you know
Some do say the questions are improving, though
Is there life on Venus? Have we lost control?
Who ate all the cookies? Why Can't Johnny Bowl?

3 HERE'S TO MOTHER NATURE

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She made the Georgia peaches, the California beaches
The cliffs along the moonlight bay
The lindens and the larches, the metatarsal arches
Molybdenum and DNA

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Here's to Mother Nature, Here's to Mother Nature
For dreamin' up the moon and sun
We better break it gently, it seems that evidently
Nearly all her work is done

CHORUS:

(And she's been) Standing in the way of progress
Someone oughta sit her down
Except for couple window boxes
She doesn't have a place in town

We appreciate her effort
But we oughta make it clear
She's standin' in the way of progress
We can take it on from here

She said I beg your pardon but can't you spare my garden
When you put your pipeline through
Your wires and your towers electrocute the flowers
And can't you spare my birdbath too

Here's to Mother Nature, here's to Mother Nature
I do believe she works quite hard
But there is only one way that we can build a runway
And that is through her big back yard (Chorus)

We tolerate her twisters, poison ivy blisters
Learned to love her droughts and floods
We do a couple dishes, she belly's up the fishes
and blames it on a few soap suds

Here's to Mother Nature, here's to Mother Nature
A little overworked no doubt
I hope that she can make it, she doesn't seem to take it
As well as she can dish it out (Chorus)

4 SIMILES

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

INTRO: If you sit here by the window, and you sit very still
 You can hear them, in the darkness, flying over the hill
 I have not heard such a big flock, since I don't know when
 It's the similes, it's the similes, and they're flying again

Like sheep, like fear. Like paint, like figs.
Like dawn, like yarn. Like trout, like flu.
Like an hour, like a nail. Like a sink, like a punk.
Like a flash, like an oak. Like a bee, like a stew.

Like a dance band in a storm drain. Like a candle in a camper van.
Like a semaphore in a cattle drive. Like a French kiss at sea.
Like a bird cage on a flight deck. Like a pine cone on a Tuesday night.
Like a tour jete on a Schnitzelbank. Like a tattoo for free.

Like an automatic enchilada toaster into undulating on the architecture.
Like an afternoon upon an escalator In an underwater five & dime.
Like a stick-in-the-mud about a dollar-a-day among the faculty cars along the tunnel of love
Before the seven eleven is open to give 'em a battery, how they all would love to lick a lime.

Like a bump-on-a-log despite a notable night beside the beckoning beach without a suitable suit
Until the furniture guy arrives and everyone eats a pizza by the door beside the shore.

Like a corn dog on a long flight. Like a shoe horn in the autoclave.
Like a VCR in the Hindenburg. Like a cardboard bow tie.
Like a food store in the full moon. Like a firefly in a voting booth.
Like a tacklebox over Fond du Lac. Like a nine dollar pie.

Like a charm, like an arm. Like a lick, like a day.
Like a gem, like an oaf. Like a pass, like a tux.
Like fire, like silk. Like flies, like hay.
Like junk, like brick. Like sheets, like ducks.

5 **SPRING CHICKEN**

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

My sideburn too auburn
My whims are too quirky
My amble too nimble
My posture too perky
To be truthful I'm so youthful, it's a crime

My limbs are too limber
My highs too euphoric
I see like a seagull
My socks are sophomoric
This birthday couldna come at a better time

My tenor is twelvish
My driving's too chancy
My running is stunning
My dancing too fancy
When I'm real hot I could foxtrot to the moon

My life is too lively
My spirit's too sprightly
My radius too ulna
My passion too nightly
This birthday's not a moment too soon

BRIDGE Although this is my major problem
 Although it's as grim as it sounds
 I also have way too much money
 And could stand to gain a few pounds

My jargon's too jaunty
I couldn't be hipper
Too lithe my demeanor
My chatter too chipper
I could handle another candle on the cake

My vigor's hair trigger
My dimple's too supple
I need a few birthdays
And more than a couple
If I could only, if I could only, stay awake

