

SAM: My great grandmother on my dad's side was Scottish, descended from clan McGeachie. I haven't been able to learn very much about clan McGeachie or the Scottish part of my heritage, but what I do know is that every time I hear Scottish pipe and drum music, I can't help it. I just started crying.

My mom grew up on Long Island and a town called Great Neck, and if you've listened to the first episode of Family Ghosts, you know, she didn't have an easy childhood. So it's never been surprising to me that we didn't spend much time on Long Island growing up. What is surprising to me is the feeling I get when I go to Long Island now or when I meet people from Long Island. It's hard to describe, but it's this overwhelming sense of being recognized, welcomed. Case in point. Last night, I got invited to perform in a storytelling show on Long Island in a town called Roslyn, which is just a couple exits down the Long Island expressway from Great Neck. The show was at this supper club called My Father's Place. It's run by a guy named Epi, Mike Epstein, who ran a rock club with the same name and Roslyn in the seventies and eighties. When I got to My Father's Place, I made my way to the green room and I found Epi lounging on a sofa watching an episode of RiffTrax.

He said, "sit down and relax. We got Chinese food on the way." I felt like I'd walked into his living room. "Sit down," Epi said again. "This is your home for tonight." The other performers started to arrive and one of them was Carol Silva, an anchor at the local TV news station. She saw me wandering through the hallways backstage practicing my story and she called out, Hey, who are you here with? I was caught off guard. I wasn't totally sure what she meant, so I just answered literally. "Nobody," I said, "I'm here alone." Carol didn't miss a beat. "You can be a part of my family for tonight then. Come meet them." And with that, she grabs my arm and literally drags me out to the front of the stage where her whole family is sitting. She introduced me to her brothers, her sisters, their husbands and wives, at least one cousin and a couple former roommates.

They were all so excited to be there. One of them had brought his iPad to film the show. Carol's brother asked if I already had a seat. If I didn't, he said I could just sit

on his wife's lap. His wife rolled her eyes and punched him. Everybody laughed. Then the wife said, “no, seriously, do you need a seat? We'll find another chair.” She shouted at everybody, “scoot over, make room for Sam.” Later I told my story, which is about my family and it's hard for me to get through, and one of Carol's cousins waited until the audience had finished clapping and I was back in my seat and then he leaned over and he looked me in the eye and he said, “Hey Sam, don't forget, your family loves you.” I wasn't sure which family he was talking about and it didn't matter. I know something like that could happen anywhere, but when it happens on Long Island, it doesn't feel like an accident.

As I drove home after the show, there was heat lightning ricocheting all across the clouds. I pulled onto the Long Island expressway, I drove past the exit for Great Neck, and just as I did, one of my favorite songs came on the radio - it's called Neighbor by Band of Horses. And as I rode out of Long Island under the flashing sky, I heard the lyrics to that song in a new way. “Every house, not a home, but dare do I roam. There's a light on the porch here for someone.”

Ghost Family, this is our last bonus episode of the summer and on it you'll hear stories about coming to terms with the people and places we come from and a song about finding a home in a place you never thought you'd end up. And after all that our feed will go quiet for just a little while while we continue the work that's already underway on Season Three of Family Ghosts. And I'm very happy to finally announce, Season Three will be coming to your headphones on December 4th. So make sure you stay subscribed because we won't be gone very long.

To paraphrase another of my favorite songs by the great Chris Smither, “We've got plenty left we've set our sights on. Don't wait up. Leave the light on. We'll be home soon.”

We'll be back with this week's first story right after the break.

SAM: Our first story this week is by John Tong, a veteran of the storytelling scene in Washington, D.C. And John joined us for Family Ghosts Live in Washington, D.C. at Union Stage a couple of weeks ago. He told this story about baseball and his dad and coming to terms with his affection for both.

JOHN: Growing up in the 80s they used to call me a husky boy, but looking back I realize I was actually ahead of my time. I was in the avant garde of the childhood obesity epidemic. We didn't know about high fructose corn syrup back then and there was literally a cartoon about Gummy Bears on TV. It's a very dangerous time to be a child. And I knew I was overweight because my father was an immigrant from mainland China and Chinese people are very blunt. And he would ask me self esteem boosting questions like, "how come you are so fat?"

