

A PRIVILEGED MAN

All Words and Music © Kenny Karen

A PRIVILEGED MAN

Words & Music by Kenny Karen - April 2000

She lives in memory
Pages of history,
Tomorrow's sun was just rising
On all that was to be.
Forever's warmth turned to cold
Never to have and hold,
In spite of life's changing plans
I am a privileged man.

Another's gift to me
Visions of fantasy,
Have filled my mind with illusion
And possibilities.
But passion overruled
Resigned to play the fool,
And though my heart's in my hand
I am a privileged man.

Tasting all the fruit that life has to offer,
Learning how to crawl before I can stand.

My middle years I find
Reflect the gifts of time,
For I have been on a journey
That opened up my mind.
And I could feel the truth
The hungry eyes of youth,
And I knew then what I am
I am a privileged man.

Tasting all the fruit that life has to offer,
Learning how to crawl before I can stand.

And as my eyes grow old
I see my life unfold,
And at the end of the rainbow
I find my pot of gold.
And now just as a tree
My branches cover me,
And love is holding my hand
I am a privileged man.
To go through life hand in hand,
I am a privileged man.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (August, 2002)

I am frail but I'm protected
In a land of shining seas.
I must go where I'm directed
And be where I long to be.

We are children of the Bible
We are strangers holding hands.
We insure our own survival
We secure our Promised Land.

Fear and hatred all around us
Still our dreams won't turn to stone.
Though our enemies surround us
We will never leave our home.

We have lived in every nation
Washed our dreams on every shore.
We have waited for salvation
Walked through every open door.

We are searchers, we are seekers
One for all, and all for one.
I will be My Brother's Keeper
Until my time on earth is done.

When you hurt, I'll be there with you
When you cry, I'll feel your pain.
All I have is all I'll give you
You'll never be alone again.

We are searchers, we are seekers
One for all, and all for one.
I will be My Brother's Keeper
Until my time on earth is done

AARP

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (January 2001)

AARP stickin' it to me
Makin' me feel my age.
AARP achin' with envy
Enter life's second stage.
Cheaper movies and lower fares
What have I got to lose.
AARP I'm ancient history
You're givin' me the blues.

AARP sippin' my coffee
Drinkin' tea in a glass.
AARP takin' Pepsid AC
Never runnin' out of gas.
Checkin' pensions and IRAs
Watchin' my bridges burn.
AARP social security
How can it be my turn?

Slow down Joe, no cash flow
Sell my soul to pay my HMO
Feelin' fine, Auld Lang Syne
Treat the golden years like vintage wine.

AARP packin' up the RV
Time to see the U.S.A.
AARP Mickey Mouse and Minnie
Grandpa's comin' out to play.
Hearts and flowers for someone else
I'm part of tomorrow's news.
AARP the rest is just gravy
I've already paid my dues.

AARP send a message to me
Lookin' life in the eye.
AARP happy anniversary
Time to taste the apple pie.
Tennis lessons, the PGA
Takin' a cruise or two.
AARP who's sedentary
I haven't got a clue
'Cause I've got too much to do.

For example:
Chardonnayin', chronic overpayin'
Buyin' expensive toys.
Upper crustin', leaves me in the dust 'n
Hangin' out with the boys.
Image makin', have my picture takin'
Wearin' a young man's shoes.
Had my fill, it's time to chill
Think I'll just take a snooze.

Now – bring on the years
Bring out the babes and the booze.

CINNAMON APPLE PIE

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (January 1, 2003)

In the morning hours, in the winter's breeze
The old iron wheels would grind
It was "all aboard" and "tickets please"
Passing through a new state of mind.

As the wires danced to the engine's song
We would sleep to pass the time
Through the wind and snow we'd trudge along
On the Delaware-Hudson line.

And the taste still fills my tongue
Silhouettes still fill my eyes
Silver-plated dreams and mounds of cream
On Cinnamon Apple Pie.

From the muted roar of a tired train
Through a star-studded evening sky
From the rippling shores of Lake Champlain
We would watch as the world passed by.

And my sister sat alongside of me
And my parents one row behind
Oh, how sweet the days, the memories
On the Delaware-Hudson line.