6 GILDA GRAY

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You don't suppose she changed her name to Gilda, do ya
The young Michalska girl from Cudahy
She'd introduce herself as Maryanna to ya
You don't suppose that she is Gilda Gray

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Is she the one who went with Sophie Tucker, lately
To introduce the shimmy to the world
Is she the one whose fame has been increasing greatly
Since she has become a Ziegfeld girl

I hear that Gilda Gray is in a brand new talkie
She sings a song and shimmies in the show
If it ain't a turkey it'll play Milwaukee
We'll get a gang together and we'll go

You do suppose she looks the way she used to, doncha
We better not sit very far away
You'll go crazy if it's Maryanna, won'tcha?
You don't suppose she's really Gilda Gray

BRIDGE: You don't suppose she talks about Wisconsin, do ya
 About the winter wind and how it blows right through ya
 She never buttoned up the way her mother told her
 Had to learn to shimmy as the night got colder

We should get together and compose a letter
That's the sort of thing she might enjoy
How I wish we could have come to know her better
Before she hopped the train for Illinois

She had taken us about as far's we could go
Things were different then in Cudahy
The dance that was the end of Maryanna's floorshow
May have been the start of Gilda Gray

(Repeat BRIDGE)

7 WHEN THE MOON IS YOUR PILLOW

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When Ruth was young, only a child
The question mark, it drove her wild
The need to know, tormented Ruth
Relentlessly, she sought the truth

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

She asked her mom, what's good, what's bad?
Her mom said go, and ask your dad
And so she did, and for a kiss
Inscrutably, he offered this

CHORUS When the moon is your pillow
 And your blanket is the ground
 And your mattress is the willow
 You are sleeping upside down

She turned 16, her searching soul
Looked for the truth in RocknRoll
When she would dance to Peggy Sue
She'd feel the pull of deja vu

She played it loud, she played it low,
She played it fast, she played it slow
But when she played it backwards then
She could have sworn, she heard again (Chorus)

It is enough when you're 16
To know the words, not what they mean
But when she grew, to 24
It would not do, she wanted more

She traveled to a psychic fair
And found a guy who read her hair
And what he charged was novel too
But what he said was nothing new (Chorus)

Now here is Ruth at 33.
The truth goes on, quite Ruthlessly
The hollow words that she had learned
For many years had not returned

Til she was wed, and had a child
Who one slow day looked up and smiled
& said her soul felt incomplete
Her mother did not miss a beat (Chorus)

8 PASS THE PEPPER

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

(Note: Peter sings plain text, *Lou sings italic*, both sing underlined)

Now I don't think treated lumber's really crucial for the railing
Pass the pepper • *I've been thinking should we feed the birds or not*
Because this year they really need it • Don't you think we should get cedar
'stead of pine • *Although it may be hard if we're away alot*

Although that cedar is expensive, pass the pepper • *Then again*
We could leave extra when we're gone I guess • But it does hold up good
This is delicious broccoli salad • Though it splits a little easy
Though it needs a dash of pepper don't you think • It's better wood

Pass the pepper • Pass the pepper
Dear nobody else'll listen like you do
So I'll go and buy the cedar • *So I will fill up the feeder*
I'm so glad that I could bounce this off of you

Say I tried all by myself to put the wallboard on the ceiling
is there coffee • *Say my sister called to say she has the flu*
And she's too sick for entertaining • First I tried to use a two-by-
Four support • *And mom and dad were gonna drop in on them too*

And though I finally put a piece up, is there coffee • *So of course*
I said to tell 'em come see us instead • I gave my dad a call
How would you like a cup of coffee • Turns out mom is coming with 'im
We could use a little Sanka don't you think • The dog and all

Here's the Sanka • Where's the coffee
Dear nobody else'll listen like you do
So my folks are coming Thursday • *So my folks are coming Thursday*
I'm so glad that I could bounce this off of you

Boy it does depress me lately when I look into the mirror
Where's the napkins • *Dear I understand we aren't millionaires*
But could we get an old piano • What with all the extra padding on my
Butt • *Now I dunno how we can get it up the stairs*

