



# Tom Russell's Last Stand

Songsmith, painter, writer:  
A triple-threat master of Southwestern  
culture homes in on Santa Fe.

BY *DAVE HERNDON* PORTRAITS BY *KURT MARKUS*

In the summer of 2015, I received an email from the musician Tom Russell saying he'd gotten my address from a mutual friend in New York who's an influential radio guy and that he'd recently moved to Santa Fe, had just played a sold-out gig in town, and would be happy to send me a new album he was promoting. He was politely fishing for coverage in *New Mexico Magazine*. I nibbled. "So what brought you to Santa Fe?" I asked.

He replied that his "hacienda" in El Paso was getting surrounded by "too much suburbia" and that he and his wife wanted "some breathing space on the high desert." Furthermore, he wrote, "I've totally written up the border in song and story and paint—so time to move on."

He also mentioned that he knew some local notables like the venerable honky-tonk crooner Bill Hearne, artist/musician Terry Allen, and Kurt Markus, "the famed photographer."

"We're knee deep in new friends and prospects," he wrote. "I really feel a part of a new surge in art and music here ... or maybe I'm just a Dennis Hopper-DH Lawrence type aching to stir up a good art mess ... inviting me to the table might be like inviting Crazy Horse over for Thanksgiving!"

This new guy in town was starting to sound promising. There's nothing like a good art mess, and the town's off-the-beaten-track music scene could use a boost from a prestige artist with great connections.

As it happens, Markus is another mutual acquaintance who had moved to town not so long ago, so I emailed him about Russell. "Tom is a fully loaded, and cocked, super artist," he wrote. "Don't know anyone like him. I'd love to

do some portraits of him for you. Nurture this man, Dave, he's a star."

Given that I used to be the music editor of a big-city newspaper and listen to more Americana than most other styles of music, I'm mildly embarrassed to admit that I knew Russell more by the company he kept than for his own accomplishments. He first came to my attention as the singer of the first track on *Tulare Dust: A Songwriters' Tribute to Merle Haggard*, which came out in 1994 and is considered a landmark album of the Americana genre for the way it linked a trad-country workingman's hero like the Hag to a generation of singer-songwriters from the eighties roots revival. Russell co-produced it with Dave Alvin, originally of the Blasters, and it featured the likes of Dwight Yoakam, Lucinda Williams, and Joe Ely, of the Flatlanders. Immediately after connecting with Russell, it clicked that he'd written a standout track on my favorite Ely album. "Gallo del Cielo" is a rollicking seven-minute ballad (corrido, more precisely) about a fighting rooster, which has earned admiration from Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

Russell's record label sent me the new CD, and it wasn't just album number 30-something and rising. A two-disc folk opera called *The Rose of Roscrae*, it came complete with an 80-page program guide and libretto. I set aside the meat of a Saturday morning to listen to it all the way through—two hours and change—and by the end I knew Markus was right: I'd never heard a recording like it in terms of scope and ambition. *Roscrae* tells a heartbreaking immigrant story that stretches from Ireland to Molokai, with most of the action on the

blood-soaked Western frontier. *Annie Get Your Gun* it ain't—more like “*Les Misérables* with cowboy hats,” according to its author. A British folk magazine called it “maybe the most important Americana album of all time,” and if it's not, well, it's hard to imagine one that covers more ground. Ten new original songs mingle with found recordings by a cast of defining voices that include Lead Belly, Johnny Cash, and even Walt friggin' Whitman himself, with contributions from a host of A-list Texas troubadours, cowboy poets, Native American folksingers, Irish songbirds, and, naturally, the Norwegian Wind Ensemble. Russell called it “a

represented at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, down the street from the Rainbow Man).

Russell appeared more prime middle-aged than senior, though he certainly qualified for the discount, having been hatched in “the late 1940s.” He was wearing a plain pullover and black jeans, a cowboy hat over close-cropped hair, rimless glasses of an interesting shape, a bandanna tied around his neck, and a guitar strap slung over his shoulder. The look: Saturday night coffeehouse with the hip chairman of the Western Studies Department. He engaged in some welcome-to-Santa Fe banter with maybe 20 assembled fans and friends. His big voice—“dark and low,” he calls it—narrated a handful of story songs, some of which shared their titles with albums. In “Tonight We Ride,” Pancho Villa raided Columbus, and Black Jack Pershing's army took off after him for three futile years. Deserters became outlaws who just might drink themselves to death on Juárez tequila and wind up with their bones bleached in the desert sun—ain't that the cowboy way to go? A, shall we say, *free-spirited* older woman from Las Cruces, who was making herself extra comfortable by sprawling right there on the gallery floor, requested a song about life near the border called “Who's Gonna Build Your Wall?” Russell hemmed a little. He'd written the thing a decade before, even played it on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, and said he had no interest in partisanship or political correctness, was just calling it like he saw it from the front line, where even his conservative rancher neighbors were against building a wall that would block access of man and beast alike to the Río Grande. But the song had become topical again and people wanted to hear it, so he played it. The chorus has a rousing union-hall romp to it and goes like this:

