

Biography

Dan Knudsen

An Intro to Dan Knudsen

Dan Knudsen is an American artist who's musical style has been described as a combination of folk, gospel and outsider genres. Since moving from Wheaton, Illinois in 1998 to his current home of Portland, Maine, Dan's performances around the growing music city have resulted in attracting a dedicated cult following, a full-length tribute album and an annual indoor festival called, "Dan-a-palooza" in honor of the artist and his music.

Songwriter.
Performer.
Recording Artist.
Visual Artist.
Local Legend.

Recording

Dan has been the epitome of the self-starter musician. Examples of that independent spirit are his handmade, home-recorded, self-released recordings accounting for the majority of his albums. It wasn't until recent that Dan received an offer to record in a professional music studio.

Dan now has eight albums all of which contain only original material. Of the eight releases, there is a Best Of Dan Knudsen (2000-2004), a live album: Live at Strange Maine (2006) and a tribute album titled, A Tribute To Dan Knudsen (2007) which features local bands and singers covering Dan's songs. These three albums highlight songs from his first two studio albums, Sunsong (2000) and Grass, Grain, & Appleseeds (2002). Dan released the Best of Dan Knudsen Volume II (2005-2010) on April 11, 2010. The new album puts a spotlight on what he refers to as "classics" from his albums spanning the past five years and also features two new tracks as is the case with each of his compilation CDs including his live and tribute albums - all offering brand new songs which serve as a welcome bonus to diehard DanFans.

Live Performance

Dan is a dedicated open-mic attendee at a few of the Portland venues. In addition to his regular appearances at these weekly spots he occasionally lands shows at venues allowing anywhere from a split-bill set to a full-length featured concert. It's at these occasional booked gigs where he can be seen accompanied by other artists when they're available to do so.

"As a writer and a performer, I really love the fantasy of it. Some of my songs, you know just like heavy metal music, and classical music, are very epic and they're the kind of songs that could be used on the soundtracks of movies or TV shows. In terms of songwriting, and creating visual art, it takes a very child-like approach. Basically, I'm a teenager that's trapped inside a young adult body, that's why I love children so much—I'm a kid at heart, I like kids and I've written a lot of children's songs and so it's very healthy and it helps keep me young in addition to exercising."

-Dan Knudsen

Visual Artwork

In addition to selling The Sharks Are Gone posters and Creatures of the Sand t-shirts, both containing artwork created by friends, Dan has and continues to create his own visual art pieces.

"I still have yet to mature as an artist, a visual artist and as I become more experienced I'll be making better pictures but I think I am becoming more and more passionate about it and eventually, before I know it I'll probably develop as much a passion for visual art as I've had for songwriting. Eventually I'd like to get away from just making album covers that have photos of me made on certain colors of construction paper—eventually, I'd like to start making CD covers that are like real pictures, not just one color of construction paper but basically like a photograph or a picture drawn with many different colors. I'll get to that one of these years." **-Dan Knudsen**

Radio Interview Fact Sheet

Dan Knudsen

Songwriter.
Performer.
Recording Artist.
Visual Artist.
Local Legend.

Current Residence Portland, ME

Birthplace Hinsdale, IL

Latest Album Best of Dan Knudsen Volume II (2005-2010)

Instruments Voice, acoustic guitar

Record Label None

Points of Note Dan has self-released 8 albums since 2000

Additional Info Some of Dan's interests include travel, action-adventure movies, live concerts, cooking, physical fitness, social justice

Contact info@danknudsenmusic.com

Website www.DanKnudsenMusic.com

Noteworthy Quotes

Dan Knudsen

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"Picture John Denver parachuting onstage during a Korn concert to play a few numbers for the kids. You can't forget a thing like that.... This sweet, earnest soul genuinely hopes his music will make the world a happier (and safer) place — that it will "slay the dragon," as he puts it. There is no anger or irony in his catchy, quirky songs, which touch on subjects as diverse as aliens, animals, Jesus, and Indiana Jones. He's a breath of fresh air on a polluted planet." **-Chris Busby, The Bollard**

