

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
Session: Song "Counting Blue Cars" by Dishwalla
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, Stephen Hughes, June 2019

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

"Counting Blue Cars" is a song by American alternative rock band Dishwalla that appears on their 1995 album *Pet Your Friends*. It was Dishwalla's only hit song, making it onto the *Billboard* Hot 100 in 1996 through A&M Records. - *Wikipedia*

Check-in: *What music have you heard lately that made an impression on you?*

Listen to the song "Counting Blue Cars" by using the included mp3 file or watch the online YouTube video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clxtg2pFTQM>
The song lyrics are provided below to help you to follow along.

Song Lyrics:

Must have been late after noon.
I could tell by how far the child's shadow stretched out.
And he walked with a purpose in his sneakers down the street.
He had many questions like children often do.

He said, "Tell me all your thoughts on God.
And tell me, am I very far?"

Must have been late after noon.
On our way, the sun broke free of the clouds.
We count only blue cars skip the cracks in the street
And ask many questions like children often do.

We said, "Tell me all your thoughts on God,
'Cause I'd really like to meet her.
And ask her why we're who we are."

Tell me all your thoughts on God,
'Cause I'm on my way to see her.
So tell me, am I very far,
Am I very far now

It's getting cold, picked up the pace.
How our shoes make hard noises in this place.
Our clothes are stained, we pass the money, cross our people
And ask many questions like children often do.

We said, Tell me all your thoughts on God,
'Cause I'd really like to meet her.
And ask her why we're who we are.

Tell me all your thoughts on God,
'Cause I'm on my way to see her.
So tell me am I very far,
Am I very far now?

Tell me all your thoughts on God.
Tell me all your thoughts on God.

Focus Questions (Part I):

- 1) What is your interpretation of the lyrics. What do they mean to you?
- 2) Is this song basically spiritual in nature or not? In what way?
- 3) Why did the author of the lyrics use the pronoun she instead of he?

Internet Postings:

The song is a brilliant double-perspective. It is sort of about a child's questioning of God, but it also references a question the guy asks the girl "Tell me all your thoughts on God, cause I'm on my way to see her". He basically worships the girl.

This song is about a man who is on a walk with his child. They get into a deep yet child-like conversation about God.

For me, I see a little boy, full of life and determination (walked with a purpose in his sneakers), and the songwriter is a first responder to this kid being struck by a car. Mid-afternoon seems to refer to the realization that the boy is dying, but hanging on. The boy is conscious and asking if he is going to die and go to Heaven (Tell me all your thoughts on God; Am I very far?) Then in the ambulance, escorted by police (only blue cars), speeding through intersections (skip the cracks in the streets), the process of dying advances (late afternoon), resulting in the moment where you get better before you get worse, seeing a light from Heaven (on the way, the sun broke free of the clouds). The child knows he is dying (on my way to see her), but isn't sure how long it will be (Am I very far, now?)

I often enjoy when a songwriter uses imagery to tell a story, because it leaves the interpretation up to each person who hears it, resulting in endless possible meanings, based on each listener's life experiences.

Focus Questions (Part II):

- 1) Did the Internet postings change your interpretation of the lyrics?
- 2) Does the meaning of the lyrics seem clear or open to interpretation?
- 3) What part does music play in your spirituality?
- 4) If you watched the video, did you notice the text that was flashed onto the screen?

Check-out/Likes & Wishes: *Did the topic inspire you to listen to music more closely?*

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

Same thing day after day

Insomniacs for a good reason

Electronically monitored time

Lose yourself in the oblivion of action

Infinite deferral

Engineered for your delight

How much more can you take?

One in five cracks up

- Flashed text from Diswalla's "Counting Blue Cows" music YouTube video.