And the taste still fills my tongue
Silhouettes still fill my eyes
Silver-plated dreams and mounds of cream
On Cinnamon Apple Pie.

Linen napkins, dining car
Tables dressed with chrome
Silk brocade and crystal jars
We were far away from home.

The conductor's voice bellowed through the train
As the terminal strained from view
But the skyline shone through window panes
On to Lexington Avenue.

And the porter's smile cast a parting glance
Through a smoke screen of steel design
As we bid farewell to our brief romance
With the Delaware-Hudson line.

And the taste still fills my tongue
Silhouettes still fill my eyes
Silver-plated dreams and mounds of cream
On Cinnamon Apple Pie.

IN EVERY GENERATION

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (June 2001)

Crystal night, a grim beginning
Running through the streets,
Broken glass and shattered windows
Crushed beneath our feet.
Ghetto walls and domination
Wear a yellow star,
And in every generation
Knowing who we are.

Master race and rigid faces
Form a master plan,
Darkness falls and never rises
Where's our fellow man?
Cattle cars and liquidation
Numbers fill the air,
And in every generation
Who'll be left to care.

Seder table, greet Elijah
Cup in hand,
Slavery can't answer freedom's call.
Teach your children
So that they might understand
Pharaohs rise and pharaohs fall.

Scattered ashes, living memories
Fight to gain control,
Take the body, break the spirit
Never lose the soul.
Promised land, emancipation
Brotherhood of men,
And in every generation
Hope will rise again.

And in every generation
We will rise again.

WHO AM I

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (July 1996)

What do I believe in, is there truth in what I
say?
Is it all deception can I find a better way?
Who do I belong to, does someone belong to
me?
Is it my reflection or some other face I see?

I am blessed with quaint perceptions of a
gentle place in time,
And each tender recollection lies embedded in
my mind.
I can stand beside each page of life, each stage
that I've passed by,
And with every line I've written I keep asking,
who am I?

Is there compensation, will I find tranquility?
Do I stand in judgment, or will someone else
judge me?
Sweet intoxication, with no trace of self-
control,
Re-evaluation, am I master of my soul?

I am blessed with quaint perceptions of a
gentle place in time,
And each tender recollection lies embedded in
my mind.
I can stand beside each page of life, each stage
that I've passed by,
And with every line I've written I keep asking,
who am I?

Who am I, what has become of me,
Have I seen all I was meant to see?
Given time, have I found peace of mind,
Have I been all I hoped that I would be?

Where is it I'm going, must I go there on my
own?
Once I find salvation, will I find my way back
home?
Home is where you love me, where my
children laugh and play,
No one stands above all others, anyone can
lead the way.
I look forward to tomorrows I have never seen
before,
And with hope and understanding, love can
open any door.
I am one of many colors, yet my heart is free to
fly.
Though I've chased away the demons
I keep asking, who am I?

THE END OF DAYS
(ISAIAH'S PROPHECY)

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (December 2000)

I have heard Isaiah's voice
Ringing through the ages.
Poetry and words of choice
Sing through timeless pages.
Time is like a blade of grass
Time is ours to borrow.
All in life that's meant to last
Lives beyond tomorrow.

Prophecies and dreams of men
Thirsting for the fountain.
All have seen Jerusalem
Stood atop God's mountain.
O' to pray at Zion's gate
Center of creation.
Guided by the hands of fate
A light unto the nations.

Who are we to close our eyes
Clouds that hide the morning sun.
Even God wears a disguise
Peace for all, peace for none.

Soldiers of the universe
Live and die together.
Some are blessed and some are cursed
But none shall live forever.
God who sits upon His throne
The End of Days lie passing.
When love is ours to call our own
And peace is everlasting.

THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (January 2003)

Common man, pen in hand
Daily column, commentary
Facial tone, cast in stone
Nondescript and ordinary
Center stage, golden age
Dignitaries rise and take a bow.
Place to be, guarantee
Close up shots and chiseled features
Broadway bound, underground
Heads of state and cartoon creatures
Camera crews, breaking news
Visionaries know their time is now.