"Naturally blazing a trail between the deep recesses of the singer/songwriter genre and the still widely-unfamiliar genre known by critics and hipsters as outsider music, Knudsen is raising eyebrows. At first I was stunned. All conversation stopped when he began singing. Once I realized the bold innocence and honesty in his unique approach to songwriting, I was curiously hooked." **-Jay Jasch, Rarity Music Arts**

"Dan Knudsen's music is about as universal as it gets. It pulls us deeper inside ourselves, where we can experience our emotions unclouded by pretense. He is not afraid to tackle the big subjects. Love, God, Fear, Fun. The clarity he writes with is something I admire and strive towards. It reminds me that the most important thing in musical creation is the capacity to feel and know one's true self." **-Mordechai Rosenblatt, Musician**

Press - Sample Article 1

The Bollard | CD Reviews, Music

June 8, 2008 | Dan Knudsen | Outer Space | Self-released

Dan Knudsen

Songwriter.

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Outer Space is Portland Gospel-folk star Dan Knudsen's darkest and most accomplished album yet. It's also his "strangest and heaviest," as he said in a recent interview. "It's very rocky."

For one thing, there are drums on several tracks, played by Knudsen himself. There's also a lot of keyboard (Knudsen again), much of it quite spacey.

Then there's the subject matter: aliens, atomic-powered insect monsters, death row, even Satan himself, "the devil, or his son or whatever," Knudsen explained. So much for grass, grain and apple seeds.

It turns out that in addition to heroes like Gordon Lightfoot and James Taylor, Knudsen listens to a lot of Ozzy and Judas Priest. You can hear echoes of hard rock on the first two songs: the title cut and "Sometimes It's So Hard."

On "Outer Space," Knudsen borrows a musical passage heard on Mötley Crüe's "Wild Side." On "Sometimes," he (perhaps ironically) lifts a bit from Guns N' Roses' "It's So Easy": "Sometimes it's so hard / So freakin' hard / Sometimes it's so hard / So dang hard." (As you can tell, Knudsen does not have Axl Rose's potty mouth; also, unlike Axl, he plays gigs booked for him in Portland and releases albums as promised.)

"The Emperor Lucifer" is one of the best songs Knudsen's ever done. It's genuinely creepy, thanks to some spooky church organ and finely picked minor-key guitar chords. But thanks to the lyrics, it's also campy in Knudsen's trademark way. This meditation on evil is packed with a cast that includes werewolves, vampires, apes, wolves (the regular kind), dinosaurs, Barbarians, Vikings, witches, warlocks, "vipers and roaches and moles and blobs and giants made of stone."

The chorus: "He's disguised as a Satanic sorcerer / He is there, the Emperor Lucifer." (You'd think Satan could cook up a better disguise than Satanic sorcerer, but the rhyme works wonderfully.)

There's some straighter material, like the James Bond homage "Born in the U.K." and the autobiographical "Working With the Kids," but weirdness pops up again in the Gospel feel-good number "I'm Rising Up," the album's closer. "Even when it's time for me to go / God shall send his star fleet / The Almighty's gonna send his space ships / Just to beam-a, beam-a, beam-a me up...." It's the catchiest and quirkiest song here, featuring Knudsen on autoharp and a vibraphone solo he plays on the keys.

The keyboards generally complement the arrangements (an exception being the overlong "Creatures of the Sand," on which they're way overdone), but the drums are often a distraction. Knudsen's DIY approach is commendable, but drums played badly are worse than no drums at all.

Knudsen's got a CD release show coming up at Strange Maine, where he's billed as being backed by the Metal Chariot Band. Competent drumming, like that heard on his 2006 live album from Strange Maine, can improve his material, and you're likely to hear some that night.

Congrats on another winner, Dan. Don't go over to the Dark Side just yet. **-Chris Busby**

Press - Sample Article 2

The Bollard | CD Reviews, Music

March 5, 2008 | Various Artists | A Tribute To Dan Knudsen

Self-released (by Knudsen)

Dan Knudsen

Songwriter.

