



disenfranchised characters inhabiting the tunes, pressing on through barriers and breaks fostered by their surroundings. Often, they travel a circuitous route, reflected in music that mirrors their path to self-determination, authenticity, happiness.

Sometimes the fruits of this journey are reflected in something as simple as a better day, their day, the day deserved.

Doug Hoekstra, 2021

# **Seaside Town**

When there's a news report about somebody gone missing, there's often the inference that something terrible has happened to them. But, people go missing all the time in day to day life, invisible to others, not fitting in. This is the story of such a person, a woman in a little seaside town: an artist. she wants something more. She is missing in her environment, but then she goes missing on her own terms, which is a sort of, redemption and of course, the last line is from the Tao. This song also calls attention to the characters in the album, throughout.

Writing the song began with the crows and vultures, which was inspired by Van Gogh's later paintings and the chord progression which began as sort of an Antonio Carlos Jobim bossa nova vibe, sliding chords up and down the neck. Of course, it wound up going different places

This was also the first track I cut with the band that comprises most of the record; I'd worked with Paul Slivka (bass) before, but not Chris Benelli (drums) or Dave Coleman (guitar) and we were able to work quickly and with verve. The basic backing for most of the tunes went down in two or three takes, with overdubs added later.

A painting of an autumn field Gold and charcoal brown Crows and vultures in the sky Trains breaking down She studied every brushstroke Until meaning hit the ground Somebody went missing In this seaside town

A storm was rising in the west Nothing built to last Ego trippers on the dime Ghosts rising from the past Good people working day and night Never gaining ground The winners kept on losing In her seaside town

In this seaside town Up and down Sometimes she couldn't sleep Sometimes, sometimes

Watching from the sidelines Wasted by the clock She stole somebody's schooner Tied up to the dock Took a trip around the world With her last love Nobody looked too hard for her In that seaside town

She landed on an island In the ocean of her mind Her lover stroked her naked back And they lost all track of time A painting of an autumn field

Patterns on the wall Those who speak will never know In her seaside town

Chorus

Chris Benelli drums Dave Coleman lead guitar, vocals David Henry violin Doug Hoekstra rhythm guitars. organ, piano, vocals Paul Slivka bass

## **Higher Ground**

There's a small coastal country the middle of the Pacific Ocean called Kirabiti. Highest point is six feet above sea level and in the near future, this nation of 110,000 is likely to be completely swallowed up by rising sea levels caused by climate change. So, the country's leaders are buying up land in Fiji, higher ground, moving the entire population 75 people at a time, by lottery. Sometimes winning isn't winning. The song is from the perspective of such a winner, an old man, looking back, missing his native land.

This may be the most layered song on the record: it was intended to be a slow burn, with touches of instruments or vocals added as we went, building on the dynamics of the core band. I demoed the songs on this record more thoroughly than usual, because I

wanted them to stretch to different places than I would normally take them

Dave went out and got a new Fender Jaguar for these sessions; which you hear in different textures throughout this record. He plays for and records with lots of acts in town, as well his own band, the Coal Men, and I left, I left my friends you really get a sense of his range in these songs. I played most of the keyboards myself, just simple counterpoints, melodic lines that work around the guitars but provide a different color. On most of them, I used this cheap Yamaha keyboard that's barely a keyboard, but sometimes that's the thing that works.

Up above the clouds, brought here to higher ground The waters began to rise. I left my friends behind

It was my childhood town Another place and time The beach kissed the sea That's what things were like I'm a survivor now They say I'm doing fine Don't have much to talk about When I close my eyes I see the coral tides

Up above the clouds, brought here to higher ground The waters began to rise, I left my friends behind, I left, I left my friends behind

It didn't happen fast The governor saw it all Coming into view Like a dream in a crystal ball Buying up Fiji land

The temperature getting hot Running from the past And what we hadn't got As we tied the knot

Up above the clouds, brought here to higher ground Looking back on life, I made to 89 behind.