CHORUS

Sunday night, eight o'clock, CBS, channel two
As the toast of the town hosts a "rilly big shoe"
For an hour notoriety passed through our door
Stretching out on our living room floor
No dilemmas of which way to go
As we'd all watch "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Beatles tunes, Crosby croons
Swiveled hips and opera singers
Ella swings, Rickles stings
Jackie Mason's middle finger
Gleason's girls, Milton Berle
Dean and Jerry premiered their who's who

Circus acts, artifacts
Pearly Mae and Rosie Cloony
Peg Leg Bates, sporting greats
Satchmo's horn and Mickey Rooney
Friar's club, private pub
Dirty jokes would always be taboo

CHORUS

Agents call
Performers beg and crawl
To set a date.
Show your stuff
A diamond in the rough
And seal your fate.

Sunday night, eight o'clock, CBS, channel two
As the toast of the town hosts a "rilly big shoe"
If by chance when the action would cut to the chase
And distractions would slow down the pace
We could linger in life's after glow
From the warmth of "The Ed Sullivan Show."

ONE MORE DAY

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (October 2002)

Ornaments of shining silver
Velvet laced with gold
To believe or to bewilder
Parchment and scrolls.
Word of God and his creations
Blooming in the sand
Chains that tie the generations
To my little man.

One more day in the life of my child
One more day in the warmth of your smile.
As your spirit runs free
You'll discover the key
To wisdom, to courage, respectability....

And as the crowd filters in
As the service begins
You are welcomed as one of our people.
Though your sweet days of childhood are gone
The children of Israel are calling
As I pass the baton
The traditions live on.

But, the prize that I've already won
Is the privilege to call you, my son.
In your eyes I can find
The reflections of time –
The fragrance of childhood
The promise of manhood
Will guide us, divide us
Then bind us together.
Just stay here beside me
Until you fly away –
Little man, be a child
One more day.

BLUE DOLPHIN DINER

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Walkin' the lake on a misty morning
Takin' in all that I can.
Rhythm and rhymin'
With paper and pen in my hand.

Telephone rings – the mystique is broken
Powers continue to slide.
Where can you go
When you've run out of places to hide.

Makin' my way to the Blue Dolphin Diner
History's on the line.
Things are okay at the Blue Dolphin Diner
Takin' some time and consultin' an old friend
of mine.

Yesterday's starin' across the table
Memories flowin' like streams.
Youthful and rugged
Prisoners to all of our dreams.

Family virtue and understanding
The past is uncomfortably clear.
Know where we've been
But just where are we goin' from here.

Makin' my way to the Blue Dolphin Diner
History's on the line.
Things are okay at the Blue Dolphin Diner
Takin' some time and consultin' an old friend
of mine.

Seeking to find paradise
Open your mind and your eyes.
Love is bitter and sweet
Insecure, incomplete
The answer lies in compromise.

Hours go by and we're still exploring
So much that needs to be said.
Bellies are full
But the soul also needs to be fed.

Lookin' for strength and for inspiration
Finding the will to pursue.
Talkin' it out
As we help one another pull through.

Makin' my way to the Blue Dolphin Diner
History's on the line.
Things are okay at the Blue Dolphin Diner
Takin' some time and consultin' an old friend
of mine.

THE PASSING OF TIME

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

In the year of my birth there was thunder in the
skies at dawn
Between heaven and earth no one knew whose
side that God was on.
So we folded our dreams and we gathered at
the gates of prayer
As I looked in my heart I knew someday I
would find you there.

I have dreamed of my bride in her satin gown
and golden hair
How she mourned as I tried to explain what
was and was not fair.
In a world that condemns for not seeing what
you're told to see
I took flight with the wind, I was where I knew
I had to be.

For love was a dream that came to life when
you would appear in my arms
And Spring that had seemed so far away was
suddenly here.
Through the passing of time I alone decide
what I'm to be
And for all that I am, I am only what you've
made of me.

There were times in my life I did battle with
the raging sea
And I fought, and I won, calling bitter tears to
victory.
There were people who cried "self-denial" for
the wrong I've done
But I learned how to smile, in your eyes I see
the morning sun.

It is kind to be old, to be blinded by the dreams
of men.
To have loved in my life and to know I'd do it
all again.
I have lived all my dreams, I have sifted
through the burning sand.
I had you in my life, I had time enough to hold
your hand.

