

# Songs of Resistance & Resolve 1984–2025

**PAUL METSA**



# Heritage Voice: Paul Metsa

By Charlie Maguire

Next time you're out taking a walk, check out the older buildings in your neighborhood. Chances are pretty good that the steel in those structures—1940 or earlier—came from the huge open-pit mines of northern Minnesota.

The “Iron Range” as that part of the state is called, are populated by people who call themselves “Iron Rangers”. They are a proudly separate and distinct population unique to the state with their own melting pot of customs, traditions, and most of all; an engrained sense of collective fairness going back more than 100 years.

Paul Metsa was born into that community and puts together the songs on this album that call for a fix or a fair shake; whether in the workplace, homeplace, or anyplace, he sees someone going through hard times.

He wades into a song idea with lyrics that explode out of his pen like a blast furnace—carried on a liquid stream of melody similar to what happens when molten steel is made at the mill. Then he hammers it all home on a rhythm anvil with his flat pick and guitar, and the sparks do fly!

Paul's hot-forged songs are built like those sturdy buildings in your town. They stand tall, ring loud, and are strengthened by the righteous Iron Ranger code of social justice mined from his own backyard.

## Paul Metsa: Quotes & Images

“Like the Iron Range-and Dylan for that matter-Metsa is a hodgepodge of characters and performers. He’s a folksinger, a blues singer, a guitarist, a social activist, a Finn, a storyteller, a comedian, a philosopher, a conspiracy theorist, and a lounge lizard.”

*-MN LAW AND POLITICS*

“Think of Paul as Bruce with a Midwestern drawl.”

*-UTNE READER*



“Metsa is a Minneapolis songwriter who doesn’t shy away from rocking out, who has a sharp ear for language, and who crafts melodies that express jazzy freedom as well as folk purity.”

*-BOSTON PHOENIX*



“Metsa is one of the most poetic protest singers of our time.”

*-CMJ MAGAZINE*

“Paul Metsa is America’s answer to Billy Bragg.”

*-AT THE OPERA,  
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO*



“Metsa is a beat-influenced motor-mouth, swooned on the rhythm of words, the jangle of phrases, the emotional bull’s-eye that pricks at the intellect on its way to the heart of the matter.”

*-MINNEAPOLIS CITY PAGES*

“Metsa writes intricate storytelling songs with complex lyrics and rich melodies.”

*-CMJ MAGAZINE*

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# Slow Justice

2020

Not all poor men are honest, not all rich men are thieves  
But the rich man owns the orchard and the poor man rakes the leaves  
And as the world goes around all I want to ask is  
If the rich man owns the land why must the poor man pay the taxes?

## **Chorus:**

Why does Justice go so slow  
Slow justice slowly go  
Poor means stop and rich means go  
Slow justice slowly goes

They say a womans work is never done and do you wonder why  
They make half as much for double time on the bye and bye  
I ain't no big shot doctor ain't no big shot doctors kid  
But I can tell you that my mother never lived in Adams rib

## **Chorus:**

Why does justice go so slow  
Slow justice slowly go  
Poor means stop and rich means go  
Slow justice slowly go

They killed a black minister in Memphis town,  
And black prince in Audubon Hall  
They used different guns in Capetown but the same bullet shot them all  
South Africa's a ghetto someday its gonna' break like glass  
One world with different colors you know there ain't no second class

**Chorus:**

Why does justice go so slow  
Slow justice slowly go  
Poor means stop and rich means go

Slow justice slowly go

They will bomb a row of houses  
Try to take down the family farm  
Shut down all the unions with the help of the National Guard  
Someday those in Congress will have to swallow a bitter pill  
They believe Clarence Thomas, I believe Anita Hill

**Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*

*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

## 59 Coal Mines

### Year

Buckdancer was sixteen when he left high school  
Got a hardhat and lunch pail like his Daddy did do  
Did not need no degree to buy a piece of the rock  
At nine bucks an hour and company stock

### Chorus:

59 Coal mines, 58 are shut down  
What will be left when the new world's around  
But a wind that won't blow and holes in the ground  
59 coal mines, 58 are shut down

