

Acknowledgments

2024.

Luckily, acknowledgments can go in the beginning or end of a book. For this trek, they belong at the beginning. Music, played a key role in helping me write this but music, helps write what is—*the story of any era's times*. We're all troubadours; it's just that only some of us, can actually make a living singing about what we think and feel! First, I want to acknowledge where all the *other* words came from. All along the way, I credit experts and journalists who provided what's known and facts, are what we must learn from so hats off to integral experts, journalists and news outlets! Which, I never imagined that integral, would need to preface facts so from all of us, to all of those who've remained committed to integrity—a *great big Thank You from us!* Next, I want to acknowledge us! It's from all the countless comments, funnies, happening's, chatter, from all the you's out there, that provided the us-fiber in—*The Story of Our Times*. This simply wouldn't be our story, if not for all the fiber—you *unwittingly provided*. Thank you. Thank you.

Troubadours, have been around forever but in 1877, Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, and music came into homes. By the 1960s, FM jockey's had more liberty to make selections and rock-n-roll, never looked back. From then on, we cut our teeth on rock-n-roll and Stevie Nicks from Fleetwood Mac, recently mused about this on the radio; kids growing up to their parents music, who then had kids who grew up to their music, who then had kids...For me, it was an older sister who introduced me to rock-n-roll. She'd tune into KOMA at night; an FM station that came all the way out from Oklahoma! She then purchased a suitcase-looking turntable for 45s, and I still remember many of the lyrics encased on those 45s. *I wanna hold your hand ~TB. These boots are made for walkin' ~NS. What goes up, must come down, spinnin' wheel gotta go round ~BST!* So from AM to FM Radio, from 45s, LPs, to 8-tracks, cassettes, CDs and now XM radio and internet streaming, we are provided the soundtrack of our lives, wherever we go.

Had it not been for music keeping my thoughts sorted and elevating my emotions to help me feel my way, I seriously doubt I could've kept at this. Many a' songs made the tangible connection here, but this started to look allot like a collage of lyrics so, something had to give. Making those cuts, was like bidding a final farewell to a really great friend. And though I don't listen to all genres, I want to acknowledge all music. Music does indeed move us, and we need to get a move-on so whatever music works for you, just allow it to spark a tangible connection, and we'll be off to a great start!

When I closed shop on what wasn't—a *measly Foreword*, it was to the beat of a 1960s song so I thought to open here with a 1970s tune and *Springsteen*, immediately came to mind. A song that isn't, a 1970s tune but whenever this Eric Church song shuffles my way, man does it take me back! *Funny how a melody sounds like a memory; like a soundtrack to a July Saturday night—and Springsteen*. During the 1970s, Springsteen was coming on and that guy is one prolific songwriter! Here's some of his quips to ready ourselves for the arduous trek ahead. *Time slips away and leaves you with nothin' but boring stories of ~ Glory Days. It takes a leap of faith ~ to get things going. Yeah, if we could just start talkin' ~ don't know when this chance might come again*. See what I mean? A collage of his lyrics alone—*could've written The Story of Our Times!*

I'd bought a spankin' new truck in 2001, and XM now commanded the dial so I played catch-up to 90s music; a nice change after spending that decade rockin' down the road to kid-friendly cassettes! This is how I discovered Pearl Jam, and their storytelling element; a preference of mine. In 2009, my CD turntable had a few of their discs going when I splayed my boulder field of notes across the living room floor. It was during this exasperation that I discovered songs were keeping my thoughts and notes sorted! That's also when their goading line—*whatcha given*, hit center so yes, their influence is evident!

When streaming music became the thing, my kids; not really kids anymore, hooked me up to *Pandora Radio*. With a mix of their selections in with my music; what they grew up listening to, they put *Pandora* on shuffle, and it's been shuffling ever since! When 2014 came along and brought my jaded outlook with it; had me thinking there wasn't a thing I could write to help unify us, *Pandora* kept shuffling my way—*The Kings of Leon*. I'd read where this band; made up of brothers and cousin, managed to stay together during their meteoric rise to fame, and I glommed onto this as a hopeful unity sign. Their music kept that hope flickering in me, all during my rimrocked years of going nowhere.

As 2019 was coming to an end, so did my rimrocked years but the year began with me being fully-rutted and when rutted, the boob-tube sure provides some great glue! Ironically, I found the courage to face where *Our Story* would need to end, right from my lounge chair! Knowing I was tech-challenged, my kids also hooked me up to *Netflix* which is where I stumbled onto the series—*The Last Kingdom*. Based on Bernard Cornwell's historical fiction books; my reading preference, that series did keep me glued! And though I can do without all the graphics of gore that comes standard with TV and human history, I couldn't have done without the courage that gang of actors instilled in me and wow! Up til then, I hadn't realized how depleted I was of courage but by the time this show's series ended, I charged forth, pulled this out from its hiddie-hole where I'd shoved it away 4 years earlier, and boldly stared right back at the mass summons scariness, lurking right at me from out of the crevice—to my rimrocked state of mind. Felt pretty damn good doing it too!

By the tail end of 2019, I felt emboldened for the first time in years, and determined to stamp done-done onto this once and for all. Yet, I still couldn't shake the feeling of how futile this was. Unity, wasn't evident and certainly not in polarized America! But also, our chatter continued to expect those others; a faceless government maybe, a superman or anyone but us, to fix everything for us! Jeez! I obviously wasn't the only one fully-rutted! These were the thoughts I was mulling over while out on the patio one evening enjoying a sunset in the foreground, music in the background when *Pandora*, shuffled my way none other than a well-aged, now classic song, which finally restored my belief in us, yet again. ***We are one, but not the same. We get to carry each other ~ U2.***

Without *Pearl Jam* prodding me, without the unity messages *Kings of Leon* and *U2* instilled in me, and without the courage that gang of actors on *The Last Kingdom* instilled in me, what refuses to end—still wouldn't be ending. I am, and have no doubt forever will be, grateful to what these gangs instilled in me, and of every other music snippet, every read, spoken or watched conveyance, that pulled, poked and prodded me onwards again and again. I never really thought about how outside influences can impact us so, but I sure know it now! To all outside influences, I just can't thank you enough. Thank you, Thank you.

And so we begin. A gang of trekking comrades enjoying a campfire and background music reverberating off the rocks on a just-right, moonlit eve before we embark on one very long and arduous trek thru—*The Story of Our Times. We're down by the river in the full moonlight where the cool grass grows ~ NGDB.*