Performer.

Recording Artist.

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You don't forget the first time you see Dan Knudsen perform.

For me, it was nine years ago, at the Fine Arts on Congress Street (a short-lived performance space that later became The Skinny and is now home to Geno's). It was open mic night, and a couple dozen bedraggled hipsters were smoking in the seats of the dimly lit former porn theater, half-listening to some unplugged punks and Ani wannabees try to out-angst one another.

Then up came Dan, his shirt tucked in, acoustic guitar slung high, oohing the intro to "Sunsong," an opener at his shows to this day. "Good morning sunrise / up above the mountains high / like a candle in the sky / where hawks and eagles fly... You hear my love and me as we think our early morning thoughts / You hear my love and me as we pray our early morning prayers."

Picture John Denver parachuting onstage during a Korn concert to play a few numbers for the kids. You can't forget a thing like that.

Dan Knudsen is not a particularly accomplished musician. He sings about as well as I do. The lyrics of his simple songs bounce between cornball and oddball, and there are often a few too many of them to make the lines rhyme right. To top it off, the covers of his homemade CDs, which he hawks relentlessly, look like they were designed on a Commodore 64 and then photocopied at the wrong exposure (see above).

So why, of all the bands and musicians in Portland past and present, is Knudsen the one to be honored by his peers with a tribute album?

Simply put, Dan deserves it. This sweet, earnest soul genuinely hopes his music will make the world a happier (and safer) place — that it will "slay the dragon," as he puts it. There is no anger or irony in his catchy, quirky songs, which touch on subjects as diverse as aliens, animals, Jesus, and Indiana Jones. He's a breath of fresh air on a polluted planet. After nearly a decade playing Portland's open mic circuit, Knudsen has developed a small but fervent following, especially among fellow troubadours and musical misfits, many of whom contributed covers to this CD. One of the many wonderful things about this album is that it serves as a fine introduction to this demimonde.

The off-kilter rock outfit Dead Man's Clothes turns in a heartbreaking version of "Rain Falls Outside My Window," a song from Knudsen's second release, 2002's *Grass, Grain, & Appleseeds*. Aside from some extraneous electronic burbling and a found-sound snippet at the end, they play it straight and add some nice cello. To hear Knudsonian lines like, "I have some music, toys and games that I could share with you / I have all day and night to be here and there with you," sung in key with genuine ache, is revelatory.

The bluesy groove-rock band Giraffe Attack contribute a rousing rendition of "I Won't Hurt You," a song about domestic violence from 2005's *Beaches And Zoos*. The strange, Tom Waits-inspired group Bass Box delivers one of the album's bigger surprises, a cover of "Go North Little Child" that could be a pop radio hit. And the ever-unpredictable experimental entity known as Id M Theftable turns the title track of *Beaches* into a pleasingly surreal a cappella sound collage. Among the more straightforward strummers, Jason Lambert's acoustic-blues version of "Rockin' on the Railroad" hits the spot, as does Jesse Frayne's happy-go-lucky interpretation of "Somewhere in the Mountains."

Press - Sample Article 2 (page 2)

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Having heard those rootsy singer-songwriters' takes on Dan's tunes, I fully expected the same from acoustic artist Keith Dover. Instead, Dover transforms "The Sharks Are Gone" into a psych-rock epic akin to a basement version of "Bohemian Rhapsody" — brilliant and hilarious.

There are a few duds among the covers. For example, longtime Knudsen collaborator Glade Swope tackles "Heart of Country and Western," but his muddy-metal approach comes off flat. Oscar Del Sebastien tries to turn "Gently" — a lovely little ditty from Dan's 2000's debut, *Sunsong* — into an electrified blues shuffle, but it just doesn't fit.

