

Our Endless Numbered Days

By Iron & Wine



Album review by Vivian Filipovic

Iron & Wine

Musical Background



Samuel Beam, otherwise known as Iron & Wine, started his music career in the early 2000s. He recorded and released his first album, *The Creek Drank the Cradle*, in September 2002. The album features 11 songs, and was recorded out of a studio Beam had set up in his house. He had released an EP six months prior to the release of his first album, *Call Your Boys*. It contained only two songs, "Call Your Boys", and "Dearest Foresaken".

One year after *The Creek Drank the Cradle*, Beam wrote another EP called *The Sea & the Rhythm*, which came out in 2003. This one included 5 songs, and had a runtime of 21 minutes and 19 seconds.

Iron & Wine's most popular song is titled "Flightless Bird, American Mouth" which has over 289,000,000 plays on Spotify alone. The song was included in the *Twilight: Breaking Dawn - Part 1* as Bella and Edward's wedding song. A couple of his other songs have been featured in other TV shows and movies throughout the years. Two songs off the album *Our Endless Numbered Days*, are both featured on fairly popular shows you can find on Netflix. "Passing Afternoon" is on season 4 episode 16 of *House, M.D.*, and "Naked as We Came" is in the first season of *Grey's Anatomy*, in episode 9.

Iron & Wine has also covered a few songs in the process of writing originals. A couple notable ones are "Such Great Heights" by The Postal Service, "Time After Time" by Cyndi Lauper, which are both posted on Iron & Wine's Spotify page. Another one is called "Fade Into You" by Mazzy Star. This one wasn't released on his Spotify, but as a clip on YouTube.

Beam tends to stay solo when writing and performing his songs.

At live shows, there was never a specific crew, but Robert Burger, Joe Adamik, and Jim Becker were often included. His sister, Sarah, is also often doing backing vocals for a number of their songs.



Iron & Wine's main genre is Folk, but can also be described as Alternative or Indie. His songs are known for gentle acoustic guitar, poetic lyrics, and overall enchanting sound. The most prominent instrument in his songs is his acoustic guitar. A couple others are bass, banjo, piano, harmonica, and various percussion. Iron & Wine has also made several collaborations throughout the years. Ben Bridwell has been his most common collaborator, them being childhood friends and sharing a similar musical interest. The pair released an album together in 2015, titled *Sing Into My Mouth*, which has 12 songs on it. More recently, In September of 2025, they released two EPs, one on September 9th called *I Want to Know What Love Is*, and on September 12th, *Making Good Time*. Both EPs share a song called "Luther", which was also put out as a single. Another collaborated album he did was with Calexico, and is called *In The Reins*. The album came out in 2005, and contains only 7 songs, being one of Iron & Wine's shortest official albums. Some of the songs on *In The Reins* stray from Iron & Wine's typical sound, going for more of an Americana and Latin sound.



A notable standalone collaboration was on a song called "All in Good Time" from the 2024 album *Light Verse*. "All in Good Time" features Fiona Apple, an Alternative/Indie songwriter. Their song tells a story of separation, learning, and growing in a relationship. Some consider it to be about the cycle of good times following bad times, and vice versa. The song got over 6.5 million spotify listens

Iron & Wine has just over 3.5 million monthly listeners. Around the world, Mexico City averages the most listens per month out of everyone. On average, they have around 55,000 monthly listeners. That's closely followed by London, England with 50,000, then Sydney, Australia with 47,000. There isn't a current statistic for Victoria, but in Vancouver, B.C. it averages around 12,000 per month.



Album reveiw: Our Endless Numbered Days

Our Endless Numbered Days is Iron & Wine's second official album, but the first to be recorded in a studio. Sam works with producer Brian Deck, in a studio called Engine Studios, which is located in Chicago, Illinois. The album has 12 songs, and a runtime of 44 minutes and 47 seconds. The album also has a deluxe edition, which was released on the same day as the original album, March 23, 2002.



The deluxe edition has 8 more songs than the main album, and a runtime of 1 hour and 14 minutes. The added songs on the deluxe are all demos coming from the album. It showcases the first idea of the song, giving how it was originally written to sound. There's little to no lyric changes, but there are clear changes in tempo, and instruments.

Personal Experience

I first heard Iron & Wine around two years ago and was immediately interested. The first song I was interested in was "Naked as We Came". I heard a 15 second clip of it from something a friend of mine had posted, and as soon as I heard it I went to go check it out on Spotify. The song had been pretty consistantly playing for me in the weeks after I discovered it, Along with the song "Cinder and Smoke". From there, I'd listen to other songs on occasion, but those had remained my top two for months. A little while later I had come across another song, and I got super into a ton of them. Iron & Wine was my 2nd top artist of 2025, with a lot of songs constantly appearing in my Spotify-made On Repeat playlist.



