

# CHOIRBOY

All Words and Music © Kenny Karen

## ONE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

People gazing out of windows,  
Searching dreams and finding memories,  
Stolen moments in disguise  
Only the eyes can still remember.

Waving hands caress the morning,  
Faces climb aboard the sunrise,  
Arms embrace the wasted years,  
Drying the tears, kissing the new day.

Chase the wind, touch the sky,  
Spread your wings, let freedom fly.  
Feel the ground burst with pride,  
Plant the seeds of life inside.

Born in the ashes of sorrow and shame,  
Scattering dreams from dust that remained,  
Lighting a flame that would not die,  
Catching the rings as horses fly,  
Reaching a world you've never known.  
One of God's Children,  
One of God's Children,  
One of God's Children is coming home.

Distant yesterdays will call you,  
Souls will speak and you will answer,  
What you seek is what you find  
Even the blind can see tomorrow.

Should you fail to taste the sweetness  
Should you walk where stones have gathered,  
Should your heart need time to mend,  
Time is your friend and love is your family.

Chase the wind, touch the sky,  
Spread your wings let freedom fly.  
Feel the ground burst with pride,  
Plant the seeds of life inside.

Wearing a prayer around his hand  
One of God's Children takes a stand,  
Never to hear a distant drum,  
Never to fear what must be won,  
Never to face the world alone.  
One of God's Children,  
One of God's Children,  
One of God's Children is coming home.

Children of Israel, children of destiny,  
Coming home.

## **A PART OF YOU**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

Autumn meets the New Year, sweetness in the  
greeting,  
Summer bids its last farewell.  
Tables dressed with flowers,  
apples dipped in honey,  
Mem'ries weave a magic spell.  
Walking down a dirt road, fragile recollections,  
Papa's years are in his eyes.  
Here is Bubbi Esther...  
Here is Zeide Chaim...  
This is where we said goodbye.

Monuments to Rudki, small Galician village,  
Faith would keep our dreams alive.  
Family traditions, day to day existence,  
Learning how a Jew survives.  
Zeide took two daughters,  
crossed the mighty ocean,  
Bubbi's strength would be our guide.  
Children still remaining  
Sheltered by her courage  
'Til we reached the other side.

Grasses overgrown, sentiments in stone.  
Neatly cared for, say a prayer  
for their eternal home.

Here among the flowers, thoughts  
are calm and peaceful,  
Voices fill the Autumn sky.  
Valleys of remembrance, silent meditation,  
Homage to the years gone by.  
Generations gather, gone but not forgotten,  
Remnants of the world they knew.  
Standing with my father  
Living through his mem'ries  
I've become a part of you.

You are still alive  
As long as I am living...  
I've become a part of you.

## **IN MY MIND**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

Watchin' the street lamps disappear  
In the back of the Dodge sedan  
From the hallowed walls of Montreal  
Headin' south to the Promised Land.

Passin' the point of no return  
Navigatin' down Ol' Route 9  
We would sing the praise of summer days  
Resurrecting a gentle time, in my mind.

Soothing rains beat on my memories  
Sweet refrains of all that used to be  
Lake George nights when the moon  
would own the sky  
Adirondacks were still, in the heat of mid-July.

Sifting' through Morris Avenue  
'Til the numbers read 1310  
And across the street in front-row seats  
Sat a trio of lost children.

Modest apartment, second floor  
On the door post a "welcome" sign  
And in Becky's day she would lead the way  
Holding' onto the ties that bind – in my mind.

Jersey shore would whisper in my ear  
Long before those neon signs appeared  
Rooms for rent and the Royal Oak marquee  
All the days that we spent fighting waves and  
feeling free.

Turning to you, O' Canada  
For the memories I hope to find  
The serenity comes back to me  
In the shadows I left behind – in my mind.

## **CHOIRBOY**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

The ivy filters through the vine  
A show of strength, a test of time.  
With not one stone replaced, one brick re-faced  
We'd sanctify this shrine.  
And through the mounds of melting snow  
We'd view the changing of the guard.  
As the winds of March grew silent  
And the southern breezes blew  
We would pray for our redemption  
Hoping God would see us through.  
And everyday would be Thanksgiving  
For the humble and the scarred,  
At the people's congregation  
On St. Joseph Boulevard.

And I heard the call  
Papa's sermons, mama's songs.  
And if I should fall they were there  
To put me back where I belonged.

So I sang for God Almighty  
And He sang along with me.  
And we harmonized and eulogized  
What was never meant to be.  
And I would not seek forgiveness  
And I could not ease the pain,  
And the painted smile would last a while  
But, the memories remained.

Back when I was a Choirboy  
Back in the sweetness of my youth.  
When I would climb the stairs  
And sing the prayers  
And know that God was truth.  
Back when I was a Choirboy  
When I was nine and ten years old,  
We would welcome every Sabbath  
Bringing glory to His name  
Singing prayers and benedictions  
We were God's eternal flame.  
And when the Holy ark was opened  
And we'd read the sacred scrolls  
We were one with our creator  
We were masters of our souls.  
And my voice was sweet  
Gifted child, my mama's pride.  
Wings beneath my feet  
I'd be taken on a magic carpet ride.

