

Me and Hank

by John Farrow

Me and Hank go back a ways. Way back at least to when *Lovesick Blues* first hit the charts and my early screams began tormenting the outside world.

Hard to believe it's been 50 years since Hank Williams checked out in the back seat of his Cadillac on the way to a New Year's Day show in Ohio. He was only 29 and had played the Skyline Club in Austin, Texas, in mid-December of 1952. It was to be his last public performance.

His widow, Billie Jean Williams, later married another young singer by the name of Johnny Horton. Horton played Austin's Skyline Club on November 4, 1960. He died the next day on the drive to another show in Louisiana. Who says lighting doesn't strike twice? But that may have been the last time anyone ever thought about marrying Billie Jean again.

Even though Hank's gone, it's as though he hasn't really left. The music he made in his few short years is just as honest and relevant today as when he wrote and recorded it. And many of his songs have a special connection to running in general and to my running career in particular.

Hey, Good Lookin'

*Hey, good lookin',
whatcha got cooking,
How's about cookin'
somethin' up with me.*

That is, if I could only catch you. It was the Duke City Marathon 5k a few years back and I was running behind a girl with perhaps the most beautiful legs I have ever seen. I desperately wanted to keep up with her, if only for the view, but it was not to be. Even though she eventually pulled away, the effort to stay with her resulted in my only individual medal from that race.

Jambalaya

*Jambalaya, a crawfish pie and a filé gumbo
'Cause tonight I'm gonna see my ma cher a-*

*mioPick guitar, fill fruit jar and be gay-oh
Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the bayou.*

They don't call New Orleans the Big Easy for nothing and the Mardi Gras Marathon is every bit as much fun as the name implies. Roll on big river, roll my blues away. Head out on the levee 'cause the blues ain't gonna worry me today. *Laissez les bons temps rouler.*

Honky Tonkin'

*Just call me up, sweet mama,
and we'll go steppin' out.
We'll go honky tonkin'
Honky tonkin' 'round this town.*

Runners like to travel and when traveling to a race, it's only natural to want to try new and exciting things and perhaps sample a bit of the night life. However, this also means that it's easy to find yourself being dragged to the starting line with margaritas and nachos on your breath and Omar & the Howlers still blasting away in your head.

Lost Highway

*When I pass by all the people say
Just another guy on the lost highway.*

It's around here somewhere, maybe just up around the bend. Or over the next hill. Or perhaps very close by. We keep looking for it, sometimes not accepting the fact that it's right in front of us and we've found it all along.

I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry

*Hear the lonesome whippoorwill
He sounds too blue to fly.
The midnight train is whining low
I'm so lonesome I could cry.*

The road goes on forever, just miles and miles of empty miles. Here and there, the wreckage of broken dreams lies strewn about in solitude, waiting. Ain't it funny how time slips away.

I Can't Help It (If I'm Still in Love With You)

*Suddenly I got that old time feeling
I can't help it if I'm still in love with you.*

After all these years and all these aches and pains,

when some people say I should know better and start acting my age, I'll still be searching for a trail to run up in the mountains or down by the river. I need to feel the cool breeze in my face, striding out, taking my chances, looking for the sun to shine on the way to set me free.□

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