

The word Americana inevitably comes up in conversation about the music of James Talley, and rightly so. And yet his isn't the Americana of some elusive radio format or marketing niche, but rather a more prophetic form of artistic and cultural expression that encompasses the fiction of John Steinbeck and the photography of Dorothea Lange, the music of Bob Dylan and the reportage of Studs Terkel.

Steinbeck's work is invoked in the title of one song included in this quietly epic selection of recent live performances by Talley and his empathetic backing band. Presenting a career-spanning program of originals, *Journey: The Second Voyage* conveys a range of emotion as broad as the American landscape. Resiliency and generosity of spirit course through this music, whether expressed by a working stiff punching the clock or by a scuffling songwriter getting the doors of Nashville's Music Row slammed in his face.

Three titles invoke the blues, as do the pressing rhythms laid down by Talley's band. Yet whether transmitted through narrative detail or through the pressure applied to a guitar string, the music here expresses the blues as lived — and survived.

Blues, country, folk, Americana: call it what you will. James Talley's music is as elemental as it is enduring — sustenance for any journey.

— Bill Friskics-Warren, Nashville 2008