*Who's gonna build your wall boys,  
who's gonna mow your lawn?  
Who's gonna cook your Mexican food  
when your Mexican maid is gone?*

Maybe, I thought, this guy really was going to stir up the New Mexico stewpot.

Mingling after the mini-gig, I checked out the Russell merchandise. There was an annotated book of lyrics called *120 Songs*, a book of paintings, several CDs, and a stack of glossy *Ranch & Reata* magazines featuring 5,000-word articles on things Western—an impressive range of product for one man.

I realized I had some catching up to do if I was ever going to write a story about Crazy Horse Russell moving to town. I'd track his movements and wait to see how he'd follow up an opera that seemed to have

incorporated a lifetime of ideas and influences. I went to school on those *Ranch & Reata* essays. (The Western lifestyle magazine is now defunct, but Russell's articles are compiled in a delightful book called *Confessions of the Horsemen*.) This sent me back into Russell's “bedrock” territory: Tex Ritter (“Blood on the Saddle,” *the goriest cowboy song of all time*) and Marty Robbins (“El Paso,” *the greatest cowboy song ever written*). I started following him on Facebook, where he posts a song a day and tells 20,000 followers what he's up to. I listened to so much Tom Russell music that my family came to think of him as this voice that comes to visit around five o'clock every Saturday and Sunday when I crank the stereo and start making dinner. Thanks to Markus, I even got an interview with Ian Tyson (of sixties folkie fame, and later the king of cowboy singers), whom Russell collaborates with and idolizes to the extent that one of his new albums this year is an Ian & Sylvia tribute.

This past January, I felt sufficiently well informed to conduct a mano-a-mano interview with a subject who's not the type to suffer a fool gladly. I reached out to Russell to see what he had cooking this year. Turns out he was working on two new albums and writing his memoir, and would be playing a couple of concerts in September in Las Cruces and Santa Fe. Perfect timing! I started trying to make an appointment, but he was always slipping out of town to record in Austin or to play gigs in Arizona or England or Norway or someplace—he's more popular in parts of Europe than in the States, and his wife is Swiss. Finally the phone rang one day in response to one more plea, and it was that voice I'd come to know so well, copping that he'd been avoiding me because he and his wife, Nadine, who handles his affairs, had grown gun-shy of journalists. They'd opened their doors to a *New Yorker* writer whose questions made them uneasy and the story had gotten killed and basically, who needs it—unless it's a cover story.

Besides, Russell said, “Time is of the essence. I write, I paint, I work on records.” I told him I'd get back to him and hung up.

With no small amount of disappointment and even disbelief, I told Markus what was happening. “Maybe this is all just part of your story,” he said. Our mutual friend in New York, Jeremy Tepper, the Outlaw Country program director at Sirius XM, was similarly incredulous. Russell was establishing an artistic legacy that would stand the test of time, he said—“There's a lot of posterity going on right here, *right now*.” Why on earth would he not cooperate on a profile that could help plant that flag?

For me, other big questions remained. In fact, my curiosity had only intensified as I learned more about

Russell's mythic-sounding life, questions about how his decades-long ramble from the Beat underbelly of Los Angeles through Western history and culture and ranches and concert halls and lots of bars (with stops in Nigeria, Austin, New York City, and Vancouver, BC) had landed him on the outskirts of Santa Fe. And, of course, how the change of scenery was reflected in the new art and music he was cranking out at a staggeringly prolific rate. I wanted to get into that art studio and look at the telltale photos on the walls of the bar where he conducts what he calls his “tequila studies.” How does a guy wind up in one snapshot with both Andy Warhol and George Jones? Where does he fit on the continuum between the masters of pure country heartache and pop art?

Some high-quality groveling ensued in the form of a lengthy last-call email sent to both Mr. and Mrs. Russell, ensuring them of my earnest good intentions. All I could do then was hope for the best.