I left. I left my friends behind

The fields I used to roam Are an underwater plain We danced one more time In the eve of the hurricane I won the lottery Half of us moved away I can see everything From this mountain peak I see love that's lost For eternity In a lottery

Up above the clouds, brought here to higher ground When I close my eyes, close my eyes, All I see are these coral tides decade, I was able to come at it Up above the clouds

Chris Benelli drums, percus-

Dave Coleman lead guitar, mandolinHannah Fairlight vocals Doug Hoekstra electric rhythm guitars, organ, vocals Paul Slivka bass

# Unseen Undetected

This song alternates narratives, between that of an immigrant family coming to America for a better life, and white nationalists, who espouse intolerance, and worse. Both are often unseen and undetected in the daily

turning of the earth, until of course, someone lets the genie out of the bottle. Then, positive light is shone or hidden darkness revealed. I wanted to write about current events on this record, but in a character-driven

Another goal for writing this was to avoid having a traditional chorus; the lines resolve, like something Dylan would do. David Henry, who produced my previous record, "Blooming Roses," did a fabulous job of adding cello to give it something extra for the kids. He also plays some mean gypsy violin on "Seaside Town."

Like any songwriter or musician, I have my influences, which tend to shape the musical starting point for a song, the place from which you depart to head on to your own journey. But for many songs on this record, such as this one, it wasn't about that. I think because I hadn't written or recorded in a fresh, while still carrying that embedded experience of the years before.

Unseen, undetected Living in the neighborhood Working hard, unprotected Doing what they know they should To be something, instead of nothing They don't count on lucky breaks Unseen, undetected, unseen...far from Monterrey

Unseen, undetected Until they're othered by the few Always turn the screws For their fears, they are crippled By their birth they're falsely claimed Unseen, undetected, unseen... until they have their say

Unseen, undetected

Until they came to build my fence
Paint my house and talk of family
And the money they had sent
Back home to their parents
For their children's better fate
Unseen undetected, unseen....
lost or on their way

Unseen, undetected Until someone lights the flame Like a nightmare unaffected By the clocks that are kept at bay Little men with blackened

magic

Wearing cloaks of doubt and pain Unseen, undetected, unseen...on the corner of Main and Main

Unseen, undetected
Mexico or Viet Nam
Walking miles to California
On the boat from Amsterdam
To be something instead of
nothing
Doing everything it takes
Unseen, undetected, unseen.
In their dreams, in their
dreams, in their dreams...they
always stay

Chris Benelli drums, percussion Dave Coleman lead guitar David Henry cello Doug Hoekstra rhythm guitars, vocals Paul Slivka bass

#### Wintertime

Winter as a metaphor, ala "Winter in America" by Gil Scott-Heron or "Winter's Tale" by Shakespeare. This song was inspired by a Nashville-Alabama drive, past miles of cotton fields, dark history rising to the present, in time to the ever redemptive power of music, especially sweet soul music. Sanctified.

The rhythm tracks to the first four songs on this record were cut in sequence, first day we worked together. Over the years I've developed a style that for better or worse, is who I am, and like anyone, I try to work within that style while broadening it, partly dictated by my strengths and limitations. I wish I had the tools or make-up to be a traditional soul artist, but alas, this is as close as I can get. That said, the arrangement does have instruments playing off each other, syncopated, in a way that pays homage to R&B and was one sonas where I did had a conscious reference point.

Hannah Fairlight, a fine artist in her own right, adds vocals to this and several other tunes throughout the record. It was my first time working with her and she fit into the tracks effortlessly, with a good mix of talent and vibe.