For love was a dream that came to life when
you would appear in my arms
And Spring that had seemed so far away was
suddenly here.
Through the passing of time I alone decide
what I'm to be
And for all that I am, I am only what you've
made of me.

WHO IS THE MAN

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (June/July
1995)

Who is the man lookin' at me in the mirror
He looks just as old as Father Time.
Family resemblance and each day it's getting
clearer
He and I are one-of-a kind.

Well meaning, unpretentious, man-about-town
Successful, conscientious, both feet on the
ground.
Emancipated in his faded jeans
He's not as young as he seems.

An individual with substance and grace
Fading residuals, accelerated pace.
Keeping one step ahead of Uncle Sam
His bread is buttered with jam.

Who is the man lookin' at me in the mirror
He looks just as old as Father Time.
Family resemblance and each day it's getting
clearer
He and I are one-of-a kind.

Like Ol' Man River he keeps rollin' along
Sealed and delivered, service rendered for a
song.
The virtues of another time and place
Reflect the lines on his face.

He sees forever but forever is lost
It's now or never, pay the price at any cost.
What do you do after you've done it all
Either you rise or you fall.

Constant trauma, melodrama
Once it's gone, it's gone.

Who is the man lookin' at me in the mirror
He looks just as old as Father Time.
Family resemblance and each day it's getting
clearer
He and I are one-of-a kind.

Hair is gray and thinnin'
Mid-drift bulge is winnin'
Slimmin' time gets harder to find.
What a spot to be in
I just can't stop peein'
Seems as though I'm losin' my mind.
Spirited and spunky
Middle-age is funky
Come on in the water is fine.

THAT'S WHAT MICKEY MANTLE MEANT TO ME

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Swings the bat from either side
Golden glove and legs that glide
He moves into the big town
With his boyish grin and Oakie pride
Wins the heart of every kid who rides the IND
That's what Mickey Mantle meant to me.

'Fifty-six the triple crown.
Injured knees won't slow him down
The records he would shatter
Certain afterlife in Cooperstown
Number Seven taught the world
What dreams could guarantee
That's what Mickey Mantle meant to me.

We played within the lines of fantasy
And what our minds might let us be
An age of innocence, the glory days
When life was still a mystery.

Baseball cards and autographs
Lots of booze and lots of laughs
The bars were always open
For the ageless prince of summers past
Nothing can replace the face
Of childhood memories
Casey's boys, those 'fifties teams
Little men with haunting dreams
Still, that's what Mickey Mantle means to me.

...Thanks, Mick!

GOOD OLD FRIENDS

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (July 2000)

Is my heart prepared
Is my back against the wall.
Am I just too scared
Will I rise or will I fall.
Will they stare at me
Will they even know my name.
Will my good old friends
Hold me in their arms again?

Have the years been kind
To the promises we made.
Have we left behind
Dreams and games that we once played.
Children's sentiments
Say "To thine own self be true"
Now my good old friends
I'll share some memories with you.

And we'll all give thanks
That we've come this far.
And look back in time to find out
Who we are.
Was it long ago
Was it yesterday.
Will the mem'ries linger
Or just fade away?

As the stories fly
Through the mounds of photographs.
As we say goodbye
Should we cry or should we laugh.
Is it all a dream
Do we go through life alone.
Will my good old friends
Help me find my way back home?

ALL ABOUT LOVE

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (July 2003)

Thinkin' of life as a hole in the ground
Tryin' to fill up the space
Learnin' to measure the ups and the downs
Keepin' a smile on my face.
Fire and water can dampen the spirit
We're here 'til they haul us away
Givin' and takin' 'n' makin' the most of each day.

CHORUS

Well, it's all about love
All about dreamin'
Schemin' and havin' a ball.
Well, it's all about love
Kickin' and screamin'
Gettin' up after you fall
Or it's all about nothin' at all.

Ashes to ashes, we live and we die
'N everything else in between
May to December we freeze and we fry
Nothing is quite as it seems.
Virtue and vanity both disappear
And it's clear that we reap what we sow
Holding on tight 'til we find that it's time to let go.

CHORUS

Cappuccino, morning blues
Lay it all on the line
Glass of vino, evening news
Take one day at a time.

