

A Year of Change

Sale runs until December 20th!

To say I've been up and down lately would be a radical understatement, so I'm just going to tackle what's been happening one item at a time.

Most important, we are well. Gracie Mae continues to whirligig any time she thinks there's a treat available. Pat continues to spend mornings on the porch, reading the papers and defining the temperature by "It's a one hoodie, two hoodie, or three hoodie morning".

As for myself, well... you may already know that I had to cancel the remainder of my North American shows, as well as all planned overseas appearances. I planned to finish my touring life with a series of shows in Ireland, culminating on May 31st in Dublin, where I'd be joined onstage by a host of colleagues. The whole show would be filmed for an upcoming documentary of my life and work. After that, I would do the occasional special event, sing on other peoples' records, and concentrate on writing prose.



Gracie Mae and Between The Lines

Unfortunately, in a nutshell, I can't sing any more. Ironically, my crew and I toured for three full months without any of us getting Covid! Still, I picked up some kind of virus mid-May, and the specialists think my right vocal cord hemorrhaged one night because of it, leaving me with vocal scarring on my larynx. Because of that, I can't "hold my notes", and since it takes more air to get past the scarring, my phrasing is also way off. Even speaking, I get hoarse and raspy without warning. There are no effective treatments or cures, unfortunately. Even if I tried what's out there, it would only be a waiting game until this re-occurred. So, I've stepped down.

I'm going to ask anyone reading this *not* to send me suggestions for vocal clinics, doctors, or treatments because believe me, I've been thorough. It's a hard thing to accept – I cannot begin to tell you how painfully hard this is – but as I've sung before, "[I'm still standing](#)".

I will confess this much: it's the little things that bring me to tears. Asking my webmaster to remove "Concerts" from the Contacts page of my website. Looking at the brand new suitcases I bought when my fifteen-year-old bag finally gave way, and cutting the "Janis Ian" luggage tags off them. Along with everything I need to sell, donate, or give away, from Al Petteway's old 1934 Gibson L-50 to a host of unused guitar straps, capos, "Janis Ian thumbpicks" and microphones I'll no longer need.

Well, enough of that. Let's move on to good news. First, I just received my *10th Grammy nomination*, for "Best Folk Album – *The Light at the End of the Line*". That brings me full circle, because my very first nomination was in 1967, for "Best Folk Album". Ten nominations over a sixty-year span, in eight different categories. Honestly, when I think of my four-year-old self on our farm, standing on the back of a flatbed truck belting out "Oklahoma" as I scattered chicken feed, it's all so unlikely!

In celebration, I'm doing two things: holding a [massive website sale](#), and starting a [new "Signed items" page](#) run by my friend Kris Noyes. And yes, *we have vinyl* of the new album!! I'm not even sure it's available in any of the regular outlets yet, but Kris has signed copies, along with various test pressings and other rare items. He's also handling a bundle we put together of – omigosh, I almost forgot!!!



Between the Lines - The Definitive Remastered CD

By special arrangement with Sony Legacy, I've been able to put together [the definitive CD version of *Between the Lines*](#). The 1983 version that's still for sale has no insert, no lyrics, no musician credits, and the artwork is miserable. This new version has everything the original vinyl had. Four people were involved in the audio recreation: Mark Wilder (hands-on engineering), Steve Berkowitz (5-time Grammy winner, in part for work with Miles Davis' and Bob Dylan's catalogues), the late and much-beloved [Brooks Arthur](#) (who produced and engineered it, winning two Grammys in the process), and myself.

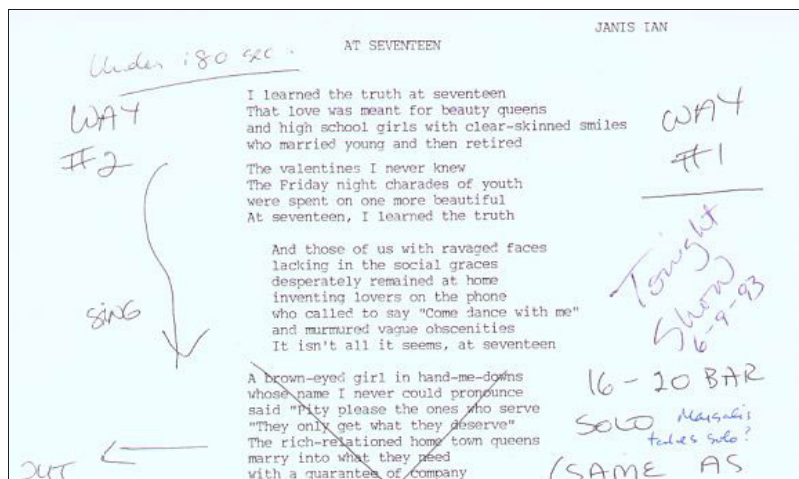
Over the course of six months, we struggled with questions like these: should we try to make the album sound more contemporary, or should it sound exactly like the original vinyl, or should it sound like what Brooks would have done *then* if he'd had the current tools available? In the end, that's what we decided on, tested it in different ways for another two months, and I think it's an unbelievably fine product.

You can purchase a [signed bundle of "BTL" and "Light" CDs](#), along with a signed laminate, a VIP pass, and two lanyards, from Kris' site. You can also purchase [unsigned copies of both CDs in a bundle from my regular store](#). I've priced downloads as low as 22 cents, and we've put up [Peter Cunningham's amazing "farewell" video](#). A great portion of all proceeds will go to... well, read on.



Janis Songbooks

I can't go into detail yet, but I'm in the process of donating my archives to Berea College. Everything. Rough drafts of songs and books, FBI files, signed scripts, correspondence with other artists, art other artists have given me, contracts and the negotiations that went into them, everything pertaining to my life as an artist. Berea's not a wealthy institution, but it's the right place for my work to live. Just so you know, I am not being paid a dime for this – Berea's not a wealthy institution. However, it's the *right* place for my work to live, and they've agreed to make the work available to the public, not just academicians. A good portion of sales on either site will help fund the archives. The [beginning of our plan is available at the Berea College website](#).



and haven for the elderly

Remember those who win the game
lose the love they sought to gain
in debentures of quality
and dubious integrity
Their small-town eyes will gaze at you
in dull surprise, when payment due
exceeds accounts received, at seventeen

OUT ←

To those of us who knew the pain
of valentines that never came
and those whose names were never called
when choosing sides for basketball
It was long ago and far away
The world was younger than today
when dreams were all they gave for free
to ugly duckling girls like me

SOLO ←

We all play the game, and when we dare
we cheat ourselves at solitaire
inventing lovers on the phone
repenting other lives unknown
that call and say "Come on, dance with me"
and murmur vague obscenities
at ugly girls like me, at seventeen

SING ←

final version =
1st vs. 1st bridge,
10 instrumental,
last bridge

SING

Sam's copy

Notes for an appearance on the "Tonight Show"

I think that's it for now. Please enjoy the sale and know that for me, life as an artist is far from over. My friend Jeff and I are already talking about using recordings made before I lost my ability to sing to create a duets album, releasing worktapes, live shows, songs you've never heard, there are literally hundreds of pieces still available... fortunately I'd been going into the studio regularly (or my bathroom, because, echo), so even if I can't vocalize any more, my work as a vocalist will continue.

Thank you all for your support, your kind words, your friendship-at-a-distance, and your belief in my work.

[Visit the store now!](#)

Sam's