Knudsen contributed two original songs to the end of his tribute album. "The Love of Your Pets" is an instant Dan classic, complete with "pet sounds" and organ. "Can't Stop the Cops," Knudsen's ode to law enforcement, is another winner, though in places it unintentionally comes off as an indictment of police brutality. "Their sirens are turned off / Their shotguns are sawed-off / They're gonna bust some shots off / And dust some crooks off / Can't stop the cops." I dunno about the cops, but no one can stop Dan Knudsen. **-Chris Busby**

For more articles please visit Dan's website www.DanKnudsenMusic.com and click on the "Press" feature

Discography

Sunsong

Released August 25, 2000



Dan Knudsen

Songwriter.

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Discography

Grass, Grain & Appleseeds
Released September 20, 2002



Dan Knudsen

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Discography

The Best of Dan Knudsen (2000-2004)
Released April 23, 2004

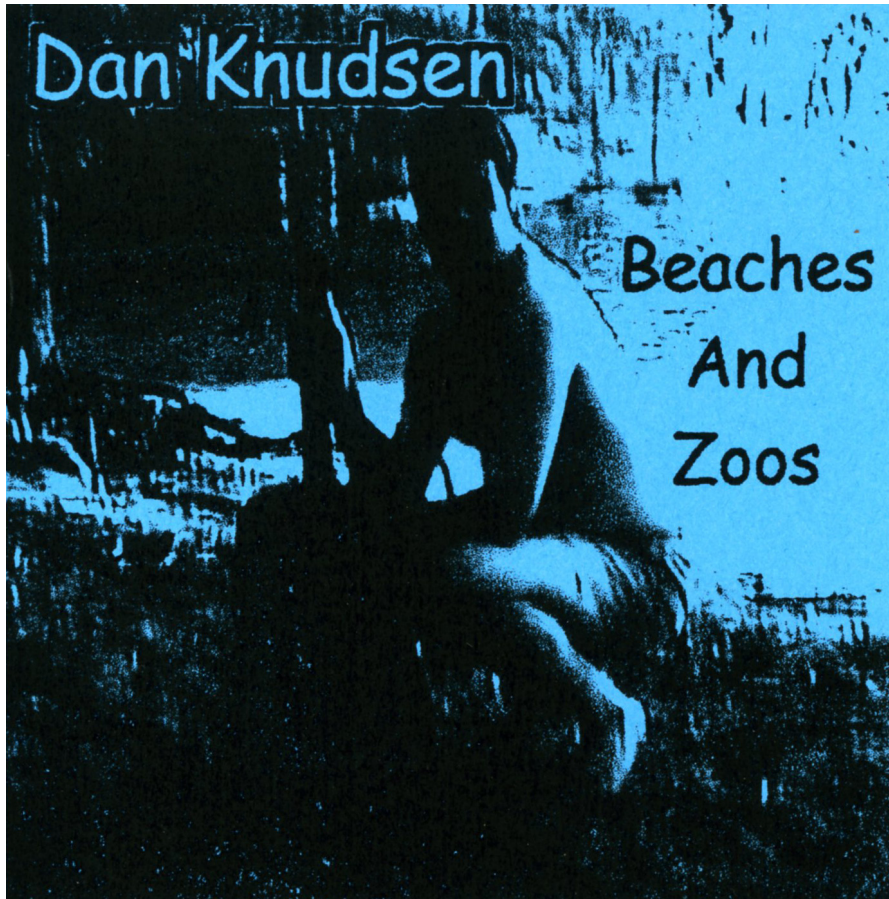
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Discography