Lucky's to old to leave town to poor to law low  
Got one good leg to stand on and lung's full of coal  
Ma says "when you go lookin' Lucky take off you hat"  
But old Lucky knows that findin' work is harder than that

You can plead with the county and plead with the state  
To pay your insurance and put food on your plate  
But it seems like God's truth as Lucky makes his last stand  
No one in this city gonna hire an old man

### Chorus:

59 Coal mines, 58 are shut down  
What will be left when the new world's around  
But a wind that won't blow and holes in the ground  
59 coal mines, 58 are shut down

Do the big boys in Pittsburgh do they stand up and clap  
Every time they make money pullin' pins from the map  
They say "what they don't know won't hurt them, they're so far underground  
Until they come up for air they're gonna find their ghost town

Bucks buddies have left him they all have gone south  
Sick and tired of livin' day to day hand to mouth  
The oldtimers knew first the coal train was through  
But Buck pays on the Chevy and dream girl is due

**Chorus:**

59 Coal mines, 58 are shut down  
What will be left when the new world's around  
But a wind that won't blow and holes in the ground  
59 coal mines, 58 are shut down

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*

*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Fires of Jerusalem

## Year

I got a message from Missletown,  
Want me to shake my sister down  
Blackjack order ain't lily white,  
Let some other rounder take that midnight ride  
Oh, its face it has got five sides

Wagon rolls into Death Valley red  
Wagon master ain't got no halo head,  
He whips you with his lariat  
Take his gun but do not carry it,  
Break the wheels on his chariot

### **Chorus:**

When the war is in the east,  
go west young man go west  
Shooting sleeping children will not put medals on your chest  
And the fires of Jerusalem,  
why must anyone get used to them  
When no one's left, well who you gonna pardon  
There's blood on the roses in victory garden

I got a telegram from Tokyo,  
Spitfire orange wind still does blow  
No trees on certain prairies stand,  
And from the ditch is raised a mystery hand  
Bleeding fingers full of sand

I heard the rumble from the underground,  
On Mother's day when we laid Daddy down  
The wind was still but all I heard  
Were the pipes and the guns  
And the drums of Gettysburg

### **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Wall of Power

## Year

In the time before the fire,  
In the time before the wheel  
Strong men would walk the earth,  
Keep the weak men beneath their heel

Someone told the weak man  
What his life was worth,  
Someone told the strong man  
That the meek shall inherit earth

### **Chorus:**

Someday the high and mighty will fall,  
There will be no power brokers,  
The wall of power will fall

You can't keep me in the corner  
And you cannot ride my back  
And if you push me hard enough  
I'll damn sure push you back

It'll be like old man Gabriel  
When he made that trumpet sound Someday  
break this ball and chain,  
Let the walls come tumbling down

### **Repeat Chorus**

I don't have to tell you  
What I am talking about  
Your wake up every morning  
Sometimes you want to scream and shout

But you just remember  
When your life becomes a living hell  
When David grabbed the slingshot  
Was the day that Goliath fell

### **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Jack Ruby

## Year

### Chorus:

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby in a Cavanaugh hat,  
whoever taught you to shoot a pistol like that  
Oh, you snuck in the basement  
and you stood in the back,  
Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby in a Cavanaugh hat

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were fifteen years old  
on the south side of Chicago you looked up to Capone,  
stole girls lunch money beat boys on their way home  
Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were fifteen years old

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were twenty-one,  
you traded brass knuckles for a caliber gun,  
in the Sherman hotel bootleg whiskey did run  
Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were twenty-one

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were thirty-five,  
set up shop in Dallas had nothing to hide,  
a nightclub with hookers and cops side by side  
Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were thirty-five

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were forty-nine,  
at the Carousel Club you kept the judges in line,  
J. Edgar Hoover said there's no organized crime  
Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were forty-nine

## **Repeat Chorus**

Did the kingfish in New Orleans give you the key,  
the numbers to contact the men you should see,  
a confederate cloak of conspiracy,  
with an eye towards November 1963

