

About Fosteresque

Back in February of 2011, my old buddy Kevin and I were hanging out in the gold room while I was getting ready to start some of the initial recordings for the album--I don;t recall if it was *Celt* or *It Flies* that I was about to work on, but as I sat with the dobro getting tuned up, I sort of slid into an old-timey melody that sounded familiar but that I knew was original. I recall Kevin looking up at me as if to say, "Hey...that's not bad. You'd better try not to forget that one." With his encouragement, I did work on remembering it and last month as I began working on wrapping up the album I realized I needed to record this as a testimony to my now-long-lost pal.

However, since the snippet of melody (which by then had reminded me enough of Stephen Foster's work that I had begun terming it Fosteresque) would have only filled out a minute and a half of space, it occurred to me I ought to partner it up with something else. The something else was an easy call. In late August, 2012, just after Dad had passed away, I found myself sitting on a lovely patio overlooking Lake Monona reading Wendell Berry's *The Memory of Old Jack* for the umpteenth time and reflecting on passages, on mortality. Berry's words were balm to me, and I began trying to fitting them into verse. The lyric structure was similar to Stephen Foster's epic tune, *Comrades Fill No Glass For Me* that my buddy Tim Carlisle had turned me onto a few years earlier.

So, here was a pilfered Foster melody containing heartfelt old-timey lyrics about death, and there was a haunting original melody that needed partnering up for inclusion on the album. Seemed like a natural fit. Dobro and mandolin are the only instruments. Tim Sharpe did an amazing job of interpreting the high harmony part--thanks, Cap'n!--and this gem has become a favorite of mine. I hope you like it too.