Beaches and Zoos
Released July 7, 2005

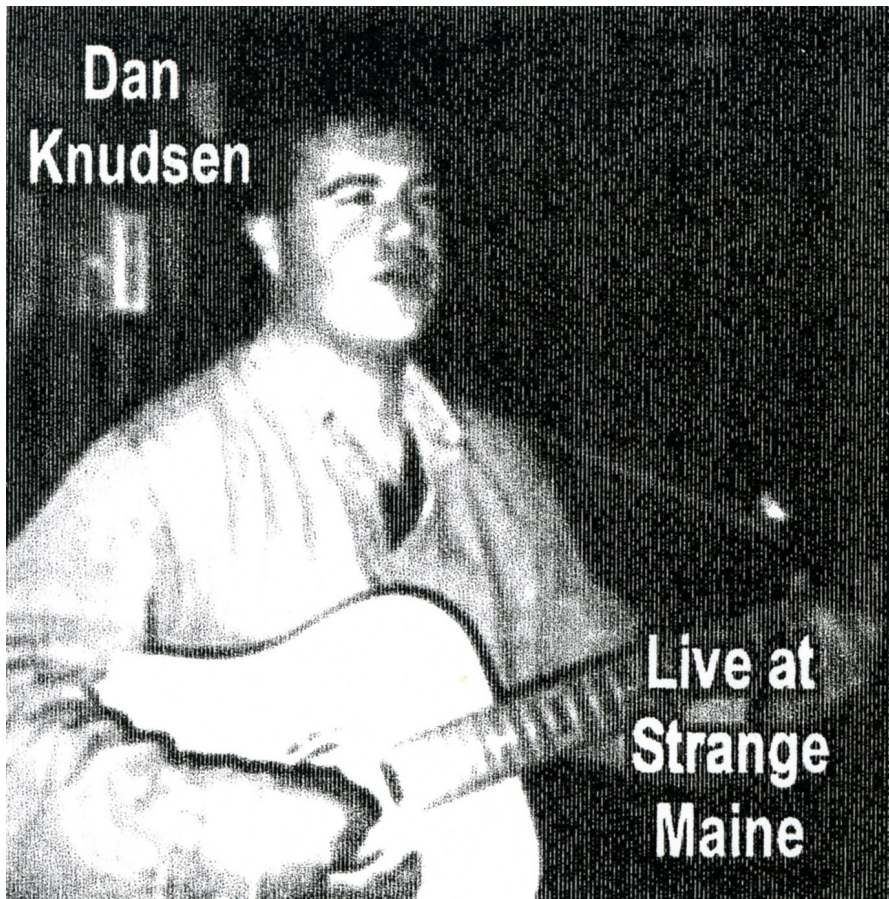


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Discography

Live at Strange Maine
Released March 31, 2006

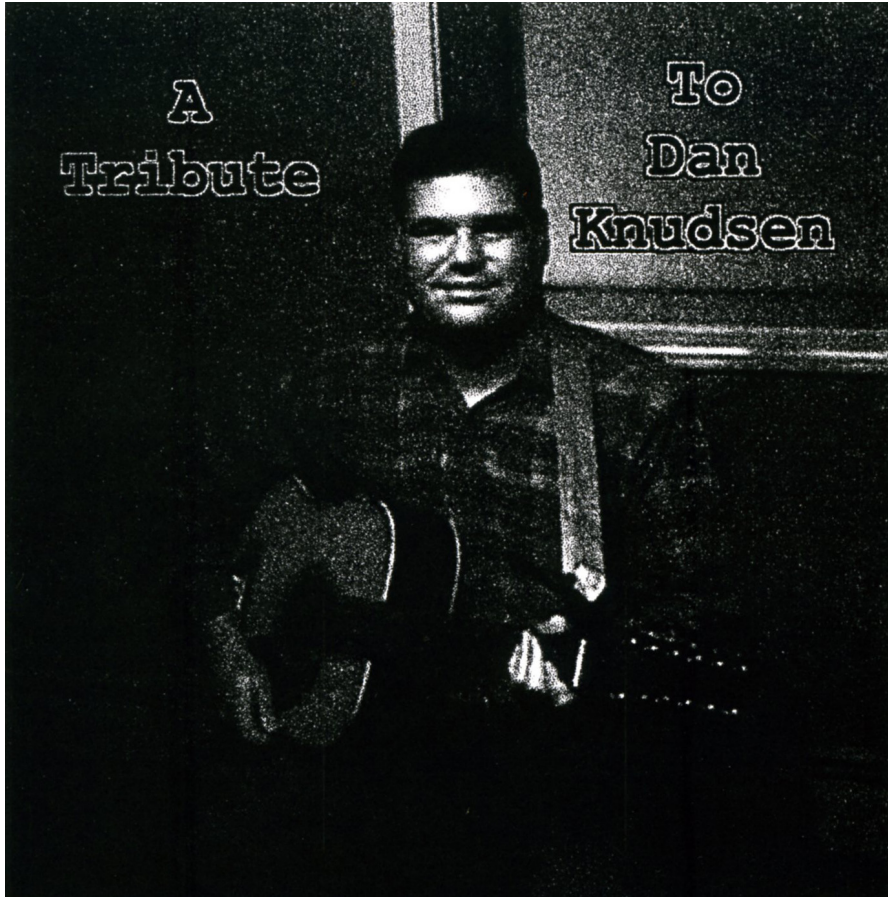


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Discography