When the motorcade turned on Houston and Elm,  
into the crossfire where Camelot fell  
Were the shots from the window or 6th floor window well?  
In Dealey Plaza more than three empty shells

Was Lee Harvey Oswald the only one?  
What of those in the bushes who started to run  
With secret service credentials and government guns,  
they'd answer no questions for what they had done

Oswald was set up so he did say  
before he appeared in the basement driveway  
On live television Ruby blew his soul away,  
God speed the witness with something to say

## **Repeat Chorus**

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby when you were sixty-four,  
told Dorothy Kilgallen you'd even the score,  
from your jail cell gave names and numbers and more,  
in forty eight hours she lay dead on the floor

Jack Ruby, Jack Ruby come back from the grave,  
tell us for real whose lives you did save  
And the powers behind the deals that were made,  
how a Presidents murder became your stock and trade

For those who are guilty are alive to this day,  
got their visas in D.C. and got on their way,  
others laid low until election day,  
a day of high treason and a quick getaway

Did the Warren Commission mean what they say?  
Did the mob or oil money get in the way?  
Did the shadow of Cuba darken the day?  
In Dallas County the land of LBJ  
In Dallas County the land of LBJ

### **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Ferris Wheels on the Farm

## Year

It ain't easy, the old man used to tell me  
He died in the field while he was makin' hay  
This land will give you life and then its gonna take it  
It ain't fair son, but that's the rules by which we play

I got these acres from my father's father  
I will hand them down on through the line  
Now it takes a horse and plow to pull the credit  
I lay awake at night and wonder is it the Bank's or is it mine

### **Chorus:**

And you know, Grandpa used to have a nightmare  
It was than when the twister took the barn  
Some city-slicker sellin' snake oil in the cornfield  
Tore down the windmill and put Ferris wheels on the farm

Eli and Mary were my brother and sister  
We were happy farm kids under the 1930's skies  
Eli fell and he drowned out in the mudpond  
He watches over us with those seven year old eyes

Mary gets drunk she dances to the jukebox  
Her letter sweater doesn't fit her anymore  
She went to beauty school, never came back from the city  
She left the farm did not fancy bein' poor

### **Repeat Chorus**

It's hard enough these days,  
To try and raise a family  
You think what God gave you should really be enough  
Now I break my back to put a little butter on the table

Ma & I are getting older, to fight it should not be so tough  
Now they tell that I'm  
faced with a foreclosure  
Auction off everything my papa gave to me  
Bankers get rich putting farmers out to pasture  
Is this the reward for working honestly

### **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Like Father, Like Son

## Year

Willie Mae was waitress at the Neptune café  
One day she met a soldier  
who stole her heart away  
Then she found she was pregnant  
as he was leavin' on a train  
To join ten thousand others  
in the cold Korean rain

Willie Mae she had a baby  
and she named him after Dad.  
Now she finally had a man  
for the man she never had  
Willie Mae she often realized  
that there would come a day  
She would lose her sweet sonny  
to a woman half her age.

### **Chorus:**

Rock a bye baby, bye baby bye bye  
I will rock your cradle,  
I will hold you when you cry,  
I will keep my arms around you  
keep you from the fallin' sky  
rock a bye baby bye baby bye bye

It was the summer of '67  
sweet sonny was engaged  
Got a letter from the army  
he'd be reporting to Fort Bragg  
Willie Mae could only wonder  
what young sonny might of done

He joined the army  
Like Father Like Son.

### **Repeat Chorus**

Willie Mae was on the front porch,  
listening to the church bells ring  
Dreamin' of her two men  
and the melodies they'd sing

When the car pulled in the driveway  
she could barely hide her rage  
Two men in uniform  
carrying dog tags and a flag

Does the final cost of freedom  
take a mother from her child  
Put a man in uniform  
then he's a number in a file

Willie Mae could only wonder  
what her two men mighta done  
Well they both died for their country,  
Like Father, Like Son  
Well they both died for their country,  
Like Father, Like Son