And uh, because my dad was an immigrant, you know, a lot of things would go over his head and uh, he wouldn't always say stuff the right way and he had a very thick accent. And sometimes people would laugh at him and uh, he's a really proud guy and he didn't like it when people laughed at him. And so he'd always say to me, you're going to be 100% American. And so we would never speak Chinese inside the house. And we never celebrated Chinese holidays and he never ever talked about his life back in China. And I only got to see him like every other week because my mom had this really good teaching job up in Massachusetts, but he could only get one in New Jersey. So he had to commute. And we only really got to hang out during the summers. And in the summer when I was nine years old, my dad said to me, "you're gonna play baseball because you're really fat."

But the uh, only problem was that neither of us knew anything about baseball. I mean not the first thing. Like he took me to a store and we bought a bat and a ball and a glove. And then we went home and then he arranged these objects in our front yard and we just sort of stood there silently trying to figure out what potential relationship they may have with one another before my father finally concluded that baseball was simply sideways golf, which for the record it's absolutely not. And so then I, I then put on my glove and we proceeded to engage in what can only be described as the saddest, clumsiest father-son catch of all time. And the

next day without warning, my father took me to something called skills assessment, which was like tryout for little league. And uh, if you were nine or older, you could play little league.

But the coaches saw me take three pitchers, uh pitches in the batter's box and they just yelled out “t-shirt league”, and t-shirt league was like the minor league of little league. It was like for the eight and nine year old kids then weren't ready for little league, so the coaches were the pitchers and they would gently tossed the ball at the kids so they get practice hitting. And although I'm sure I was the cutest little sausage roll out on that field, due to my aforementioned lack of physical conditioning and experience and equipped only with the knowledge that baseball had some type of inverse relationship with golf, it should not surprise you to learn I was not a good baseball player. And to make matters worse, all of the other kids on the team went to the public school and I went to the private school and I didn't know what the public school kids were going to be like, but I quickly found out that the public school boys did not share my unbridled enthusiasm for scratch and sniff stickers.

Meanwhile, my father, a professor of ancient Chinese philosophy would sit in the bleachers with these salty, ball busting, working class dads who probably ragged on him constantly. I mean my dad had no idea how to fit in. He would wear these like plaid polyester golf pants and a driving cap. So he kind of looked like a depression era golf caddy, like the Chinese Bagger Vance

And like after the games, all the other dads would buy the kids pizza and soda. But my dad would bring tubs of rum raisin ice cream. Yes, that's right. Rum raisin ice cream, the official ice cream flavor of assisted living communities.

But my dad desperately wanted to understand baseball, so he would watch Boston Red Sox games with his nose pressed against the TV, trying to decipher what the hell was going. On and all he could really figure out with her two important players. Dwight Evans and Roger Clemens. And so he would stand on the periphery of the other dads conversations and he'd wait for his moment and real

confidently he'd go, "Dwight Evans." And the other dads would be like, "what about him?" "Dwight Evans is my favorite baseball player." And like, that was it. That was his entire extent of his guy talk, you know. And over that summer, all of the other kids were getting better and better at baseball because their dads were teaching them things, you know, like how to swing a bat with your eyes open and how to throw a ball in the general direction you intended and how not to be overcome with fear if a ball gets hit directly at you.

But my dad couldn't teach me any of that stuff. So when I did play, they put me out in the outfield, but mostly my coach told me I had a special job to do. He'd say, "John, I need you to go sit on that bench over there so it doesn't fly away. Hold on tight." And so for the rest of that summer, my dad sat up in the bleachers, and his son sat on the bench, and the two of us endured public humiliation nine innings at a time. But then that October, the Boston Red Sox famously lost the 1986 World Series when their first baseman Bill Buckner let a slow moving ground ball roll between his legs, and a palpable depression swept across the entirety of New England, with the exception of one man, my father. Because he now realized he could start a conversation with any other man simply by saying, "Ohh, Bill Buckner."

