

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 H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>

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)