Verb Tenses in the Song "Tucson Train" by Bruce Springsteen

A. Bruce Springsteen is a songwriter, singer, and guitarist. Imagine that a reporter is interviewing him. Read the reporter’s questions and Springsteen’s answers. Notice the tenses he uses in his answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporter’s Question</th>
<th>Springsteen’s Answer</th>
<th>Verb tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How often do you play the guitar?</td>
<td>I play the guitar every day.</td>
<td>Simple present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are you doing right now?</td>
<td>I am (or I'm) playing the guitar.</td>
<td>Present progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What did you do yesterday?</td>
<td>I played the guitar.</td>
<td>Simple past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How long have you played the guitar?</td>
<td>I have (or I've) played the guitar for many years.</td>
<td>Present perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When will you play the guitar in a concert?</td>
<td>I will (or I'll) play the guitar in a concert next week.</td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Work with a partner. One person reads the reporter's questions aloud. The other person reads Springsteen's answers aloud.

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Photo of guitar: © William Brodt | dreamstime. Used with permission.
C. Write the missing verbs in the song lyrics below. Use the correct verb tense.

1. (get, simple past) I _______got_________ so down and out in San Francisco.
2. (pick, simple past) I ____________________ up, and
3. (head, simple past) I ____________________ for the sunshine.
4. (leave, simple past) I ____________________ a good thing behind.
5. (seem, simple past) It ____________________ all of our love was in vain.
6. (come, simple past) I ____________________ here looking for a new life, one I wouldn’t have to explain
7. (keep, simple present) to that voice that____________________ me awake at night.
8. (fight, simple past) We ____________________ hard over nothing.
9. (remain, simple past) We fought until nothing ____________________.
10. (carry, present perfect) I ______________ that nothing for a long time.
11. (carry, simple present) Now I ______________ my operator’s license.
12. (spend, simple present) I ______________ my days just running this crane.
13. (clear, future) Hard work ______________ your mind and body.
15. (look, present progressive) If they ______________ for me, tell them
16. (wait, present progressive) I ______________ down at the station.
17. (come, present progressive) My baby ______________ in on the Tucson train.

Lyrics: from "Tucson Train" by Bruce Springsteen
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Answer Key

1. got
2. picked
3. headed
4. left
5. seemed
6. came
7. keeps
8. fought
9. remained
10. have carried
11. carry
12. spend
13. will clear
14. will burn
15. are looking
16. am waiting
17. is coming

D. Complete questions 1, 4, and 5. (There are many possible ways to complete the questions.) Then ask a partner the questions below.

1. How often do you ________________________________?
2. What are you doing right now?
3. What did you do yesterday?
4. How long have you ________________________________?
5. When will you ________________________________?