I would wear a robe of satin  
And a skullcap graced my head.  
And His spirit would envelop me  
In each blessing that I read.  
And I'd choose my own direction  
And I'd choose to be set free,

If I'd look into the eyes of God  
Would I see what He would see?

Well, once I was a Choirboy  
The second seat, the second row.  
With every new command the leader's hand  
Would make the music flow.  
And when I was a Choirboy  
I'd always do as I was told.  
I would be just like the others  
And the others just like me,  
We were seedlings in the garden  
We were branches of a tree.  
And, what became of my companions  
Did they blend into the fold  
Would they challenge the convictions  
Of a child as good as gold?

And I lost my place  
Searching for my happiness.  
In God's saving grace  
Would I taste the fruits of life,  
Would I be blessed?

I learned to trust the doubters  
The wicked and the weak,  
The noble men, the holy men  
The mighty and the meek.  
We're all cast upon the waters  
And we're set adrift at sea  
To find the strength of our beliefs,  
Is it God or is it me?

Well, once I was a Choirboy.  
And, I am still that Choirboy.

### **SOMEBODY'S CHILD**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

I climb the stairs  
The second floor,  
An answered prayer  
An open door,  
A warm embrace  
A loving smile,  
And I am still  
Somebody's child.

His eyes are warm  
His voice is strong,  
Between the lines  
Of mama's songs,  
We live the years  
We walk the miles,  
And I am still  
Somebody's child.

The room's filled with clutter and photographs,  
The loneliness plays with his mind.  
Pieces of memories lie torn in half,  
Since he remained behind.

I touch his cheek  
I take his hands,  
It's time to go  
He understands,  
I watch his face  
I read his eyes,  
I hold him close  
We kiss good bye.

He's in my heart  
I'm in his smile,  
I feel his love  
And all the while  
I know I'm still  
Somebody's child.

### **GOD OF MY FATHER**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

God of my father, Father in heaven  
Give us your blessings, we grains of sand.  
Show us your kindness, we non-believers  
Remove our blindness, give us your hand.

We are as snowflakes dancing one moment  
Madness and passion taking command.  
Are you eternal? Are you forgiving?  
Is life worth living, can we understand?

God of my father, Father in heaven  
Where you will lead us, you alone know.  
Are we the victims, are we the dreamers  
You're our redeemer, don't let us go.  
\_Do you not hear us, are you not listening  
Cries and confusion of mortal men.  
You are our healer, our greatest virtue  
God would not hurt you, whisper "Amen."

God of my father, I must beseech you  
How can I reach you, one common stone.  
I seek the answers no one has shown me  
Until I find them, I'll be alone  
God of my father, please bring me home.

## **I USED TO BE**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

Little guy, school boy clothes  
Freezing hands, 'n runny nose  
Thinks about the joy this day might bring.  
Record hops, junior proms  
Living rooms or just for mom  
All he ever wants to do is sing.

CBS, RCA, New York's just a breath away  
"Sign here kid, we'll do all the rest."  
Startin' slow, humble pie,  
living' at the local "Y"  
'Cause nothin's too good when you're the best.

Subways to the Bronx and back  
Aunt Frieda's food 'n Uncle Max was there  
Just for a while, then he was gone.  
My country called, I went to school  
I may be young but I'm no fool  
My mama's son won't fight in Vietnam.

I used to be Kenny Karen  
Kenny Karen, celebrity.  
I used to be Kenny Karen  
Anybody remember me?

Presley songs, Bachrach tunes  
Paper cups and plastic spoons  
For fifteen bucks I felt just like a king.  
Record dates, jingles too,  
any style fits any shoe  
I learned my craft, I didn't miss a thing.

"You deserve a break today"  
Now fortune's child is on his way  
And suddenly the certainty is clear.  
One divorce, one good bye  
Misconceptions make you cry  
Now riding high I live the golden years

I used to be Kenny Karen  
Kenny Karen, celebrity.  
I used to be Kenny Karen  
Anybody remember me?

Money flowed like waterfalls  
Chauffeured cars and center halls  
Country house, summers at the lake.  
True respectability, music business monarchy  
Too much of a good thing's hard to take....

Broken heart, all alone  
Sycamore feels just like stone

Telephone stopped ringing off the wall.  
Middle age, slow decline  
Stepping out, losing time  
Business...just not there at all.

Younger men can take my place  
But vanity, I know thy face,  
Where did it go, does no one give a damn.  
Tough to climb, tough to fall  
But in my mind I've had it all  
I'll take it slow 'cause I know who I am.

I used to be Kenny Karen  
Kenny Karen, celebrity.  
I used to be Kenny Karen  
Anybody remember me?  
Does anybody still remember me?

## **WORDS FROM MAMA'S EYES**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

Sweetness and sorrow she wore with style  
Yesterday's sadness, tomorrow's smile  
Strength of conviction or helpless child  
She would be all things to me.

