

## ***Everything Passing***

*Babe*

*I won't cry when you walk away  
with everything passing.*

*Day to day*

*I make my great escape,  
each one blooming  
and burning away.*

*Reckless in the moment,  
we act like we own this.*

*When flocks of birds have flown in.  
Flocks of letters, tracks of words,  
you're a strange bird,  
you're a stranger.*

*Tame,  
thought I'd teach you to stay.  
Black clouds rising...*

As one could guess, *Everything Passing* is a song about how all things in life are passing. Everything in existence is going through the process of entropy; whether it be a mountain, a human body, a relationship, or an old photograph that continues to fade. It is hard to imagine that anything, other than the fact that everything is passing, will last forever.

The first and last verses of this song refer to romantic relationships, which, especially during youth, are most likely ephemeral as life is changing and we ourselves fluctuate and are indecisive. The fact that we are changing so rapidly at this time in our lives can induce the feeling that the people you are close to are really just strangers who may become completely different people in a matter of months.

*I wanna cry  
when you kiss my face  
with everything trembling  
and passing away*

*Reckless in the moment,  
we act like we own this.  
When flocks of birds have flown in.  
Flocks of letters, tracks of words,  
you're a strange bird,  
you're a stranger.*



The second verse of *Everything Passing*, beginning with the line, “Day to day//I make my great escape”, refers to the way I and most of the world finds solace in external things such as drugs, video games, T.V., sex, etc. The highs we achieve from these removals take our minds away for a moment as they bloom but in the end they burn away only to leave cold empty spaces. We are truly “reckless in the moment” as we search for thrills or comforts that may, in the long run, damage or hollow us out. We cling tightly to what we think we need as if we own it, even though we have all experienced how things pass and new opportunities fly in like migrating flocks of birds. The line “Flocks of letters, tracks of words” is a variation of a quote used for our program’s course description.

## ***The Farther I Roam***

*Mama, you're a mirror to me now.*

*Just look at the way that I turned out.*

*Mamas thinking that their boys are  
burned out.*

*Mama, mazemaker.*

*Father you're the future to me now.*

*Just look at the way that we come  
down.*

*Just like the wind came and blew the  
flames out.*

*Father figure.*

*The farther I roam,*

*the harder I want my home.*

*Keep me in your hearts*

*and I'll call you on that telephone.*

*The farther I roam,*

*the harder I want my home.*

*Keep me in your hearts,*

This song is perhaps the darkest piece of music that I've ever written. It is also one of my favorite songs to play alone because it is so raw and doesn't try to beat around the bush at all. *The Farther I Roam* was started when I was a junior in high school during a time when I was having issues with my mother and father as well as with myself and my behavior around substance abuse. I was feeling very separate from the people I loved and distant from my own self. I was a stranger.

I continued to tweak the song around a bit during my senior year and through the first two quarters of college until I finally felt that the lyrics did the ideas behind it justice. The three verses are organized as such: the first to my mother, the second to my father, and the third to myself. The third verse is especially disturbing as

*Nathan, you're a stranger to me now.  
The worm inside your brain, I watch it  
hang out.*

*I watch it hang out.*

*Nathan, don't be a stranger.*

*The farther I roam,  
the harder I want my home.*

*Keep me in your hearts  
and I'll call you on that telephone.*

*The farther I roam,  
the harder I want my home.*

*Keep me in your hearts,  
keep me in your hearts.*

it describes feelings of insanity and self-separation. The choruses are meant to explain the idea that the more detached I became from my family the more I desired the feeling of a home. To this day I still haven't fully had the feeling of being truly at home anywhere; only during short periods of time have I really felt like I belonged somewhere. I think that, in a way, this placelessness I am describing is part of becoming an adult and leaving home. All I can do is to ask those I love to *keep me in your hearts, keep me in your hearts.*



## ***Great White Plains***

*Where you gonna run to now,  
after all the love runs out?  
Aren't you worn?  
You must be tired and torn  
and burned out from the fire.  
Holding on, the flames get higher.  
  