Not only is most of Russell's work about the West, but the man himself is a product of its geography, history, legend, and lore. And while he's more the storytelling songsmith than the confessional singer-songwriter, his body of work is loaded with autobiography and grounded in a connoisseur's version of scholarship and journalism. The first part of his life is a full-blown Western noir, loaded with outsize, colorful characters from his own family background that he's put to good use in his personal project of becoming “Tom Russell,” the tough-guy folkie poet whose old Martin guitar is his ticket to the world. He writes a lot about the West as a land of constant reinvention. He's a product of midcentury Hollywood Westerns and the robust, rough-and-tumble drugstore cowboy culture of those who wrangled the horses and performed the stunts. There were 20 film ranches within striking distance of Los Angeles, and they were busy; Russell reports that between 1930 and 1960, an average of 99 Westerns were made yearly.

Russell's grandfather was the sheriff of Chickasaw County, Iowa, and a horse trader on the side. His father, Charlie, fled to L.A., where he played poker with an actor who portrayed Hopalong Cassidy at Hollywood Park Racetrack. *It was horses that got my father's blood moving and it was betting on them that brought him down*, Russell writes. His older brother, Pat, was a cowboy on a film ranch and remained in the rodeo and livestock business his entire life. Pat also had a record collection that included all the greats of country and western (before Nashville beat the *western* out of



Above: Russell's Hank Williams with Daughter and Black Touring Limousine.

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the genre) and a Tijuana gut-string guitar that his little brother stole so he could learn to play the songs. Russell's uncle was a professional pianist, and his mother shared with him a love of Broadway musicals. He even had a bohemian grandmother who was a painter—a pretty fine one at that.

Russell played defensive end on what was the number-two high school team in the country, and as a teenager he got to shake hands with a campaigning JFK at the Los Angeles Coliseum—a very big deal for a Catholic boy, and the subject of a song on his new album called “Rise Again Handsome Johnny” (“This country could use a few good men”). That notable brush with fame was certainly not his only one: He's got the Zelig gene. Adept at sneaking into places, he once pretended to be a security escort for the Beatles as they drove into the Coliseum. He'd walk backwards into Hollywood music clubs to see popular folkies, who were having a heyday. He saw Dylan twice at the Hollywood Bowl and snuck backstage to have a word with him. At the latter concert, in 1964, Russell says he saw the future: *I wanted to become a folksinger. A songwriter. I wanted to ride down the trail with [Ramblin'] Jack. And Bob Dylan. And Ian and Sylvia. The minstrel road.*

## Not only is most of Russell's work about the West, but the man himself is a product of its geography, history, legend, and lore.

In retrospect, we can easily see that the die was cast. His up-close exposure to Hollywood Western culture and showbiz, combined with a fan's deep appreciation of literary New Folk, have the ingredients of a distinctive songwriting voice. Add to it his temperamental attraction to Tijuana-Mexicali-Juárez border culture and the Beat scene. But it took a while—decades—for that voice to find itself, and find an audience.

Russell first embarked on an academic career in criminology at UC Santa Barbara. This led to a teaching stint in Nigeria during the Biafran War of the late sixties,

an experience that led him further away from academia and into firsthand cultural studies with the local griots, guitarists, and drummers. Africa provided more material for songs that would come out 20 years later, notably “East of Woodstock, West of Viet Nam,” which deftly makes the point that he was able to sit out that turbulent period of youth politics. The song first appeared on the 2009 album *Blood and Candle Smoke*, recorded with the estimable Tucson band Calexico, whose trumpets and accordion marry perfectly with Russell's brand of border music.

Knowing he had dues to pay and lessons to learn, Russell put a band together that played Skid Row, in Vancouver. *Eight sets a night, six nights a week, backing up topless dancers, sword swallows, and female impersonators.*

In the seventies, he was writing fiction and songs, lived in Austin when it was becoming a music capital, and got a break that resulted in his first album, which was not a success. He had a family, but writes that the minstrel road wasn't a good fit for fatherhood. *My oldest daughter got over it. My youngest never will.*

His work-in-progress memoir will shine light on the shadow side of the profession, as a cautionary tale to younger musicians, but for now Russell simply acknowledges that at times he's suffered from the black dog of depression, and has crashed and burned and had to work his way out of some deep holes. Redemption is another of Russell's recurring themes (there's a thesis waiting to be written about Catholic Themes in the Work of Thomas George Russell), but in the early eighties we find him living in a storefront in pre-gentrified Brooklyn, driving a cab, still writing, fronting a cover band on Long Island and in the city during what he calls the Urban Cowboy Scare. A few years earlier, during a stint as a bartender in a San Francisco comedy club, the muse had spoken and Russell had batted out “Gallo del Cielo,” which his then-wife told him was his first great song. Now in New York, he was shopping the song around, and one night Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter got into the cab after a performance in Rockaway, Queens. They started talking and Russell told his passenger that he was a songwriter, too, so Hunter asked him to sing one. *The chips were down. I pulled out my strongest card. Gallo.*