### **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Floretta's Junkyard

## Year

I was working at Florettas's junk yard  
She had a moustache and a rose tattoo  
I was living in a shack in dogtown  
With my old man and his girlfriend too

One day my old man left me  
With a picture of my mother with her only son  
He said, I hope my blood don't run through your veins  
He said, you know it's better to fight than run  
He said, you know it's better to fight than run

### **Chorus:**

Fight not run  
Fight not run  
Fight not run

Well I did not mean to get kicked out of high school  
He had to put some clothes upon my back  
I was delivering the newspaper in the Windy city rain  
In the morning with my blind dog jack

And I ended up in a fox hole in Saigon  
Just a teenager with a loaded gun  
I said, you know I had to get out of the jungle alive  
So you know I had to fight not run  
Fight not run  
I said, you know I had to fight not run

## **Repeat Chorus**

I got a mobile home in Milwaukee  
And I'm married to my pride and joy  
And I try to make peace with this world around me  
And on my knee I got a bouncing baby boy  
You've got to fight when you love somebody  
You've got to fight when you believe in someone  
You know you've got to fight for the space to breathe in  
You know you've got to fight not run  
You know you've got to fight not run

## **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa  
Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Another Man's Chains

## Year

Nobody told me life would be this tough  
If you need a reason right is reason enough  
I said I ain't gonna work for a minimum wage  
Make somebody's money, cleanin' somebody's cage  
Is it any wonder why good men go insane?

### **Chorus:**

Nobody's got to wear another man's chains  
Nobody's got to wear another man's chains

They hear it in Pretoria, they hear it in Beijing  
I said the loud bells of freedom waiting to ring  
The people in power getting tired and old  
The people under their thumb they're just about to explode  
Bring on the tear gas baby bring on the tanks

### **Chorus:**

Nobody's got to wear another man's chains  
Nobody's got to wear another man's chains

Give me liberty or give me death  
Any other way ain't worth my dying breath  
Shout it on the radio, play it on TV  
You ain't got nothing without the right to be free  
I said the people in power will be the people in pain.

**Chorus:**

Nobody's got to wear another man's chains  
Nobody's got to wear another man's chains

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Walkin' In a Woman's World

## Year

Kitty Genovese was walkin' home one night  
Stranger on Queens Boulevard asked her for a light  
She said no and he struck her down as 38 looked on  
Now those 38 still hear her cries since Kitty has passed on

Karen came home from college  
With story's of where she's been  
In this town ten years ago she was the homecoming queen  
We won't hear those stories now or meet her boyfriend Dave  
It was a short walk from the coffee shop to her shallow grave

### **Chorus:**

She ain't safe in a straight line  
She ain't safe in a round  
She ain't safe in an airplane  
She ain't safe on the ground  
Because my grandma was once just a girl  
Well I won't stop runnin' 'til I'm walkin in a woman's world

A little girls on the playground  
She dreams of growin' up  
She might be a fireman  
A princess or a cop  
Let her be what she wants to be  
Let her not pretend let her be a king or queen  
Or the next president

### **Repeat Chorus**

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*

*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Second Avenue Sunset

## Year

The soldiers of misfortune  
walk up Second Avenue  
Some march in single file,  
some stumble two by two  
They wear cardboard tuxedos  
and their top hats made of wire  
Rub their hands 'neath a frozen moon round  
a trash can full of fire

### **Chorus:**

Second Avenue sunset  
why does it have to be so hard  
Second Avenue sunset  
sleep in a city park  
They are living in a house of cards  
They are living in a house of cards

Raggedy Ann and Andy  
on a black top promenade  
Like plastic dolls on their wedding cake,  
they thought they had it made  
Small town kids with big town tastes their  
piggy bank went bust  
Now the mission smells like muscatel,  
thelights still ain't bright enough

### **Repeat Chorus**

You will walk around them  
when they are on their hands and knees  
Step over them in alleys

from sea to shining sea  
Some know how they got there  
but they don't know what to do  
Because there are no second chances  
on Second Avenue

**Repeat Chorus\***

\*(alternate chorus)

The wind blew down their house of cards,  
The wind blew down their house of cards