Track No. 1 - On Your Wings

On Your Wings is the opening track on Our Endless Numbered Days. It has been interpreted to be about immaturity, hope, and longing for change and a chance to get away from everything. It opens with a twangy guitar sound, joined by Sam's vocals. The song is 3 minutes and 53 seconds long, and is a great opener to understand the vibe and sound of the album right from the start.



I'd rate the song a 6/10. I like it for its opening sound, and I think it's a good song to start the album. It's personally not one of my go-to's, but I'd never skip it when listening to the first album. When I first heard it, it took a bit of time for it to really grow on me, but now I'm happy to say it has.

Main Lyrics

God, there is gold hidden deep in the ground
God, there's a hangman wants to come 'round
How we rise when we're born
Like the ravens in the corn
On their wings, on our knees
Crawling careless from the sea
God, give us love in the time that we have
God, give us love in the time that we have
God, give us love in the time that we have
God, give us love in the time that we have



Track No. 2 - Naked as We Came

This specific song will always be special to me. I'll rate it a 9/10 Every time I hear it, I'm reminded of the friend who posted it. She was a very close friend for a long period of my life, and I still consider her to be, even though we rarely talk anymore. I vividly remember the first time I heard the clip she posted, and then hearing the full version on Spotify. It's a very melodic song which also opens with a guitar, followed by vocals which come in at 22 seconds. The song itself is 2 minutes and 32 seconds, and it's about life's vulnerabilities. Fun fact; Sam wrote this song in his backyard.

Main Lyrics

She says "Wake up, it's no use pretending"

I'll keep stealing, breathing her

Birds are leaving over autumn's ending

One of us will die inside these arms

Eyes wide open

Naked as we came

One will spread our

Ashes 'round the yard

She says, "If I leave before you, darling

Don't you waste me in the ground"

I lay smiling like our sleeping children

One of us will die inside these arms

Eyes wide open

Naked as we came

One will spread our

Ashes 'round the yard

Track No. 3 - Cinder and Smoke

Cinder and Smoke is the third song on the album. It's another favourite of mine, specifically for the ending vocals and instrumental. It's the longest song on the album, being 5 minutes and 44 seconds long. I rate it a 9.5/10 just because i like it a little bit more than the last, but it's not my all-time favourite.

Lyrics



Give me your hand
The dog in the garden roam
Is covered in mud
And draggin' your mother's clothes
Cinder and smoke
The snake in the basement found
The juniper shade
The farmhouse is burning down
Give me your hand
And take what you will tonight
I'll give it as fast
And high as the flame will rise
Cinder and smoke
So whispers around the trees
The juniper bends
As if you were listening
Give me your hand
Your mother is drunk as all
The firemen shake
A photo from father's arms
Cinder and smoke
You'll ask me to pray for rain
With ash in your mouth
You'll ask it to burn again

Track No. 9 - Free Until They Cut Me Down

Free Until They Cut Me Down is the album's 9th song, I give it a 7/10 and newest find for me. It has a playtime of 4 minutes and 34 seconds. The sound of this song is slightly different from the others, with new instruments, and a change in the usually slow tempo. The song is about finding the good in the bad, or the joy in hardships.

Lyrics

When the men take me to the devil's tree
I will be free and shining like before
Papa, don't tell me what I should've done
She's the one, she's the one who begged me
"Take me, take me home"

When the wind wraps me like the reaper's hand
I will swing free until they cut me down
Papa, don't tell me what I could've done
She's the one, she's the one who begged me
"Take me, take me home"

When the sea takes me like my mother's arms
I will breathe free as any word of God
Papa, don't tell me what you would've done
She's the one, she's the one who begged me
"Take me, take me home"



Track No. 12 - Passing Afternoon

Passing afternoon is the closing track on the album. It's another slower one, and one of the quieter songs. It's 4 minutes and 1 second long, and another one of my more recent finds. The song is about the passage of time, and life's stages expressed as seasons. I'd rate it an 7/10. It's a new favourite, and I find it really nice to simply just listen to.



Lyrics

There are times I walk from you
Like some passing afternoon
Summer warmed the open window of her honeymoon
And she chose a yard to burn
But the ground remembers her
Wooden spoons, her children stir her Bougainvillea blooms
There are things that drift away
Like our endless numbered days
Autumn blew the quilt right off the perfect bed she made
And she's chosen to believe
In the hymns her mother sings
Sunday pulls its children from their piles of fallen leaves
There are sailing ships that pass
All our bodies in the grass
Springtime calls her children 'til she lets them go at last
And she's chosen where to be
Though she's lost her wedding ring
Somewhere near her misplaced jar of Bougainvillea seeds
There are things we can't recall
Blind as night that finds us all
Winter tucks her children in, her fragile china dolls
But my hands remember hers
Rolling 'round the shaded ferns
Naked arms, her secrets still like songs I'd never learned
There are names across the sea
Only now I do believe
Sometimes, with the windows closed, she'll sit and think of me
But she'll mend his tattered clothes
And they'll kiss as if they know
A baby sleeps in all our bones, so scared to be alone
Alone (alone) (repating)