

# Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town

Words and Music by Stone Gossard, Jeffrey Ament, Eddie Vedder, Michael McCready, and David Abbruzzese



"longest title in the Pearl Jam catalogue," the song is now known to many simply

A bittersweet reflection on memories, relationships, and squandered potential, "Elderly Woman Behind the Counter in a Small Town" began for Pearl Jam as an acoustic demo (a solo-acoustic guitar rendition can be found on the B-side of the "Go" single) and has since grown into an enduring fan favorite. Once described by frontman Eddie Vedder as the

as "Elderly Woman" or "Small Town." The best-known recording of the song includes the entire band (with then-drummer Dave Abbruzzese) and appears on the group's second LP, *Vs.*

Lyrical content aside, the song is a relatively upbeat strummer in 6/8 time. The chords are wide and jangly, with the G note ringing out on top for most of the song. As you play each verse, keep your ring finger planted on the third-fret D using that position as a reference point to inform your other fingers. As written, the G/B chords synthesize the movement of Jeff Ament's bass guitar, but you can easily include the low G note for the sake of variation or a fuller, bassier sound.

—DAN APCZYNSKI

## Chords

**D**  
x0132

**Cadd9**  
x21034

**G/B**  
x10034

**A**  
x01230

**Em**  
012000

## Strum Pattern

D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B

\*♣ = down; ♠ = up

1. **D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
I seem to recognize your face
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Haunting, familiar, yet I can't seem to place it
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Cannot find the candle of thought to light your name
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Lifetimes are catchin' up with me

### Prechorus

- Cadd9 A Cadd9**  
All these changes taking place
- A Cadd9**  
I wish I'd seen the place
- A Em**  
But no one's ever taken me

### Chorus

- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Hearts and thoughts they fade, fade away
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Hearts and thoughts they fade, fade away

2. **D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
I swear I recognize your breath
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Memories, like fingerprints, are slowly raising
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
You wouldn't recall, for I'm not my former
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
It's hard when you're stuck upon the shelf

### Prechorus

- Cadd9 A Cadd9**  
I changed by not changing at all
- A Cadd9**  
Small town predicts my fate
- A Em**  
Perhaps that's what no one wants to see

3. **D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
I just want to scream, "Hello!"
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
My God, it's been so long, never dreamed you'd return
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
But now here you are, and here I am
- D Cadd9 G/B Cadd9 G/B**  
Hearts and thoughts they fade away

Repeat Chorus and fade

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