



Tom Pacheco **"Railroad Rainbows & Talkin' Blues"** Frogs Claw Records

**"Railroad Rainbows & Talkin' Blues"** is the latest instalment in Tom's **"Bare Bones"** series of 'stripped down' acoustic recordings. Since this new disc bears the sub-title **"VI,"** it has become apparent that **"Bloodlines,"** which I reviewed [in FolkWax] a few years ago, was **"Bare Bones V."** On this disc, Tom is accompanied on bass and acoustic lead guitar by his younger brother Paul.

As the "Out In The Spooky Country" lyric unfolds, the narrator – 'a musician on the road' - journeys from Gettysburg to Pittsburg, Boise, Tulsa and some unnamed location in Montana while closely observing people and their surroundings. There's a weeping father whose marine son was killed in action last week, a female mass murderer, a bearded, white haired man who claims to be Elvis, a young family whose mortgage has been foreclosed, and a train carrying genetically modified seeds which *"will save the world,"* while a mandolin toting rabbi warns of apocalyptic times to come. Out in a bitterly cold, snow covered Colorado, his car having broken down, the narrator in "Riding With Mr. Thompson" is picked up by none other than an intoxicated, opinionated Hunter S. Thompson. Aged 67, around 6.00pm, this American icon, author and journalist took his life on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2005 in the study of his fortified Owl Farm home in Woody Creek – a location that Pacheco alludes to in the lyric. When the price of gas is jacked up by the oil companies, a Citgo gas station proprietor and some buddies hi-jack tankers and sell of their plunder as "10 Cent Gas." Set to a waltz paced melody, "The Girl From Tornado Country" opens her front door and finds her ex-con, former husband standing there. Do they get back together?? Buy the album.....

Set once again 'on the road,' old friends meet in "Ship Of Light," spend some time reminiscing, and part again. The ensuing "Someday" and "Annie's Homemade Pies" are diatribes that point the finger at big brother, corporate wealth, greed and wiping out 'mom and pop' stores – here's a couple of quotes, respectively *"It all had come down to the trampling of the poor, And the rich strutting on the golf course"* and *"Annie's pies were sold alongside napalm and war planes, And pharmaceuticals that killed far more than they could save, And precision guided missiles that blew whole families away."* The closing verses of "Annie's Homemade Pies" deliver a sly 'don't mess with the little guy' wink, as well as a deathly sting. January 2008 saw Woodstock experience particularly bitter weather, motivating the "Donuts And Deer" narrator to feed the hungry local wildlife.

In the dark of night "In A Roomful Of Guitars" is a love themed creation that unfolds gently, although the narrator expresses a deal of trepidation - *"I'm afraid that I'll wake up, And this will all be just a dream."* Primal lust leads to an unhappy marriage, offspring, and 'her' extra-marital affair. Although she subsequently found religion, bearing the scars of her abuse the husband concludes that this "Sweet Hell" must end and so, one day, he simply walks away. The decision proves to be his salvation. "Who" recalls people, now '[deathly] shadows,' who once walked this Earth in a simpler and possibly happier time. A band version of the pro Barack Obama number "Man From Illinois" appeared during the summer as the lead track of a four song CD/web download. The thirteenth and closing album track "This Grand Old Land," a patriotic sounding epistle, also featured as a band rendition on the aforementioned single.

Instruments in hand, Tom and Paul are pictured on a railway carriage on the rear tray insert, the continuity curiosity being that the latter is holding a mandolin.

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

**Arthur Wood.**

Kerrville Kronikles 10/08.