My face has turned into a biscuit, where's the napkins • *I suppose*
We'll have to scrape it down and varnish it • My hair is lying flat
Boy this is really greasy pizza • And it's turning grey in patches
Anyway what do you think about it dear • *I need a hat*

Where's the napkins • Where's the napkins
Dear nobody else'll listen like you do
I feel older every minute • *So I'll go and find a spinet*
I'm so glad that I could bounce this off of you

9 TALK ABOUT LUCK

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Good thing the snow isn't deep dark green
Coulda had the texture of Vaseline
With an odor on the order of a diesel truck
Oh boy, talk about luck

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

Good thing the top of your head don't grow
Gain a little weight it woulda hung so low
'Cause that woulda been where the fat got stuck
Oh boy, talk about luck

Good thing feet don't sound like a bird
Be the craziest feet you ever heard
They'd squawk when you walk or quack like a duck
Oh boy, talk about luck

Good thing that's not how things go
You'd be draggin' your head through the slimy snow
With your poor old feet goin' cluck cluck cluck
Oh boy, talk about luck

We're so lucky
Why are we so tense?
Life is ducky
& everything makes sense

10 FORGET ME NOT

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

When the whatchacallums blossom by the back porch
And the bluish purple whoozis do the same
And the bird with yellow on it sings a number
My mind drifts back to lovely whats-her-name

The puffy nimbo-something clouds are floating
High above the hoosiewhatsis tree
And the bushes with the purple jobs are blooming
By those forget-me-nots I love to see

On the Monday or the Tuesday that I met her
We had pasta full of cheese, what is it called
When we stopped at the Cafe something-or-other
Where our Dodge or was it Studebaker stalled

We danced some kind of dance I can't remember
As they played what was the name of that old song
I recall i gave her wine or was it candy
And I brought a few forget-me-nots along

I almost can remember what she looks like
Her elbow on the gizmo of the chair
Pinning up the doodad of her dickey
And snapping the doohickey in her hair

Well I gave her a fancy thing of flowers
I asked her if she'd share my driveway too
If my memory serves me she was cordial
But whispered these forget-me-nots'll do

Well I should look her up one of these summers
I believe she moved to Boise or Madrid
So that we could lie again by what's that river
And do some of the things I think we did

She broke my heart or was it vice-versa
Well one of us was sad as we could be
I sent her some forget-me-nots in parting
Or did she send forget-me-nots to me?

11 HANDYMAN

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

He goes for a walk, he comes back with caulk, and a gallon o' roofin' tar
A leveling rule, a spackling tool, spark plugs for the car
A pair of pliers, speaker wires, an oil draining pan
Well I know that I, could do it but why, when I fell for my handyman

Well he's gonna lay a floor o' parkay just as soon as he finds the time
He's gonna install a light in the hall, a doorbell like a chime
How he chooses all my fuses I don't understand
I know that I could, I probably should, but I fell for my handyman

He sanded the sink, epoxied it pink, it's exactly the shade I like
He got the TV adjusted for me, gonna fix my bike
Grease & oil it, move the toilet, according to my plan
It used to take dough, to get it just so til I fell for my handyman

His carpenter square & dust in his hair oh my heart has begun to melt
The paint he can scrape the measuring tape clipped right to his belt
Here's a pipe wrench there's the workbench where it all began
A lamp on the blink a smile & a wink & I fell for my handyman

I know he's sincere cause either he's here or he's out at the lumberyard
& I have a hunch when I make him lunch, he works twice as hard
Main attraction, satisfaction, says so on his van
My doors they all close, my lawnmower mows,
Since I fell for my Handyman

12 EARTH ANTHEM

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Oh Earth, Detroit, an inch, the Baltic Sea,
The Ginkgo tree and sev'ral kinds of hair
The flea, the fly, the flue, the private nurse,
The voodoo curse, the Adirondack chair