Alabama state roads
Down to Muscle Shoals
Bobby and Aretha testify
To what we know
The highway is a river
Twisted drawn and taut
Woman gotta have it
A little or a lot
Whenever you are sanctified
You only get one shot
Winter of the heart

Tell me what you're thinking And who you are Cotton fields asphalt Stretching near and far Holes between the rows Trees on the line Branches blown to bits Among the sea of white It's the end of the season, No longer black and white No longer black and white Winter of the mind

Wintertime, Wintertime I can feel it

Calloused hands relentless Backs against the wind Sweating, shackled shouting Families gone again Soldiers and their guns Tramping through the real As if their father's bidding Was a noble legacy Lifeless on the barren ground Where memories are sold Where memories are sold Winter of the soul

Wintertime, Wintertime I can feel it

Alabama State Roads
Down to Muscle Shoals
Wondering will I see
The past up and go
Or is it trapped between us
And can't escape
Pops and Mavis sing
The uncloudy day
Let the people say
Storm clouds blow away
Winter of the day

Chris Benelli drums, percussion Jimmy Bowland saxophones Dave Coleman lead guitar, organ Hannah Fairlight vocals Doug Hoekstra rhythm guitar, vocals Paul Slivka bass

# **Late Night Ramble**

This a late night conversation between friends, she is one of those people who takes risks, standing at the edge, in a world that doesn't understand. She pays for it, sometimes, but that's still where she wants to be. The song alludes to some of the things she is going through, but ultimately, for her, feeling of any kind is where it's at, even when it's a rough ride. The narrator is simply there to listen and try and sympathize with her point of view.

Spent a lot of time working on composing the musical changes for this one, it's subtle, but there is the verse, the b verse, the chorus, the bridge, all necessary in terms of creating the mood and building the song. It's live really, with keyboard and clarinet added later. My son, Jude plays the

clarinet, which was a great moment for me, first time he's been on one of my tracks. Funny thing about that was I scored part of the tune and just had him improve on another part, and his ideas were probably better than mine, which just goes to show.

She's got blue marks
From falling off her bike
Wears a patch to stop the
smoking
There's a dude she likes
Who'll take her out to dinner
On a date if she quits first
I saw her two weeks later
Her cough was sounding worse

She smiled like no tomorrows Bit down harder on her nails Sitting close together Our feet upon the rail Searching for the words There was nothing I could do To give her what she needed To start her life anew

Late night ramble In this, in this Late night ramble

She wore long sleeves And hats in mid-July Moving like the wind The saddest pair of eyes Steady and unblinking As if every tear she cried Soaked into the pillow Never left to dry

### Chorus

Sirens passed us by
She made the sign of the cross
The radio filled with static
Somewhere a child was lost
In a field full of maiden grass
Confidence at bay
Some words last forever
And only later resonate

At home at night, in darkness The blade catches candlelight A couple go to bed and Try to stop the time Some people skate the surface Others go just deep enough To feel any kind of feeling That isn't mindless and numb

#### Chorus

Chris Benelli drums
Dave Coleman lead guitar
Doug Hoekstra rhythm guitars,
organ, vocals
Jude Hoekstra clarinet
Paul Slivka bass

## **Carry Me**

Radnor Lake in Nashville. When my son Jude was little, we'd go for a hike and it wouldn't take long for him to reach up and shout "Carry Me." Time goes on, things change, but it's still something you do as a parent, in a different way. Somehow I get as much or more from this dynamic than he does, over the years, and this song tries to get at that idea – we are all connected, taking turns carrying each other as our lives go on.

I wrote a tune for him when he was born ("Picture of the Soul") and this is sort of the bookend to that. It was also a good excuse for me to slip into reggae mode and play some melodica. I love reggae, but beyond that it's probably more common for the song about your kids to be more in ballad more. I wanted this to be more up tempo, to evoke the joy in that experience.