Take me to the great white plains to  
die,  
I don't want to hear the sirens.  
I've heard that death is an island,  
isolated, I'm forced to fight it.  
Where you gonna run to now?  
Who's gonna comfort you and how,  
how, how?  
  
It's funny how we keep alive  
those who we know are meant to die.  
The body breaks but you can try.  
Aren't you worn?*

As with *Drumsticks*, *Great White Plains* is one of the finer songs I've written during my career as a musician. Its melodies are catchy and the lyrical content is extremely cohesive and continuous. It is a song about life and death and the loneliness and comfort found within each. In our modern American culture, we generally perceive death as something to avoid at all costs. People live to the point where they spend months and months in sanitized hospital beds just so they can prolong their existence. For me, death is not something to be feared. It is as natural as birth and joy and suffering and I hope that when I become old and sickly I will be able to let go of my life happily with a sigh of gratitude and relief. I have no desire to die in a hospital bed or in an apartment room with the sounds of an ambulance coming for me. Ideally, I

*You must be tired and torn  
and burned out from the fire.  
Holding on, the flames get higher.*

*Who can thrive in asylums?  
Sanitized, I'm forced to try them.  
Maybe life is the island.  
Death's a collective, simple when you  
find it.*

*Where am I gonna run to now?  
Who's gonna comfort me and how,  
how, how?*

*Take me to the great white plains  
to die*

*I don't wanna hear the sirens.  
I've heard that death is an island,  
isolated, I'm forced to fight it.*

*Maybe life is the island.  
Maybe life is the island.*

will expire in a sea of grass upon some great white plain with the sky above me and the warm earth below. Death is a ripple, an echo that resounds in all directions as we return to the soil that feeds and supports.

Interestingly enough, when I played this song for a friend of mine he derived a completely different meaning from it. As a veteran of the war in Iraq, he heard the lyrics and thought of gunfire and battling death at every moment; knowing that his life could end in a split second by the sting of a bullet or the detonation of an explosive. This was so cool for me: the fact that my song could be translated to a completely different situation while still encompassing the main themes of accepting death's presence and the desire for comfort while we live. This is the purpose of sharing my art: to elicit emotion.

## ***Strange Bird***

*All these golden falling leaves...*

*Moving like a slow bird,*

*moving like a slow bird,*

*that flies all through the trees.*

*Oh, so slowly I see.*

*Oh, so slowly I see.*

*My eyes fixed on the shore...*

*Moving like a strange bird,*

*moving like a strange bird,*

*that I don't know anymore.*

*Oh, I don't know anymore.*

*Oh, I don't know anymore.*

*All these green unfolding leaves...*

*Singing like songbirds,*

*singing like songbirds,*

*crying, "let me be".*

*Oh, what's it mean to be free?*

*Oh, what's it mean to be free?*

I wrote *Strange Bird* with a friend of mine during the fall quarter of my time here at Evergreen. Prior to sitting down with him and writing it, we had been walking through the woods that were in the midst of change from summer to fall. The big-leaf maples were letting go of their leaves, which drifted like strange bird to the ground below. My friend and I talked about the idea of the leaves wanting to be released from the grip of their branches, to experience the sensation of freedom and flight even though it meant falling to their death on the forest floor below. Directly after our walk in the woods we slipped into an empty stairwell with incredible reverberation and *Strange Bird* spilled out of us like water and blood.

## **Conclusion:**

As my work around this project has come to a close, I have noticed ways in which it has changed me. First of all, my research around the physics, ecology, and evolution of sound on Earth has invigorated the way I listen to the world around me. Through the practice of hearing carefully, my awareness of what is around me has heightened as well as my awareness of the sound I emit. I have also come to realize the necessity of art in my life to keep me sane and happy to exist. In this way, music combats my Midnight, which would otherwise leave me blind and helpless. On top of this, I now feel extremely confident at recording my own music. I've realized that a single college quarter is not enough time to record an album and now, using the skills I've been practicing, I can record a song immediately after writing it while the passion is blooming and my patience is unlimited. This is how I plan to construct my next compilation of music: gradually, over a long period of time as each individual piece is composed. I am excited to see where my interest in sound and music will take me next and I pray for a future that is full of both.



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