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Donna Lange

ALONE AT SEA

*Fairest of winds and love,
only gratitude... Donna*



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1** *Alone at Sea* was written on my very first offshore sail crewing on SV_Omuramba. I was at the beginning of my quest, lamenting the loss of faith, believing that on my way I would discover truth that would become a foundation for renewed faith.

2** When my daughter Ptarmigan was to be married, I trusted for a song for her wedding. Strangely, the song that came to me was *Never Forget Gratitude*, which isn't really a wedding song. It is really about nurturing gratitude, talking about the things we loved together. It just so happened that she didn't get married. She wasn't quite ready then. But, she did marry the same lucky guy 6 months later. (She's pretty lucky, too.) This is her song.

3** While in Bristol, RI, in 2002, after my first solo sail, preparing to go on to Ireland, I met an Irishman who is also a bass player. We became fast bar friends and in my zeal to encourage people to develop their songwriting skills, I nudged Corky about singing his original songs. At one point he volunteered to give me a beautiful poem he had written for a friend's daughter. Just so happens that Corky also has a lovely daughter who inspired the poem which I wrote into the Irish waltz, *Delicate Butterfly*. It was the first song I sang when I arrived in Ireland and has become a favorite.

4** There are landmarks in one's life. Becoming a grandmother was a precious landmark for me. *Noni's Lullaby* is the first song I wrote to mark that integration of my heart, family and privilege of being a Grandmother. But I have to say, Grandma was just a bit too staunch a name for the likes of me, so I adopted Noni as my name for my wiser (I hope) years.

5 Raising my boys had dynamic elements of challenge. I have to say, watching my sons move into adult spaces, make their own choices and pave their ways through "growing up" was very enlightening. As I was also forging so much new territory in my life I was no "expert," but by observing them, often in awe, I was the one learning from them. The hardest thing about traveling to such far distant shores is missing being a part of their day-to-day

lives and adventures. *Just Wanna Be Spending Time with You* came from that longing, written crossing the North Atlantic Ocean. When I arrived in Ireland, it was Keel who said, "Well Mom, if it didn't kill ya, it'll make you stronger." Truth!

6 One of the greatest privileges of my life has been the opportunity my daughter Kristy has given me to enjoy a loving, sweet relationship with her. When Kristy was born, it was a desperate time in my life. I entrusted Kristy's care to another family as I gave her up for adoption. Twenty-one years later, after I had sailed to Ireland, the long-awaited connections were made and we were to meet for the first time since her birth. We chose to meet in Ireland and spent a magical week together. These lyrics poured from my heart to a journal while sailing off the coast of Africa. Quite a while later, when rereading excerpts from my journals, I came across the writings. Shortly after that, the music was inspired while doing a sailing delivery with Keel. I knew the music was meant for Kristy's song *Reunion*.

7** The roots of this song was a rhythm I liked. While playing music in the Caribbean with fabulous instrumentalist Morgan Rael, we often gathered drummers. I would finish this one song and spontaneously start playing 2 chords with this cool drum rhythm. As we ended the jam, I said, "I'm gonna write a song to that." I wrote *Sailing on the Sea* as soon as I got offshore on my way to RI.

8 In 2002, after nearly a month on the North Atlantic Ocean, after losing my steering vane, weeks without sleep, jury rigging sails, and endless storms, I came to a beautiful understanding of the depth of love that is the very nature of my heart, and I believe every human heart. I experienced a deep meditation as I learned to rest my mind during the endless hours of steering. This poem came as I tried to journal my experience. *Loose Me From Time*.

9 This past February I was rounding the infamous Cape Hope of South Africa. The two storms, with just one day between, created

the greatest seas and winds I have ever encountered. After 5 days of 35-50 knot winds creating swells mounting to 60' high, I was on the verge of succumbing to the instinct to panic. But, within, I had come to sense such a nurturing flow from the ocean herself, that instead, as the day was turning to dusk, I began to sing from the my depths of soul *Peace, Still the Raging Storm*. Over the next hours I watched as the last mountains of swells rolled under Inspired Insanity, one fully engulfing the stern with a crushing wave that broke my companionway window, flooding the cabin sole below. But Peace came. The winds slowly abated. The intensity of the storm passed and in peace and exhaustion I enjoyed the splendor of a clear early evening sky and, in the long night, eased out sails as the winds decreased.

10 This song was written as a plea with the Winds to "give me a break" amidst the continual front lines I had to forge crossing the North Atlantic to Ireland. It fits nicely here with the theme of expressing respect for the beauty and personal dynamics I felt as I interacted with the Winds. No less than transcendental.