Slippin' and slidin' and stayin' on course
Findin' it hard to perceive
Goin' full throttle or holdin' your horse
Whatever you choose to believe.
Pickin' your battles and feelin' the sting
Don't be rattled if life passed you by
Gather your heart in your hand and give love one more try.

CHORUS

JOAN SAID

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

Spirit and tenacity unbridled by the wind
Nurtured by a need to feed the soul.
Courage and fragility do battle from within
Plant the seeds to gain control.
Writing with determination
Fighting for the concentration needed.
Quality of living can't be measured from your bed...
That's what Joan Said.

Bright illuminations from the darkness to the light
Revelations seek to ease the pain.
Hands upon the hourglass, a beacon in the night
Can't explore, can't explain.
Prayer defines the Holy Days
A calendar of praise to mark the moment.
Try to find atonement in your heart and not your head...
That's what Joan Said.

Whispered voice and velvet smile
Words of choice for wisdom's child
She finds the strength to take one final stand,
And she holds her family's love right in her hands
By the grace of God she'll face what life demands.

Years of creativity, a world of children's books
Woven by perceptions in her mind.
Fear and objectivity no matter where she looks
Letters she would leave behind.
Walking through that August day
A hundred pair of eyes that cried "she made it!"
Mem'ries are consoling but the future lies ahead...
That's what Joan Said.
That's what Joan Said.

WHERE WERE YOU

Words & Music by Kenny Karen

You look at me and see a man whose world
has turned to gray
A legendary figure put on permanent display,
For the younger ones to stare at, and politely
turn away,
When did I become the man I am today?

Where were you when I was twenty in the
company of kings
Praise and accolades would follow every note
that I would sing,
He's a real life Jolsen story with a tabloid's
tale to tell
Press releases straight from heaven, but there's
nothing there to sell.

Where were you when I was hungry, locking
horns with God's brigade
Doing penance for the Big Guy, for mistakes
that I had made,
Children needing my attention, freedom
pulling in the reins
Needing more than she could give me, passion
flowing through my veins.

Where were you when I was thirty, breaking
hearts and breaking stride
Changing patterns I had woven, watching fire
and ice collide,
Mich and Bud for Mr. Karmen, Chevrolet for
Sue and Jake
Giving everything worth giving, taking all
there was to take.

And I was thirty-five and watching Mama
retching from the cure
Crying out to God Almighty, faith had taught
her to endure,
It was vanity that cloaked the inhumanity of
pain
Tearful prayers for her deliverance, shrouded
memories still remain.

Where were you when I was forty, passing
through the great divide
The ascension of the privileged waiting on the
other side,
Weekly visits to my Papa, teenage daughters
almost grown
When she left me, I was not prepared to live
my life alone.

Where were you when I was dating every
Eighties renegade
Eager, high-profile ladies, liberation on parade,
My condition was appalling, self-indulgent to
be sure
For beguiling younger women, an enchanting
paramour.
And after thirteen years of living at the foot of
heaven's door
I was forced to re-examine all that I was living
for,
I could sense the dissipation and a charlatan's
demise
An intense preoccupation, the delaying of good
byes,
Only then was I directed to perceive a trusting
place
Where the dreams I had neglected were
concealed in love's embrace,
Underneath a crimson canopy and blazing
summer skies
I found truth and self-assurance when I looked
into her eyes.

Now my cup is running over and the taste of
life is sweet
Once again the sounds of children's voices
make my days complete,
Looking forward to tomorrow, looking back at
all I did
Well, my friend, I'm almost sixty but, I still
feel like a kid....

YOU ARE THERE

Words & Music by Kenny Karen (August 2003)

We meet by chance
One early summer's day
The winds would guide our sails,
And the air is dense with compliments
But your honesty prevails.

And love's in bloom
When Autumn comes to call
And all the world lies bare,
But the winter's gloom
Bathes in sweet perfume
As the sunlight strokes your hair,
And I smile 'cause you are there.

There to turn the tide
Guide the ebb and flow,
There to groom the gardens
Watch the seedlings grow.

And still there's time
To fly above the clouds
To soar where eagles dare,
And the years we've spent
Write a testament
To the fruit that love can bear,
And I smile 'cause you are there.
I can smile 'cause you are there.