Bear in mind that “Gallo” requires 11 verses to cover a fighting cock's regular season, playoffs, and championship game. With so many episodes and place names, the author himself has to work to remember all the lyrics. The fare climbed way over a hundred dollars. Donning his producer hat, Hunter asked him for a cassette of the song, with the New Riders of the Purple Sage in mind for it, so they drove to Russell's

**Facing page:** Russell collaborator and com-padre Ian Tyson. Russell recently released an Ian & Sylvia tribute album.



garret to get it. Not long after that, Hunter played New York's premier showcase club, the Bottom Line, in the Village. Not only did he invite Russell to the gig, but he told the story of meeting him and invited him onstage to play it for the packed house of Deadheads, who demanded more. After that three-song set, Russell writes, *I'd regained my footing and my confidence. I was back in the music business.*

“I was living in a cabin on a ranch near the Montana line, trying to learn to train cuttin' horses, and I wasn't doing much music at all, and I received a letter from Tom. Where he got the address I don't know. It was isolated. It was a nicely written fan letter—he was a fan of Ian and Sylvia—and he wanted to send me a demo of this cockfighting song. He was having no luck getting it covered, and I was

fascinated with it, and I said, 'Next time I record, I'm gonna take a run at it.'”

So began a recurring partnership between Russell and Ian Tyson, who's a living legend among the folk and cowboy music cognoscenti, as well as Canadians in general. In 2005, CBC radio listeners voted his “Four Strong Winds” that country's best song. Ever. Period. Neil Young's version of it paid enough in royalties for Tyson to buy his first ranch. “Someday Soon” is a folk standard, thanks largely to the hit Judy Collins had with it.

Tyson reinvented his career as a Western artist soon after Russell came along, and he flourished with a string of genre-expanding albums in the eighties. “Navajo Rug” is just the most famous of the songs Tyson wrote with Russell.

I met Tyson at Kurt Markus' photography studio in Santa Fe last winter. Dressed in a Carhartt jacket and a sweat-stained cowboy hat, Tyson looked every bit the working rancher, with lots of hard miles under his belt: He was 83 at the time. He'd come south to escape the frigidity of his ranch, outside Calgary, and visit friends. I'd been warned that he has good days and the other kind. This was a good one.

“He was interested in the same subject matter I was—the Western stuff,” Tyson said of teaming up with Russell. “He can pass along the best of his songs in a very strong, powerful way, in the old balladeer tradition. A lot of it is based on the Scots-Irish canon. We both spring from the same geography of the songs.”

But as for the geography of the Western music, Tyson sees the writing on the wall. “I think it's about over, because if you don't have the classic lifestyle of the West, of handling livestock on horseback, you don't have a relevant tradition.”

That's why Tyson likes New Mexico, and even used to have a writing cabin on a ranch in Ocate, north of Las Vegas. “It's still pretty Western,” he said, tipping his hat to the San Cristobal Ranch, which is 400 years old, covers 8,000 acres, and lies 15 miles south of Santa Fe. “As Western life recedes pretty rapidly, there are still some relevant places left.”

*Relevance* is a recurring term with Tyson, and he obviously feels that he's on the downslope of it. No wonder. A couple of years ago, he suffered a heart attack that required open-heart surgery and left him with short-term memory loss. New Mexico remains a place where he has fans and friends, most of whom are “artists or singers or guitar players or poets or writers of one stripe or another.” Russell, of course, ticks all those boxes. With him in mind, I asked Tyson how Western culture could evolve in the siege context he described.



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“I don't know if it'll survive the modern pop music of today,” Tyson said. “I know Tom thinks about it—we all do. But while I live alone on a ranch, Tom is more cosmopolitan. I think he's surprised at the success of his painting. And he's fortunate to have a bride. She keeps it all together.”

answered the office phone. Russell apologized for trying to run me off. “I was just being Tom,” he said, “and that can be scary. You threw the Hail Mary pass and you made it. You won her over. You did good.”

We made an afternoon appointment for the following week. The price of entry was a bottle of Casamigos reposado, but, having deduced the ways of Team Russell, I stopped along the way and picked up a little spray of lilies for Nadine, too.