A Tribute to Dan Knudsen
Released December 29, 2007

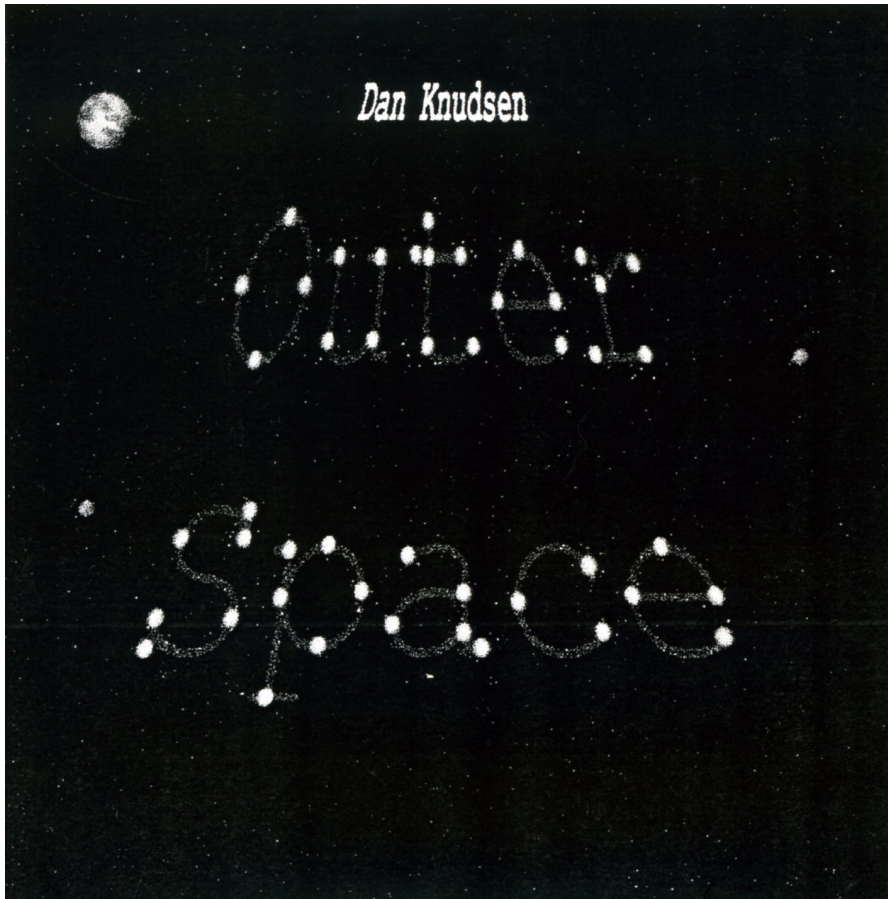


Dan Knudsen

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Discography

Outer Space
Released May 11, 2008



Dan Knudsen

Songwriter.
Performer.
Recording Artist.
Visual Artist.
Local Legend.