And so, uh, so the next summer he made me try out for little league again and, uh, you know, cause he wanted to try out his new material. And, uh, and now, although I was 10 years old and technically too old for little league, uh, he, uh, the coaches decided to make a special exception just for me. And so I was now the biggest and uh, oldest kid on the team, and I was so big in fact that the t-shirt league t-shirt, uh, they didn't fit me anymore. So I was forced to play every baseball game with an exposed midriff.

And, uh, that's a total nightmare scenario for a fat boy. And so, uh, and when you're the biggest kid on the team, everyone kind of expects you to be, you know, the best player on the team. But, uh, you know, uh, that just made my inevitable failure just a lot more noticeable. So I was sort of like the Babe Ruth of the t-shirt league without all the trappings of talent or success. Uh, but meanwhile, my dad

was, uh, making a lot of new friends because he knew so much more about baseball and, uh, you know, he was, I remember one day after a game, I had to wait for him to finish talking to another dad about how Bill Buckner needed to be more like Dwight Evans.

And, uh, but after that second season, I knew I was in a lot of trouble because, uh, you know, I knew that my dad was going to make me try out for little league again. And I knew I wasn't gonna make it on a team. And, uh, because that winter I had gained more weight as a direct result of the introduction of cool ranch Doritos. And as the spring preset progressed and I got uh, and we got closer and closer to skills assessment, I got more and more worried because I realized, you know, baseball is what I did with my dad in the summer. And uh, I was going to screw it up, but a couple of weeks before skills assessment on April fool's day, my dad died of a heart attack. And because I didn't have anyone to take me to practice anymore, I never played baseball again. And a couple of months later, my mom got a new teaching job in North Carolina and we moved to one of those small Southern towns where uh, there's a railroad track down the middle and all the white folks live in a nice house on one side and all the black folks live in old houses on the other.

And for the first time, the other kids really made fun of me for being Chinese, which was weird to me because I thought I was supposed to be 100% American. And uh, a few years after that when I was 16 my mom started telling me stories about my dad and his life in China. And she told me that he was descended from Chinese aristocracy and that my grandfather was this massively wealthy landlord. And when my father was 16 he was a Colonel in Chiang Kai-shek's army against Japan. And she told me how he converted to become a Catholic priest after his brother, who was a singer in the Peking Opera died of an appendicitis. And when the communist army was about to invade their town, my grandparents, fearing that they were gonna execute their only remaining son, literally paid by father's weight in gold to get him on the last plane from Beijing to San Francisco. And when my father arrived in America, the United States government granted him asylum because we used to believe in that in this country. You know? That we're a nation

of immigrants. And after you got inside, you're not supposed to slam the door shut behind you. You're supposed to hold it open for the next guy.

No, look, I don't know why my dad didn't want me to be too Chinese, just like I don't really know why I still watch baseball games considering I never made it out of the t-shirt league. But I do know this, two months ago Bill Buckner died and on TV they kept rerunning those clips from the 1986 World Series. And I think it's pretty safe to say that when they watch that ground ball go between Bill Buckner's legs, I'm probably the only Red Sox fan you'll ever meet that feels a little happy.

SAM: Coming up, another dad with another unorthodox approach to setting his son on the right path. As well as the unintended consequences of that approach. We'll be right back.

SAM: Welcome back to Family Ghosts. This next story was also told at our live show in Washington, D.C. at Union Stage by Jeff Simmermon. Jeff's work has been featured in the pages of the Paris Review and on This American Life, and before I brought him up that night, I told the audience about one of my most treasured memories about Jeff as a performer, which is the night he came to a storytelling open mic that I used to host here in Brooklyn. It was called Dingmantics, and he told this story about being in a band where the instrument that he played was that he had two typewriters and two live chickens and he would put chicken food - bird seed? What do chickens eat? He would put that on the keys of the typewriter and the chickens would Peck and that would be the percussion in the band. It turns out that was actually a slightly false memory as Jeff clarified when he took the stage wearing a tank top and a denim jacket with the sleeves cut off.