“This is where men go to weep,” Russell said, opening the door to the studio he built onto his adobe house on the outskirts of Santa Fe. Actually, it's where the man goes to work for the half-year or so that he's not on the road or in Switzerland. And it's not just a studio. Yes, there's a sunny rectangular room, with windows on three sides, that's filled with instruments and speakers and African artifacts and books and pictures and easels and brushes and Navajo rugs and all kinds of works in progress. But not every studio is adjacent to a cantina housed in a *torreón*—a circular tower built in Puebloan style. That makes this place a fortress, a refuge, a place for a self-described “outsider” and “isolate” to “waltz with the muse.”

One look was all it took to realize there was nothing sloppy about this studio. And that the rowdy-sounding guy who two years previously had promised to make an art mess in Santa Fe was actually more monk than madman. There was even a book called *Falling Upward* on top of a stack next to the stand-up writing desk. Written by an Albuquerque-based Franciscan priest named Richard Rohr, it's about the spiritual journey of making your name in the first part of life and finding your true self in the second half.

“I reference that a couple of times on the new record,” he said. “It's the underground theme.”

In the studio, the difference between Russell's older and newer paintings is striking. With experience, and as painting has become a more important part of his repertoire and income, his lines have become finer; he's no longer an outsider artist.

“I started that one today,” he said of the piece on the easel. He said it depicted “Ramblin' Jack in Washington Square Park” and that it synced with the new album, which he describes as a return to the ethos and simplicity of the folk-revival era—“me, a

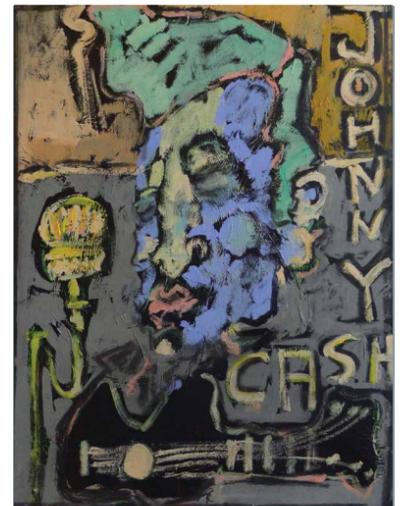
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guitar, and a harmonica”—after his adventuresome excursions with Calexico and the Norwegian Wind Ensemble and the kitchen-sink approach to *Rose of Roscrea*. Russell says the song cycle, titled *Folk Hotel*, connects the dots between the Village folk scene that started it all and his recent journey up the Camino Real from El Paso to Santa Fe.

The scrapbook collection of snapshots, autographs, and influences on the cantina's rounded walls testify to the decades Russell spent along that minstrel trail and his arrival at the top of his profession. Here he is with Merle Haggard at Fillmore West, alongside Townes Van Zandt, onstage with Lucinda Williams, singing with Johnny Cash, backstage at a festival with Joni Mitchell. There's a framed memento of “Outbound Plane,” his only Top 10 hit, co-written with Nanci Griffith and performed by Suzy Bogguss. There's a picture of his wedding in Elko, Nevada, with Tyson and Ramblin' Jack Elliott as his best men. And, yes, there he is with George Jones and Andy Warhol on the street outside the Bottom Line in 1981. Russell was covering the Jones performance for *Crawdaddy* and tried to have a word with Jones as he took some air between sets. “He looked lost,” said Russell. “Not a New York guy. Warhol popped up with his Instamatic. He was even weirder than George.”

We settled into his library/office space and Russell described the routine behind his “I write, I paint, I work on records” mantra. He and Nadine walk for an hour early in the morning, he paints for an hour or two before breakfast, he works on the memoir, sings for a half-hour to keep his pipes in shape, usually works on a new song, then paints again till quitting time. “Life is a savage row to happy hour,” he likes to say, though Nadine “tries to keep me down to two drinks a day. She's got me in better shape than I was 15 years ago.”