Bridging the waters throughout her life  
Mother and daughter and loving wife  
Spoke with the softness of lullabies  
Words from Mama's Eyes.

Chaimke, mein kind  
I will watch over you  
Chaimke, mein kind  
No harm will come to you  
Wherever you may be, I'll be with you  
Chaimke, mein kind.

Standing beside her with watchful eye  
Frail imitation of years gone by  
Looking to heaven and asking why  
Mournful sighs and last goodbyes.

Years entertain us and life goes on  
Mem'ries sustain us when dreams have gone  
Remembering with flowers and family ties  
These words from Mama's Eyes.

Chaimke, mein kind  
I will watch over you  
Chaimke, mein kind  
No harm will come to you  
Wherever you may be, I'll be with you  
Chaimke, mein kind.

Her legacy, her gift to me  
These words from my Mama's Eyes.

## **THE OLD MAN**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

Starin' up at tired faces,  
Searchin' eyes that look before they see.  
Disbelief that time erases,  
Days when they were them and I was me.  
Mama hugs the man she's never seen before,  
Daddy wipes away the tears.  
Shadows hide the scars of aging, but not the years.

Picture frames and faded mem'ries,  
Pages of the past I threw away.  
Covered by a web of summers,  
Waves that learned to dance  
while children played.  
Daddy wanders through the dreams  
he's left behind,  
Preaching sermons no one hears.  
Prayers to mourn a congregation that's disappeared.

And everyone keeps askin'  
"Where you've been, where've you gone?"  
Everyone keeps mentioning your name.  
Did your road to freedom change  
The colors of the dawn,  
Or are they still the same?  
Is life to blame  
For all the pain that's in your smile?  
And the old man cried, "We missed you boy."

Once we chased the wind together,  
Guided by the love that filled our home.  
Once we painted words with laughter,  
Now we speak of names engraved in stone.  
Time has somehow lost what  
time cannot replace,  
Voices blending with the sun.  
We walked the promised land forever,  
When we were one.

And everyone keeps askin'  
"Where you've been, where've you gone?"  
Everyone keeps mentioning your name.  
Did your road to freedom change  
The colors of the dawn,  
Or are they still the same?  
Is life to blame  
For all the pain that's in your smile?  
And the old man cried, "We missed you boy."  
And I turned to him and said, "So have I."

## **MY BABIES**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

Driving past a row of gardens  
Aching feeling in my heart  
and all at once I'm there,  
And there's magic in the air  
Because I see My Babies standing at the door,  
And for a moment life is as it was before.

Stay with us forever, Daddy,  
Play with us until you think it's  
time for you to go,  
Are they old enough to know  
how much it hurts  
Each time I have to say, goodbye.  
And will they know the pain of longing,  
or will I?

I trace the lines of mem'ries made together  
As I hold two golden spirits in my hands,  
And the worship in their eyes  
Can disguise a faceless dream  
Till it seems that God is man.

Color me with love My Babies,  
Rearrange your puzzled lives and  
make the pieces fit,  
Till you sit inside a carousel  
that paints the world  
A candy apple red  
Where goodbyes are never felt and never said.

Then once more I embark upon forever,  
But, glancing back I see it in their eyes  
Can I wash away the lies from the  
innocence I wear  
Should they care enough to cry?  
And in time will I forsake the seeds I've sown  
Or is it me who'll be alone?  
Will they know me,  
Or will someone else's face replace the  
laughter we once shared?

Good-bye, My Babies.....

## **I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PRAY** **(KACEY'S SONG)**

Words and Music by Kenny Karen

We sit and talk awhile  
And shed a tear or two  
I look for words to say  
To try and comfort you.  
You've been a friend to me  
And I'll help see you through  
I don't know how to pray  
But I will pray for you.

Just how long has it been  
Since you've not been yourself  
The memory's fading now  
Like pictures on a shelf.  
It seems like yesterday  
But I guess that's just not true  
I don't know how to pray  
But I will pray for you.

You never talk to God  
And say that life's not fair  
You understand the virtues  
Of a simple prayer  
And though I can't deny  
The things that I can't do  
Still I can justify  
That God must be with you.

You sing inside my mind  
Your voice is sweet and true  
The strength I couldn't find  
I'll always find in you  
I don't expect to see  
What life taught you to see  
I don't know how to pray  
But will you pray for me.

## **THE PICTURE**

Lyric by Bernard Miller, Music by Kenny  
Karen

My little boy, Billy, was drawing a picture  
A picture that no one could see.  
What kind of a picture, I asked,  
are you drawing  
A picture of God, said he.

I smiled with the infinite wisdom of grown-ups  
And patted the top of his head.  
But nobody knows what God really looks like  
They will in a minute, he said.

They will in a minute  
They'll know what God looks like  
They will in a minute, he said.  
As soon as I finish drawing my picture  
They'll know what God looks like, he said.

The wisest of wise men  
Have searched through the heavens  
To see what the eye cannot see.  
But one little boy with a handful of crayons  
Drew a picture of God for me.