JEFF: Hey guys. Um, I'm aware that when you hear This American Life and the Paris Review, you think more like sweater vest energy than denim vest energy. That's, that's uh, something I like to play with. And also I just would like to clarify. I played the typewriter as a percussion instrument, okay, and we had two toy pianos that the chickens played. They were like kind of a free jazz combo act. It's

okay. Sam's a great guy, you know, he's, he's doing his best up here. Um, but look, I'm not here to talk about that, that doomed band. Um here, here's a, my, this is, my head has been the same si- this has, my head has been the same size since I was in the fifth grade and I've just gained like 150 pounds and, and, and some height. But I was fortunate in that my parents sent me to a special school for children with enormous heads and I fit in very well there. Like the coolest guy in the whole school could solve a Rubik's cube like so fast. And that like, if that's the metric for success, I'm, I'm in, you know, I couldn't, I couldn't do Rubik's cubes, but I could draw the X-men like real well. And that got me a spot at the lunch table. And that was, that was going good. The kids in the neighborhood less so, uh less, significantly less so probably cause I could draw the X-men so well, but I, I just like, this is, look. I'm standing on stage at a storytelling show talking about my feelings. Right? You're right to assume this is a story about being bullied as a child and you guys paid money to hear the story about my feelings. So you were probably bullied as children too, right? There's, we don't need to feel bad for anybody here. Let's just talk about facts. So many, so many bullied people. This is great. Everybody gets bullied all over America and then they moved to Washington D.C. and live right next to the worst bullies on earth. It's so weird. It's either like people that did Model UN or people that want to destroy the UN. And anyway, it's a tangent. Uh, so yeah, like I would just, I would, I would get tackled real hard, like when we were supposed to be playing touch football and I could kind of, you know, brush it off and be like, oh that fellows just get a little excited, you know. But then when I got tackled playing basketball, I, I recognized that I had a problem, you know, and I, I went home and, to talk to my dad about it. And every day after work, my dad would be sitting there on a couch, right, shirt open, necktie loose. But he's still wearing his necktie and his ID badge from the CIA. And he's sitting there watching, you know, the Harrison Ford movie Witness,? His favorite five minutes of cinema is the part where Harrison Ford dressed as an Amish person, gets out of a boogie, uh, gets out of a buggy and whips the tar out of some people that bullied his new Amish friends. He just would watch that and laugh and then rewind and watch it again. We had to tape it off network television like three different times because the tape got all wiggly from him, like, kept running it back and laughing.

And that's the home I grew up in, you know, so I would just kind of walk up to that. I don't know what he did at the CIA. Really. Uh, I, I know what he did at the CIA, I can't tell you. Let's just call it fieldwork. Okay. Like, so I would come home and I told my dad like, "dad, I'm really getting, getting whipped out here," you know, and he was like, "Jeffrey, I feel so bad for you. I wish this wasn't happening, but I cannot fight your battles for you. Like you have to, you have to learn how to take care of yourself. This is hard for me and I know it's hard for you, but you, you gotta. you gotta really give it a try. You know, I can't just be getting involved all the time, but what I'm going to do, we're going to go down in the basement and I'm going to teach you a little bit about how to fight."

And we went downstairs and I did some pad work, you know, on his hands. He taught me to throw a cross. The guys would do this thing where they'd like knocked my glasses off and then hit me in the face when I went for the glasses, so he taught me how to block and counter real quick. And the thing is, he did a lot of, he, I heard him talking a lot about like critiquing people's reports at work, you know, so I don't know if he was actually the best guy to teach anybody how to fight, but he was the best guy to teach me how to fight and that's what counted right then. And then I just went back out in the world and I felt a little more confident, you know. And one day I'm at the pool and, with my little sister, and the jerks in the neighborhood took my sister and held her underwater like way, way longer than I ever would've did it. And, and you know, I mean I know her limits, you know, and we have a code and I'm like, so I like choose, Like really spazzing out there. So I ran up and like sort of tackle the guys off of her and they let her up from the water and she's all blue and just like puking water on the deck of the pool. And I was just furious and I was just like, you know, I have decided there's going to be a fight so I might as well throw the first punch. But I like all the pad work stuff went out the window and I was way out numbered. So I was like, let me just kick as many nutsacks as I can find, just like oom! Oom! Just like, just do as ma- take out as many guys as I can. Just Wolverine, in my head, like Wolverine claws popped out, nobody else could see them.