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

The River Nile and vinyl tile, the Taj Mahal and cheese
The cup o' joe, the snow, the neighbor kid
The pyramid, the ocean and my knees

CHORUS:

Show me a sphere • I'LL SHOW YOU THE WORLD WHAT A PLACE
Show me a dome • OR ACTU'LLY TWO, BASE TO BASE
Show me a ball • AND IF YOU CAN WAIT TIL TEN-TO-EIGHT
I'll show you home • I'LL SHOW YOU HOME

Oh Earth, Nepal, the cloud, the kidney stone
The Sousaphone, the mornings of remorse
The billibong, the bomb, the big brown bag
The checkered flag and two guys as a horse

The dust upon Saskatchewan the shovels and the sheiks
The night, the gnat, the note, the oil and lube
The cardboard tube and moonlight on my cheeks (Chorus)

Oh Earth, Peru, the ox, the ozone layer
If it's still there, and Monday afternoon
The Fords, the fjords, the forts, the stormy ports
The pints and quarts, short shorts and now this tune

The double dare, the double door, the time zone and a rose
The Poles, the gloom, the barn, the the apple blintz
The fingerprints, the sunset on my nose (Chorus)

Oh Earth, Madrid, the mud, the molecule
The business school and seashells by the shore
The corn, Pernod, decay, the northern lights
The purple tights and H₂SO₄

The Ivory Coast, the friendly ghost, the samovar for tea
The quacks, the quakes, the quarks, the pounding rain
The bounding main, the bathtub drain and me (Chorus)

13 WHEN IT BLOWS IT SNOWS

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1. Went to school to learn to be a poet
Seemed so cool I could hardly wait
Here's my rhyme. It's awful and I know it
But at the time I thought that it was great

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

CHORUS: Every single winter when the cold wind blows
It snows, it snows, it snows
Every single iglet in Decembe blows
Its nose, its nose, its nose

If there is a feature that'll freeze on deers
it's ears it's ears, its ears
We'll buy 'em all a muffler if our VISA clears
At Sears, at Sears, at Sears

2. Teacher freaked, he really was a weiner
How he shrieked and this is what he said
That's no verse, that's a misdemeanor
And what's worse, it's stuck inside my head (Chorus)

BRIDGE: There's another verse
Just a little bit worse that's never been sung
When the little bee tried to lick its knee
It stung its tongue

3. Shocked the cop make the jury shiver
The judge yelled stop! you're guilty of the crime
One last thing, they sent me up the river
Now Sing-Sing sings it all the time (Chorus)

14 STATE OF THE ART

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[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

INTRO: Badger state politics tend toward the odd
 When dairyland worships the tourist as god
 There is a plan when the new season starts
 To badger the tourist by milking the arts

 But will poets go thru their personal hells
 When they have to prove that it sells at the dells
 How many painters will choke back their tears
 When their masterpieces are called souvenirs

Here is a minnow net / There is a string quartet
Portraits on velveteen / Unleaded gasoline
Symphony at the track / Greyhounds & Dvorak
Landscapes by Fragonard / Visa & Mastercard

CHORUS Art cheese beer pop subs / jazz milk food film grubs
 Dance fudge maps ice phones / opera ice cream cones

Carmex & art supplies / Tap shoes & pizza pies
With every sticky bun / Emily Dickinson
Hear a soliloquy / Bet on the lottery
Mouse traps & tambourines / Still lives & bait machines

Sunglasses on the wall / Right by the small Chagall
Next to the Goya nude / There by the Evinrude
Tutus & playing cards / Shotguns & leotards
STP for the chev / Film clips of Nuryev (Chorus)

Blues on the saxophone / Up there by Jellystone
Music for every taste / RV's can dump their waste
Fugues, odes and Packer hats / Dada & Brewski bats
Screenplays and spinning reels / Yard guard & glockenspiels

Milwaukee symphony / Come see them water ski
Cheese dogs & turjouteys / Swan lake & dairy days
Exit Baryshnekoff / EZ on EZ off
Exlax and curtain calls / Frescos & bowling balls (Chorus)