

Gratiot Lake Road

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Gratiot Lake Road is the modern folk music of husband and wife Ben and Emaleigh Jensen. Songwriter Emaleigh sings and plays melodies on a closed-back banjo and Ben sings harmonies while fingerpicking an acoustic guitar and stomping with ankle-percussion. Their songs vary from soft ballads to upbeat jams played in a style that has been described as haunting, bittersweet, and eerie. Since their 2009 inception while living in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Gratiot Lake Road has released two albums and performed at festivals, art galleries, historic theaters, house shows, bars, and dives throughout the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic.

Gratiot Lake Road's recent release, *Read This If I Don't Make It Home*, is the product of a two-year collaboration with drummer Matthew Radue and bassist Tony Laux. Recorded in living rooms, bedrooms and historic churches in Michigan and Virginia, the album expands on Gratiot Lake Road's live sound with synth and distorted guitars, and features Virginia musicians Mike Glass on electric guitar and Ben Lassiter on steel guitar. *Altdaily.com* said, "The whole album feels like reading a novel co-written by Bram Stoker and John Steinbeck. When people say that ghosts are real this is what they mean. They mean that musicians can create works that put a ghost in your head."

Gratiot Lake Road's first release, *Stamp Sand Shores*, pays homage to the Keweenaw Peninsula in Michigan where they lived for nearly ten years. Historically known as the Copper County due to significant copper mining operations there at the turn of the century, many of the peninsula's beaches are lined with stamp sand, a coarse black sand made of crushed rock produced by the many stamp mills used to extract copper from rock. Many of the songs on this album are set in or named after Copper Country locations such as Freda, a remote community on top of a red sandstone bluff overlooking Lake Superior, Dollar Bay (they say the bay is as round as a dollar!), and Coles Creek Road (I hear the smelt fishing is good).

Gratiot Lake Road currently resides in Virginia where they can see the sea ospreys fishing, mohawked herons stalking insects, and the damp air mixes with the smell of low-tide, and a subtle southern drawl can be heard on most, save for two Michiganders at least.