And then so you know, a couple of guys my age went down and then some ninth graders, they really said this, they said, "hey, he's fighting dirty, let's get him." And they held me like face down in the mulch and just kicked me in the ribs and face every time I brought my face up for a breath. And um like, every time I came up I would just see like Vans, Airwalks to the teeth. This is the mid 1980s you know, and um, I finally got home and I was like, I had a cracked rib and a black eye and I was really messed up. And my dad was just like, "Oh my God, oh God, this, this is awful. Uh, I hate, I hate seeing this. But like we gotta" you know, he cleaned me up, he gave me a couple of pep talks but he's like, "I don't want to go, I don't want to go get in there. Cause like if people, people fix your problems for you, then you grow up to be this completely useless adult. And I just, I can't have this and I'm watching but I'm, I'm worried, you know." And I was just like, "well I'm getting my ass kicked and I'm worried too." So you know, and you know, it was just let it ride for now. And then one day I'm coming home from school from, you know, the special school bus at the special bus stop. And I got off the bus and all of these neighborhood kids surrounded me and one of them put me in a full Nelson real quick. And this kid in front of me just popped a switchblade and - I know this guy goes, "Jesus Christ." And like I would like to point out, this is not the Bronx in the 1970s, this is Herndon, Virginia, 1987. This is Donnie Darko country. Okay? Like everybody's just getting divorced and teasing out their bangs and ignoring their kids, I guess. Cause like you also could get bladed weapons in the mail with no ID at that time. We used to throw throwing stars in, at the forest after school. Not like at a tree but just at the whole concept of the forest. Anyway, so he's got the switchblade and he's waving it around like this. And I remember him saying, "did you save anything from your lunch for me today, Jeffery? Did you?" And my mouth has always been way bigger than my survival instinct. And I was just like, "no, uh maybe you should have tried to cut me uh, before lunch, dumb ass." You know? And, and they, they saw it as a valid point, you know, and they kind of shoved me away and in falling the blade cuts my coat and all the stuffing comes out and I just ran home and I got, I got home and I, I saw my dad and he was like, "Jesus Christ, what happened to you?"

And I was just like, “there were just some kids up there um, and they had a switchblade but it was like only one switchblade so I could probably handle it. Just like give me a sec.” And he goes, “Oh no, come here. And he just takes my hand and, and we just start walking out the back door through like the woods behind the house. And I was like, “where are we going?” He goes, “I'm getting involved now.” And so we, we cut up this path through the woods, up to the back of this kid's house, and he was sitting there on the driveway on a skateboard, just like rocking back and forth and like tossing the knife around and laughing, just like it was such a, it was too on the nose for Stranger Things. You know what I mean? It's just like, too, too much cheesiness is going on right now. But he's like “heh heh heh” and all his buddies are like, “yeah, that was cool.” And then my dad just comes walking right up to them and doesn't break his stride at all. Just walking very quickly with purpose. He just like picks his foot up and it just goes boom! And puts it right on the kid's chest, knocks him off the skateboard, and just bam! Pins him to the driveway and he's just flopping around under my dad's foot and just going “kkgghhkghh” like that. Like uh, like, you know when you stomp on a roach and it's not dead? Like that. And the other kids are just like, “ahh!” Because from their perspective, an adult man in a necktie had emerged from the forest and taken out their leader like immediately so, and they were just like “aahhh!” And my dad is just like, “Oh, I see why you're picking on people smaller than you. Mm! Like, that. Mm. It's so fun! I'm into this.” Like that. And the kid is just like “kgghlhhkghh” like as my dad stomps down on him. And I was, “this is so awesome.” And, and he goes, “give me that switchblade.” And I went for it. And he goes, “no, no, no, not you, not you, Jeffrey. Nobody in this family is getting their prints on an illegal switchblade. You, give me that switchblade.” And he like took it on his shirt and he looked at it and he was like, “Mhmm, mhmm, seen these before.” And he just like throw it on the ground, kicks it into the storm sewer and he's just pointed to the kids and he's like, “I would hate, hate to have to discuss this incident with y'all's parents later on this evening. I don't think any of us wants that now do we?” And they were like, “Oh no, no, no. Don't tell our parents no, no, no, no, no, no. We'll be good. Don't tell our parents.” And they didn't know that what he meant was, I would hate to have to talk to your parents about this because I'm a 41 year old man and I just stopped on a ninth grader. I tried to crush his windpipe,

