I'll Be Your Water

Words and music by Keb' Mo' and John Lewis Parker, from the album Suitcase



"I'll Be Your Water" offers a particularly good chance to check out Keb Mo's playing up close, as it's the one unaccompanied track on *Suitcase*, with Mo's guitar and vocal carrying the entire tune. If the very next track, "Life Is Beautiful," is a funky wooden shack built from sturdy alternating-thumb acoustic guitar riffs, "I'll Be Your Water" is more of an abstract modern sculpture,

with a few lean, curving lines defining the plentiful open spaces in between.

In the intro and chorus, the chord changes are sketched out using tenth intervals (an octave plus a third). It's the same sound Paul McCartney used in "Blackbird," and in fact Mo' turns to this sound at other times on Suitcase, most notably on "Remain Silent" but also for the walkdown between the opening vamp and the vocal on "Eileen" and, to a lesser extent, on "Still There For You." Try fretting the low F notes

throughout the tune (like the one in the very first full measure) with your thumb; that will help the rest of your fingers fall into place whenever you're in open position.

The chords in the verse are a great example of how emptying out a chord fingering and either using one of the resulting open strings or adding in one new note can make ordinary, open-position I, IV, and V chords sound fresh. The Fsus2 is just an F chord (again, try fretting the sixth string with your thumb) with the fifth-, third-, and first-string notes of the usual fingering left out; the G on the open third string is what makes it a sus2 chord. For a G chord, Mo' doesn't worry about fretting the fifth string, thereby freeing up his left-hand ring finger to grab the second fret on the third string; that A note is what makes the resulting chord a Gadd9.

-DAVID HAMBURGER

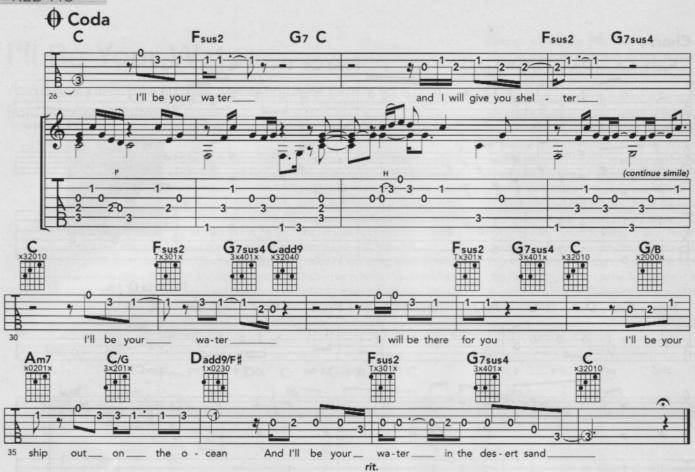


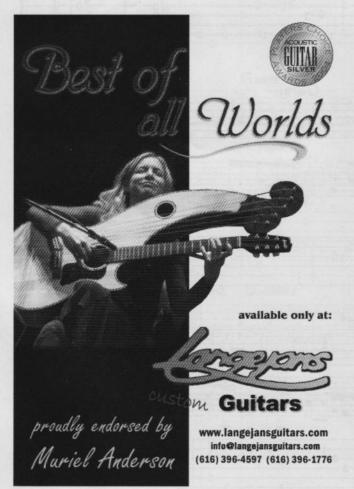
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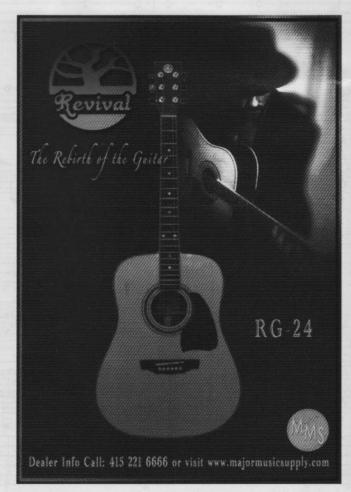
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Fsus2 Gadd9

1. Do you ever get worried

Fsus2 Gadd9
And your load is hard to bear

Fsus2 Am7 Dadd9/Fs
And your life is like a sad, sad story

Fsus2 G C
And no one, nobody really cares

Chorus

Fsus2 C/E $\,$ Dm $\,$ C $\,$ G/B Am7 $\,$ G But if you ever need someone to talk to

Fsus2 C/E Dm C G And if you ever need a helping hand

Fsus2 C/E Dm C Am7 Dadd9/F; I'll be your ship out on the ocean

Fsus2 G C
I'll be your water in the desert sand

Fsus2 Gadd9
2. I've been there I've felt like you do

Fsus2 Gadd9
Feeling like winter would never turn to spring

Fsus2 Am Dadd9/Fs
And everybody I know has got problems

Fsus2 G C
But there's a solution to everything

Repeat Chorus

Bridge

Csus2 G/B Gm/B Fadd9/A
And after you've found your way, you won't owe me nothing

Fm(add9)/A⁵ C/G G7sus4
'Cause you're gonna know that your well would never run dry,

never run dry

Repeat Chorus

Fsus2 G7 C Fsus2 G7sus4 C
I'll be your water and I will give you shelter

Fsus2 G7sus4 Cadd9 Fsus2 G7sus4 C I'll be your water, I will be there for you

Am7 C/G Dadd9/F#
I'll be your ship out on the ocean

Fsus2 G7sus4 C And I'll be your water in the desert sand