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# Ain't Gonna Whistle Dixie Anymore

2017

## First Verse:

I saw your Tiki Torch parade on the blood red evening news,  
I remembered Timothy McVeigh and that Jesus was a Jew,  
Benedict Arnold waits for you in the hottest place in Hell,  
The screaming souls will drown you out-your Sieg Heil Rebel Yell

## Chorus:

Ain't Gonna Whistle Dixie Anymore, ain't gonna whistle Dixie anymore  
Bury that song in the land of cotton, deep in the Delta mud to be long forgotten  
Ain't Gonna Whistle Dixie Anymore

## Second Verse:

Fallen soldiers that were left behind, we salute on wounded knee  
Sacrifice of the highest kind, from Gettysburg to Normandy  
Burn your crosses, mask your face, sing the Appomattox Blues  
Woody Guthrie told us long ago, fascists are bound to lose, fascists born and  
bound to lose

## Repeat Chorus

Charlottesville Virginia, August 12 th of '17  
Emancipation Park and Dixie flags flew across the village green  
4 wheels of hate on 4 th street raced where Heather Heyer died  
Now her Blue Ridge Mountain Angel voice forever magnified, forever magnified

## Repeat Chorus Twice

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# No Kings (No Crown)

2025

They are banning the books, the books they ain't read  
Obeying the voices they hear in their head  
They like to say they're more righteous than you  
They're just fool after fool after fool

They banish the women silence their voice  
To clothes hangar alleys with no other choice  
Handcuff the doctors and scientists, too  
They're just fool after fool after fool

They mask up like gangster, roll into your school  
Round up the students who have broken no rules  
In farms and factories, the finest hotels  
if your skin's coffee colored you're on a highway to hell

NO KINGS, NO CROWN  
NOT EVER, NOT NOW  
NO KINGS NO CROWN  
NOT EVER, NOT NOW

They got alligator prisons, jack boot police  
They'll grab grandpa or grandma, a nephew or niece  
That man selling ice cream, they'll take him too  
They're just fool after fool after fool

They pardoned the criminals who beat up the cops  
Even those who pled guilty with flag poles and rocks  
Starve hungry children steal their medicine too  
They're just fool after fool after fool

They're robbing the veterans wounded in war  
Close the suicide hotlines slam the hospital door

Call them suckers and losers for the red, white and blue  
They're just fool after fool after fool

NO KINGS NO CROWN  
NOT EVER NOT NOW  
NO KINGS NO CROWN  
NOT EVER NOW NOW

Their god that breathes fire sets them up for the fall  
Behind their halo curtain there aint no god at all  
Think they'll get to Heaven riding King Solomans mule  
They're just fool after fool after fool

If we stand together we become bullet proof  
Like old Paul Revere who shouted up to the roof  
Warn all your neighbors and repeat after me  
One if by land, and two if by sea

History will be recorded and be quick to condemn  
The cowardly traitors both women and men  
But it's good to remember, and times this by ten  
There's way more of us than there are of them  
There's way more of us than there are of them

They're just fool after fool after fool  
They're just fool after fool after fool  
They're just fool after fool after fool  
They're just fool after fool after fool

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*

# You Can't Be Brave (If You're Not Scared)

2020

The day is dark, but the night is darker  
The honey bee stays in it's hive  
The whippoorwill will sing tomorrow  
For whoever gets out alive

A river runs from golden mountains  
A redwood sways from side to side  
Blue bonnets grow in Texas prairies  
By highways traveled by those  
Who got out alive

## **Chorus:**

Abandon hope, you must be kidding  
My coat of steel of which I wear  
Put this on my faded tombstone  
You can't be brave, if you're not scared  
You can't be brave, if you're not scared

Let's not forget those vanished footsteps  
And every soldier who fought side by side  
We salute them all in midnight moments  
Especially those who got out alive

The hour draws near and the clock is ticking  
I hope the answer comes from 9-5  
I say a prayer for those still listening  
Especially those who got out alive

*Words and Music by Paul Metsa*  
*Paul Metsa Music - BMI ©®*