I'll go to jail, you know? But he was just like, "yeah, let's keep that between us for now." And they were like, "yeah, sure. Totally." And we went, we're going back home. And I was just like, "dad, wait, what was all that about? I thought you weren't going to get involved." And he, he's, he says, "well listen, I, I called it wrong and I am really sorry." He's like, "I got to tell you something. It's important to learn to fight your own battles. But the other thing that's important is when you see something that's wrong going on right in front of you and you know it's wrong and you can try to put a stop to it and you don't, you might as well be doing too. Nobody will sympathize with you just for letting it happen. You got to get in there, you've got to apply yourself and turn that wrong right." And I was like, okay, got it. And like I went on to just get beat up for years after like trying to apply that and it didn't even bother me cause I had right on my side. And decades go by, decades. I grew up, grew all up and everything, moved to New York city and I'm at the movies with my best buddies. And I mean I feel like if we are talking about this dude getting bullied in the 1980s it's safe for you to assume I'm super into Batman. And so we're watching the Dark Knight Rises in IMAX like I don't think that's a tough call. And where, we're like, you know, center, center row, center aisle, just right there, perfect seats. I'm taking it in and it's magical. And then the people behind us are just talking and they're not like, "Hey, what do you want? Some more popcorn?" They're like just talking just regular like we're like, like we're just a bunch of hairy dolls in their IMAX living room. Like nobody else is here, but them just like, "what do you think?" "I don't know. Let's go, let's talk about it later. But let's keep also talking now." You know, like it just kept going. I turned around twice to be like, "shh, could you just shush it, you know, come on." And I could really only sort of see the girl cause the, the seats are steep, you know, and then so this, that happened twice and then the guy's phone rings and he takes the call and he's just like, "hello." And you know, you guys, you guys aren't gonna believe this. Ok, he was, this guy did, here's what's going on in his life. There is a party going on on the other side of a town that he lives in and he's trying to decide if he and his girlfriend can make it to that party because they have such busy lives and they sometimes become tired. Right? And boy am I worried about this problem right now. And then I start getting mad at him like, fuck you for talking during Batman. But also I'm mad for the host. Like, how is this guy supposed to know how much

food to get? Commit, you know? And then, and then, and then I was just like also where, Batman is down in that fighting pit, we gotta get him out. Y'all won't shut up, like this is, Jesus Christ. So I turned around and said, "would you just shut up?" And when I turned, my hand like touched the guy on the knee, and he went for my face immediately. And just, the training kicked in, you know, all those years, block, counter, right? People going for the glasses. And so I smacked his hand away, threw a punch and I missed him, but I just grabbed his shirt and I was getting ready. I was like ready to do it. And then right then Gotham City exploded in the movie, it blew up and it lit up the whole theater and it was a 14 year old kid.

