

The Songs of My Colorado

It didn't take Lissa Hanner long to come up with the title of her latest album, *My Colorado*. After all, the songs on the album are all about the people and places she loves in her beloved home state. Hanner shares the stories behind the songs below:

1. High Altitude Blues: "I had some friends who came up here and they got altitude sickness, which is like the worst flu you've ever had, the worst headache, you get really sick. So I wrote a sort of tongue-in-cheek song about high altitude sickness, but they couldn't appreciate it. So I ended up rewriting it and kept the hook line, 'high altitude blues,' and used it to describe men who live where I live — these guys who are mountain men, who live up here and love the mountains. They bring these women from California, the East Coast, wherever, to live up here, and the women are like, 'I love it so much, it's so beautiful.' But once they realize what life up here is really like, they don't like it anymore. Then the guy ends up getting his heart broken. . It's a harder life up here, so that's what that song is all about, for all the men and all the women who bring their partners up here, who say they like it, but then, they can't handle it."

2. Meant To Be: "Meant To Be' is a wedding song I wrote for some friends of mine. I worked on it until six in the morning on the day of the wedding. I went way up on the mountaintop to the wedding and they were both on horseback. So I'm thinking, 'Finally, I'm going to get to sing this song and they're going to love it, it's going to be great.' So I started singing the song, but they couldn't get the horses to stand still, so the horses just walked away. So they never even heard the song and it was two months before I could get it recorded so they could hear it."

3. Careful What You Wish For: "Careful What You Wish For' is kind of a tongue-in-cheek song to Gary, my husband. You know guys are like, 'I love you, I want to be with you forever, please be with me forever,' you know. Well, okay, if I'm really going to do that, I'm really going to do that, so you better mean it."

4. Colorado Colors: "Colorado Colors' I wrote for a friend of mine, Kent Gunnufson. He produces documentaries and asked me to write a song for a documentary he was doing. He wanted me to write a song about what I love about Colorado, and it's really the colors and the sunshine and the blue sky — it's never dreary here, it's rarely overcast."

5. Stay: "I wrote that one upstairs in my bedroom on my bed for a couple of friends of mine named Tony and Melissa — they don't live here anymore. They were having problems — and then, of course, there is always a little bit of your own personal relationship in these songs and I was going through some relationship issues myself."

6. Merry Go Round: "Merry Go Round' is basically about

my life. All I wanted to do was be a singer and make a lot of money; instead I got pregnant, got married and moved back here."

7. Rocky Mountain High: "When I was 15, my dad's company transferred him to Colorado Springs, and I was thrilled because I was in love with John Denver and I just knew Colorado was where I belonged."

8. Colorado Cowgirl: "'Colorado Cowgirl' I wrote with my friend Ron Hammons. On the back of the CD, there is a silhouette and that is the gate that goes up to his wife Linda's grave. So if you open that gate and hike up to the top of that hill, that's where her grave is and it overlooks her valley and shows her house. She died of cancer and she was very well-known in the Guffey community, very well-respected family, and very loved. One day I was out at the bar, playing on the patio, and I was like, 'Hey, everybody, I want you to hear my new song I wrote called 'Colorado Colors.'" And Linda turned to Ron and said, "'Colorado Cowgirl,' isn't that cool?' And he said, 'Yeah, "Colorado Cowgirl," that's really cool.'" But I said "Colorado Colors," okay. So, she got really sick that fall and we ended up losing her and the whole town was devastated. So Ron would come hear me sing and every time he would come hear me sing, he would say, 'Can you please play "Colorado Cowgirl?'" And I would be like, 'Oh, Ron, I don't remember the words,' or 'Oh, I just played it,' I'd make up something. Then I would go home and madly try to write this song. And I just couldn't, nothing came out. It sounded stupid, it all sounded contrived. Finally, about the ninth time he asked, I said, 'Ron, I'm so embarrassed,' and I told him the whole story. I said, 'I don't have a song — I've tried, but I don't have it.' And he laughed his ass off, he thought that was so funny. So he goes home that night, woke up at two o'clock in the morning, and wrote the words to 'Colorado Cowgirl.'"

9. Springtime In The Rockies: "'Springtime In The Rockies' is a song I wrote for my friend, Big Jim [Tubbs], for his birthday. Big Jim is an icon of the community. It was just a birthday song, but Big Jim doesn't like me to play it because it makes him cry."

10. Pink Palace: "'Pink Palace' I wrote for my friends Gene and Shelley. I had just met them and they had a funny story about this pink trailer he had out in East Colorado. And I thought, 'Oh, that's a cool idea for a song. Let me write a wedding song for you.' So, I wrote the wedding song and that's 'Pink Palace.' The trailer is actually a really trashed, gnarly looking trailer. It would be great for a video and we're talking to the fire department about either getting to blow it up or burn it up at the end of the video. It's in Cheyenne Wells, Colo., and he used to go to this bar called The Cheyenne. He went down to The Cheyenne one night and he met Shelley. He took her home and they spent the night together. So that's the line, 'It's night they will never forget,' because he brought her home and it was a great night. And that's how the relationship started. So that's the story behind 'Pink Palace.'"