I mentioned to Russell that our mutual friend Tepper, who's known him since the struggling club-band days in New York in the eighties, observed that there's got to be a lot of satisfaction in accomplishing the lofty goals he set long ago. In becoming the artist



Above, from top: Russell's paintings of Joni Mitchell and Johnny Cash. Facing page: Bob Dylan and Muhammad Ali—*Brothers in Arms*.

who belongs on the cantina wall with his inspirations. Russell agreed, saying he sees his career as a special case. Rare is the artist in a grueling field who gains strength as he goes along. "I'm at the top of my form now, 40 years later," he said. "I'm not like John Prine, who was a huge success right out of the box. But right now I'm at the level right below Prine," who's considered perhaps the finest of the post-Dylan songwriters. "In this day and age, there aren't a lot of great literate songwriters, so I'm picking up a younger audience. My biggest records are my most recent ones." *Roscræ* sold 10,000 copies—"a lot of CDs for a guy like me"—but he also said that not being more popular than that liberates him "to do whatever I want." Doing solo shows these days instead of touring with a guitarist, which adds considerably to road expenses, "frees me up to be Tom Russell, playing songs and telling stories."

Creeping overdevelopment and spillover from the Juárez drug wars drove the Russells north from El Paso. They chose Santa Fe because of the local galleries that support him, and because he's a desert rat, while Nadine prefers the mountains, and northern New Mexico has plenty of both. Now that he's fallen up into this good place, he's writing the memoir (working title: *East of Woodstock*) to "tell the truth about a guy with a master's degree who went to Africa and started at the bottom, had a couple of near breakdowns, and came back. It's about how to survive on the road and how to travel."

Russell credits Nadine, who's trained in psychology, with elevating his game and knowing when to say no to gigs that aren't worth it (like interviews with pesky journalists). They schedule regular nights off, sleep in good hotels, fly business class to Europe.

Happy hour hit sharply, the tequila was cracked, and Nadine entered the studio as if she'd been watching for this moment on a surveillance camera. Russell's "Finding You" is one of the most touching love songs you'll ever hear, but the anecdotal story of how the couple met is pretty good, too. Rootsy American music has a robust following in Switzerland, and Nadine's mother was a huge enough fan that the family befriended Augie Meyers and Doug Sahm, of the Texas Tornados. One night in the summer of 2004, they went to the Dream Valley Saloon, a log-cabin roadhouse in Schwarzenegg, to see a singer whose "Tonight We Ride" they'd heard on the radio. It was sold out, Nadine walked in anyway, and she immediately met a man named Tom, at the bar drinking coffee.

"You're beautiful," he said. "Are you Swiss? I'm going to marry you."

After he walked away, Mom asked, "Who's that? An American?"

"We only realized who it was when he got onstage," said Nadine.

Three years later, in a Venice bistro, Russell proposed with a ring of fried calamari. "I'm not interested in jewelry," said Russell.

"I was happy to buy my own ring," said Nadine.

Nadine departed in search of the kind of organic food she says was not so available in El Paso, leaving her husband to preview a few of the new songs that moving here inspired. "Leaving El Paso" rides north on lilting accordion runs. "I Can't Leave These Old Horses" is a country lament for Tyson, isolated and cold and burdened with responsibility for his animals. Tyson never developed a following in Europe, Russell noted, whereas he managed to, *and* met the love of his life on the long and winding "Road to Santa Fe-o."

Russell made his name on concept albums and story songs with a grasp of the history and mythology of the West, but the new stuff is more overtly personal. He's singing more from the heart than the head, and right now his heart is here in this very place, with this very view. Cue "The Light Through the Coyote Fence":

*So you keep on singing—for in singing is Eternity,  
No Father Time will shake you from this trance,  
And the breath of God blows you where it will,  
And the eyes of God shine through the coyote fence,  
The refuge from the road, inside the coyote fence.*

Markus showed up to take some pictures at the golden hour, which broke the spell of the music and turned Russell's attention to the scenery out beyond that coyote fence. "Look out that door and out *that* door! You see mountains in every direction!

"To me, this is paradise," he said, finally answering the question I'd been wondering about since we first connected a couple of years ago. "It's within staggering distance of the bar, and I get a lot of work done." ■

**Dave Herndon** says he was privileged to edit the 72 issues of *New Mexico Magazine* published between August 2011 and August 2017. In 2016, he won a gold award for travel writing from the International Regional Magazine Association for a story about Ted Turner's ranches in southern New Mexico ([nmmag.us/TurnerCountry](http://nmmag.us/TurnerCountry)).

## Hear It, See It

Tom Russell plays the St. Clair Winery in Las Cruces on September 23 and the Jean Cocteau theater in Santa Fe on September 24. Find information about purchasing tickets and CDs at [tomrussell.com](http://tomrussell.com).

Russell's art is represented by the Rainbow Man in Santa Fe ([rainbowman.com](http://rainbowman.com)) and ArtBeatGallery in Eldorado ([artbeat.nm.com](http://artbeat.nm.com)).

