

I was first introduced to the music of Dan Fogelberg as a 15-year-old high school student in Williamsburg, Virginia. The year was 1977 and my friend, Ellen Anderson, had a very cool, older boyfriend (a Senior) who had copies of "Home Free", "Souvenirs", and "Captured Angel". She and I had just purchased Dan's latest album "Nether Lands" and spent hour upon hour listening and analyzing lyrics. We were mesmerized by his brilliant songwriting and sensitive poet's heart. Under "Scarecrow's Dream" in the liner notes it read "For Don Quixote, Walt Disney and the Wizard of Oz". Geez...why didn't we have boys like THAT at Bruton High School?

While doing our homework for Chemistry, Geometry, and French, we always had Dan in the background...comforting us, inspiring us, and providing fodder for school-girl fantasies of someday meeting him (or at least someone remotely like him.) When we graduated in 1980, our yearbook offered the usual list of superlatives including "Nether Lands" as Class Album. Obviously, Ellen and I weren't alone in our praise.

The next year I moved farther south to begin college. During my sophomore year at the University of South Carolina, I got tickets to see Dan in concert for the first time...on my 20th birthday...with "The Innocent Age" tour. I was beside myself, and waited for weeks for the "Big Day" to arrive! My boyfriend (no Dan, but a musician at least) had the tickets in hand as we headed out for a pre-show birthday dinner. Sadly, in my dorm room the radio blasted the news that Dan had cancelled the show at the last minute! NO! I was heartbroken, as if my own boyfriend had just dumped me himself. We walked down to the Carolina Coliseum where the roadies confirmed the news. I was devastated. Would I ever get to see Dan?

In 1984 I graduated with a degree in Broadcasting, and set out to conquer the world of television. I hosted "P.M. Magazine", worked for TNN and CMT, and had the opportunity to meet and interview many amazing people. On July 8, 1988 I finally had my "Full Circle" moment. I was working on the TNN show "Crook & Chase" when the opportunity to interview Dan Fogelberg came across the assignment desk! Upon meeting him backstage in Nashville, I turned into what Hank Williams, Sr. fondly referred to as a "G.E.R.M." (Glassy Eyed Road Mama). My face turned bright red and I couldn't stop smiling, but Dan was gracious, charming, and offered a great interview. I've interviewed many celebrities (Sting, Reba, Johnny Cash, etc.) and nobody has ever rendered me star struck like Dan. There's an old adage about not meeting your heroes, but I have to say that meeting Dan Fogelberg was truly one of the highlights of my life.

I saw him in concert twice more over the years. There was the 30th Anniversary Tour in 2002 in Portsmouth, Virginia and the last time, appropriately, during the "Full Circle" tour in May of 2003 at the amazing venue, Wolf Trap, in Vienna, Virginia. The evening was exceptional with Dan at his absolute finest. A little over a year later, fans would hear the stunning news: Dan Fogelberg has prostate cancer. Collectively, as a fan community, we were all in shock. The Living Legacy website provided an outlet for support and encouragement with the "Dear Dan" section. I immediately wrote what was on my heart, though not as eloquently as the 10,000 fans that followed suit.

On December 16, 2007 the radio announcer declared that Dan was gone. I cried like I did the night of my 20th birthday. It was a loss so profound that you would have thought I had lost a member of my own family. It felt that way, not only to me, but also to countless others whose lives were impacted by Dan's music. I couldn't listen to his Christmas CD that year.

I recently discovered that I was the very first person to sign the "Dear Dan" book. My entry from August 2004 simply reads:

Dear Dan & Jean: Please know that you are being lifted up in prayer tonight! You've been such a comfort to your many fans throughout the years...I pray that we may return the love to you right now. God bless you! ~ Lesley, Williamsburg, Virginia

Knowing that Dan read my words...and those of Dan Fans everywhere...has brought me great peace.

Ever On. ~ Lesley Clary Hamer, Williamsburg VA