

# My Heartstrings

(Will Always Play the Blues)

**Glass Bead Nation**  
featuring  
**Anna**

## **My Heartstrings (Will Always Play the Blues)**

I've marched among the specters  
And led a company of ghosts  
And when my fears did battle with my dreams  
I shut my eyes and learned to let it go

When I open my wounds  
And pick at the skin  
Am I letting something out  
Or inviting something in?

Every leaf will have to fall  
There is life beyond these prison walls  
But I know now that my heartstrings  
Will always play the blues

I didn't want to be the bad one  
They said I'd pick a fight with God  
Perhaps I would if I had found him  
But I was slipping and losing my control

It's only when I'm alone  
I can be me  
I lock the door on the day  
To set myself free

Every leaf will have to fall  
There is life beyond these prison walls  
But I know now that my heartstrings  
Will always play the blues  
Will always play the blues.

## **The story behind the lyrics**

This song came about as a direct result of conversations with people I encountered at random over the last few years, who were either experiencing - or caring for people with - a mental health issue. (This is not a rare condition: in 2014, medical statistics showed that one in five American adults had experienced a mental illness, one in twenty-five to a very serious degree.\* Astonishingly, many sufferers still experience prejudice and stigma!).

In particular, I remember two separate conversations, a couple of years apart, with two veterans, one English, one American. Both had seen active service, both had experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, both had been homeless. Their stories were harrowing. They spoke about the death of comrades and how they felt their fallen friends had 'stayed with them' on the battlefield. They spoke about guilt, about their anger at God and government and about how their closest relationships had been affected or even destroyed. Remarkably, they were also able to talk about healing and acceptance and about coming to terms with their experiences. From being unable to imagine feeling happy and normal ever again, they were able to heal to the point that, although they knew there were always going to be bad days, they knew there were going to be good days too. In other words, they knew that their heartstrings would always play the blues...

In honor of the two guys who most inspired this song, we donate all proceeds of the sales of this recording to the American Legion, to distribute as they see fit to veterans needing support in coping with mental illness.

Paul Johnson Rogers, November 2016

\*Taken from a US government website article: *'Mental Health Myths and Facts'*, November 2016

**Glass Bead Nation** is a project-focused music and arts collective co-ordinated by composer/producer Paul Johnson Rogers.



**Paul Johnson Rogers** is a community musician and composer who writes for broadcast, stage and the concert platform. A versatile multi-instrumentalist and highly experienced studio producer, his music is regularly heard worldwide on dozens of tv programs and films. In 2014, Paul relocated from England to the USA and he now works mainly from his private studio in rural Missouri.



17 year old **Anna Miller** is a high school senior with a great enthusiasm and talent for the performing arts in general and music in particular. As well as singing, Anna writes her own material and plays the guitar, citing Ed Sheeran as one of her current influences.



**Phil Hayes** is a photographer currently based in the county of West Sussex, on the South Coast of England, where the unique light of the beaches and woodlands inspires his passion for nature photography. Phil finds monochrome a particularly expressive medium, but he continues to develop new techniques using cutting-edge technology.