11 It is wonderful when I encounter a musician who is spiritually a kindred heart. I appreciate that aspect of my friendship with singer/ songwriter Jason Valcourt (www.jasonvalcourt.com). While I was at sea we talked a few moments by sat phone. I asked him for a thought or revelation. He shared a topic from a recent meditation group discussion, *Peace is All I Have to Give* to the world.

12 My natural bio rhythms became very noticeable alone at sea. The life-long tendency towards depression started to set in as I lay becalmed day after day in the South Atlantic, dodging high pressure systems. I was already delayed by the trauma of crossing the North Atlantic to windward and against current. I felt thwarted by Mother Nature and life. How could such unusual conditions plague my efforts? Was I cursed? Karma? As depression set in, I and gave it my full attention was able to reflect. *Some Days, All I Can Do Is Cry* describes the challenge of accepting such deep lows that no matter what I think, do, or practice, the tears do not stop flowing.

13 Amongst the purposes of my journey, I have sought to discover true health and develop practices that bring balance to my body and entire person. I found freedom in discovering that I no longer need to fight against my own nature because it is full of love and potential. I can now choose my life. Unraveling the layers of self-judgment unleashed a greater potential to change direction. *Changing Direction* suggests that everyone has the same potential to "find a better way."

14 Somewhat in the thread of *Changing Direction, Just Trying on Different Me's*, was written in the South Atlantic during my reflections. Inspired, as I read Neale Donald Walsh's *Conversations With God*, I was considering how relationships help me learn about myself.

15 During my sail I would check in with my mom by sat phone. It was while I was crossing the Southern Ocean, that she was deciding whether to marry to a wonderful man I had known for many years. I would get a message from my brother Jeff that the wedding was on, but when I talked to Mom, she was unsure.

Partly to encourage me to return home during my interim in New Zealand, she said one day, "You need to see your new granddaughter and you have to make the wedding." Finally, an answer. She was getting married. Over the next weeks I pondered writing her and her fiancé a song and in a moment, the expression *Golden Years of Love* came to me. The rest of the lyrics flowed quickly. Keel graced me with a wonderful guitar lead for the reception—I regret that it is not here. Next time.

16 Like *Golden Years of Love, Sticking Together* began with the expression and just poured out from there. It speaks of undoing the lies of segregation that have been perpetrated by religious leaders and releasing freedom which will unlock the door to prosperity for all.

Here, within, lies this compilation of 15 songs and a poem—all written during my journeys at sea, soloing blue water. The first songs were actually recorded nearly a year ago when my son Keel roused up a recording system so I could lay down songs for him to practice lead riffs on his guitar. However, I also wanted to have a CD of my songs that my grandchildren could enjoy. It was wonderful and several of the tracks are really good takes, so we included them here. The second set of songs are all about the sea, my challenges and experiences out there. Then I sing for you the songs inspired by the incredible energy of unity and love I experienced from the ocean and natural wonders of the sea. The unity of the earth and all people is intrinsic to the energy of the universe. We have but to see it and live accordingly. All for one and one for all.

This CD is the doing of faithful people who believe in me. I had visions of a grand CD done with my children and other musicians. I was going to postpone the recording until I could "do it right" which would not have happened until I returned to RI in 2007. But Janet Marie Yeates, the fabulous graphic designer I am so fortunate to have been found by, who has become the facilitator of my music realm, gave me a talking to and strongly encouraged me to get my new music recorded. I am heard all over the world with just me and my guitar—may as well make the CD authentic. Dan Berggren was miraculously available in that very small time window we had for recording and production. Musician Bert Mayne (www.bertmayne.com) volunteered his time and equipment as sound engineer for the CD Release Concert on June 15, 2006. Stu Kahn is both a financial sponsor and an incredible foundation for me—believing in me and my music. Especially now, only a month off the sea from a very demanding sail that has left me with less energy to flaunt, I so appreciate these wonderful people. My thanks to them and my family with all my heart.

—*Fairest of winds and love, Captain Donna Lange*

Credits

All songs written by Donna Lange. ©©Donna Lange 2006

Vocals; guitar and harmonica played by Donna Lange

Lyrics for *Delicate Butterfly* by Corky Jones

** songs recorded in Charlton, NY, in the living room of Keel's good friend's dad

All other songs and the poem produced by BerggrenFolk Studios, Dan Berggren, Ballston Spa, NY www.berggrenfolk.com

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