His, his, his voice changed early, I guess. And, and I was just holding him by the throat and to him he's just seeing a city in flames and he's just like, "ahhh" you know, like, and, and I saw it like, and just literally wasn't, I was just like, "Oh my God," I just put him down and I just sat down and tried to make myself very tiny for the remainder of the movie. I don't have any idea how that movie ended and, and it's like, cause you couldn't, you couldn't, I feel like that's a reason to punch somebody in the movies, you know? But like, but then the cops are going to come, right? The cops come and they'll be like, "what was your reason for punching this teenager at the movies tonight?" And, and it's like, "well, you know, I, it's a such a great reason, but it's really like a rich tapestry that goes back 20 years at this point. So let's just, let's just go on downtown and get that phone call going. You know, like let's don't waste time." And I don't know, my dad, my dad gave me a very acute sense of right and wrong and like I'm very sensitive to petty injustice and I just have gone around my whole life just being like, I'm going to get involved if I see wrong and I'm gonna try to get involved a little quicker than dad did on that one too. You know, so like I'm just, I'm just doing it. I'm, I'm, I'm inserting myself. I want to see the world become a place of right. But the thing is, is I am no longer a nerdy fifth grader. Okay? I occupy this body now and I'm walking around responding to a trauma nobody remembers or cares about right? No- nobody's like, "we need a hero. Oh, here he is, great." Like there's no bat signal on the clouds. It's just people screwing with their phones in a movie theater and I'm out here fixing it, causing trauma for somebody else that they then are going to overreact to and just keeping that chain going and I don't know how to stop it. You guys are awesome.

SAM: Coming up, a song about looking up and realizing that you have against all odds found your way home. We'll be right back.

As we were preparing for our live show in Austin, Texas last month, I sent a text to my friend Jesse, who lives there and asked if she could recommend any great local music acts. She wrote back right away and said, you need to book Milktoast Millie and The Scabby Knees. A few days later I found myself on the phone with Bridget, one of the members of that band, and Bridget asked me what kind of sound I was going for. I said, well, usually we look for songs about regret, longing, homecoming, that kind of thing. And I believe Bridget's exact words were, "Oh, dude, we got you covered." So to close out this season, here is the song Bridget and the band played to close out that show, Family Ghosts Live at The Driskill in Austin. The song is called, I Love You So Much, and if I may, Ghost Family, that's exactly how I feel about all of you.

I Love You So Much

Another workday is letting out
Under the owl's watchful eye
This hustle and bustle is winding down
Beneath this painted orange sky

If I thought that I'd be here
If I thought I'd say this song
If you told me years ago
And I told you you were wrong

Something about standing on that bridge
With a bunch of sweaty tourists and their sticky kids
You said to me "when the bats come out
Run into your ruts til you scream and shout"

If I thought that I'd be here
If I thought I'd say this song
If you told me years ago
And I told you you were wrong

Ooooh
Ooooh
Oooooohh
Oooooohh

Sitting on the porch, dogs at my feet
My heart joins with this city's beat
As the cowboys pass they give a wave
Here's my home I'll never stray
Here's my home I'll never stray
Here's my home I'll never stray
Here's my home I'll never stray
Here's my home I'll never stray

If I thought that I'd be here
If I thought I'd say this song
If you told me years ago
And I told you you were wrong

SAM: Family Ghosts is hosted and produced by me, Sam Dingman.

John Tong says he's retired from storytelling, but he came out of retirement for our show, so you never really know with him.

Jeff Simmermon has a comedy album called *And I Am Not Lying*, which you can purchase a digital copy of or get on hot pink vinyl. Click the link in our show notes to get your copy.

Milktoast Milly and The Scabby Knees is Bridget Brewer and Jillian Samar with Jared Robertson. They just released their debut album. It's called *Milktoast Millie*

and friends, it is a thing of beauty. Find it on Spotify or follow the link in our show notes. This episode was mixed by Evan Arnett with Spoke Media's head of post-production Will Short. Family Ghosts is a proud creative partner of Spoke Media. Find more great podcasts at spokemedia.io. A friendly reminder that while there won't be any new episodes in this feat until December, our Patreon supporters will continue hearing exclusive bonus episodes between now and then and they will get early access to season three and discounts on tickets for future installments of Family Ghosts Live. They get all of that for just \$5 a month. So if that sounds good to you and you have the means, please join the Kindred Spirits on Patreon at patreon.com/familyghosts and get the added benefit of knowing that your support makes it possible to keep this show going. We'll be back in your headphones on December 4th, Ghost Family, and until then, thank you for listening to Family Ghosts, where every house is haunted.

You're listening to WALT homemade radio.