Discography

The Best of Dan Knudsen Volume II (2005-2010)
Released March 1, 2010



Dan Knudsen

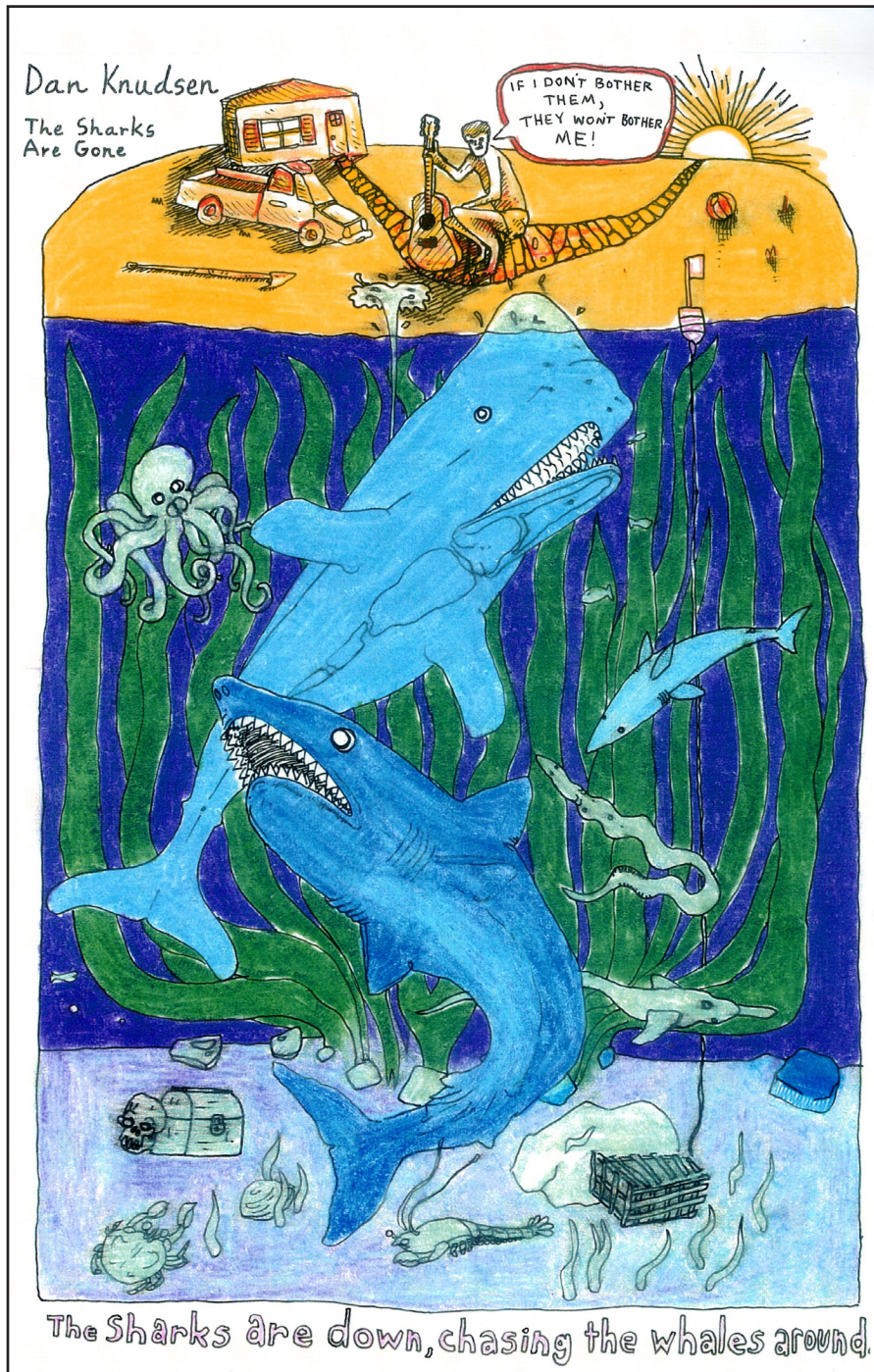
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Poster

The Sharks Are Gone Poster

Dan Knudsen

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T-Shirt

Creatures Of The Sand T-Shirt



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