In another side note, my brother Dave, and I, went out for a walk on Christmas Eve at Radnor, just before the pandemic. Unknowing to me, Dave snapped the picture of me and my son on the back cover, which fits all of this perfectly

Rambling autumn walk, Colors turn to sounds Woodpecker clouds All around Off the beat Hammer trees In this boss nova forest Carry me

Critters rustle leaves A newborn wails Reminding me Another time This very place You would always say Before we even started Sunny and light hearted Carry me away

Reaching outstretched arms I'd pick you up so sure Proud of who I was Proud of who we were Your feet touched the ground You ran beyond my reach to be free Carry me

Embracing your own love Happiness, and Sometimes, crazy sorrow I walk not far behind If you need a little rest Please remember when Everything was new And if you're ever feeling blue I'll be there to carry you

#### Chorus

Chris Benelli drums, percussion Dave Coleman lead guitar Doug Hoekstra rhythm guitars, melodica, organ, vocals Paul Slivka bass

## **Grace**

Grace is a lost word in many ways, sometimes feels like a word of the past. Doing something without self-interest, acting with humility and cutting each other slack, whether it's in a relationship or navigating daily waters. Some of us have a difficult time accepting love when it's given, also a cause for grace.

I wound up recording this song in both Chicago and Nashville, with different bands, different lyrics, just trying to wrap my head around all the ways that grace plays out. To me, both versions are cool in different ways, but obviously, the Music City session belongs to this record. I think Chris and Paul did a really nice job laying down a steady but lilting groove and Dave played beautifully

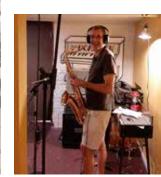
























with the key guitar figure that supports the vocal.

Jimmy Bowland, who is a terrific horn player and also played on my previous record, came straight from a Nashville Symphony concert playing Prokofiev, which gave him the idea of using a "classical sax" on this. As Jimmy savs – a classical has smaller internal dimensions and a design that allows a slower and smaller amount of air into the horn. This makes the sound more mellow and homogeneous throughout the range of the horn." It was a perfect choice.

For those who care, I tend to demo Gandy Dancer and have some sort of general idea mapped out for lines or parts, because it helps set the tone and Ithink folks like some sort of road map when they're playing. But, when we get going, everyone pours in their ideas and talents and takes it somewhere else, where ideally you wind up with the best of both worlds. Overall, this was a fun record to make and that was part of the point; part of what I'd missed in not doing an album in so long was this sort of collaboration. Everyone who contributed did so in the best sense of the word.

You hate it when I love you When we're close you move away The moment I start running You come back to stav I just wanna say

I'm here for you baby Here for bad and good As long as it may last As long as it should

We'll wash our sins away, yeah Cut a little slack Look at what we have, yeah Instead of what we lack Baby, it's a fact

Chorus

Watching from my window It's like a picture show People to and fro

We only get the power When we let it go

Chorus

It's a complicated world But, some things still remain A little bit of love A little bit of faith A little bit of grac

Chris Benelli drums, percussion Jimmy Bowland *classical* saxophone Dave Coleman lead guitar Doug Hoekstra acoustic guitars, vocalsPaul Slivka bass

Before my parents passed, I recorded many hours of interviews with them, family questions, about their lives and the times they lived. Recently, I was driving along listening to my Dad from the past coming to the present to tell me about his brother Herbie, who worked for a short time as a gandy dancer, on the railway in Chicago. Apparently, it was a terrible job, very hard, and he guit after a week. I didn't remember this particular family tale and I wasn't even sure what a gandy dancer was, so I looked it up. Herbie is not Eddie, the rest of this story is simply a noir tale I made up, but I thank my Dad for giving me the idea from then to now, as if he was just waiting to lay it on me, from the areat beyond.

This was the last song we finished for the record: I felt like the bass/drums were solid, but that it didn't have enough layers and that it was probably a song that needed to deviate more from the original path. When the pandemic hit, however, necessity became the mother of invention as we went back to the drawing board, flying in overdubs, with Wurlitzer (me), guitars (Dave), congas (Chris), and sax (Jimmy) getting added to the mix and creating a whole new stew.

Next up, I'd had this idea of doing round robin vocals, like something you'd hear from the Band or the Staple Singers or Prince (1999). I just had a one-take scratch vocals in place, but we flew the backing over to Hannah to sing all the way through and did the same, for an old friend of mine, stellar bluesman Preacher Boy. Then Dave and I listened through and picked parts and put them together and it made sense. So this track really has a nice evolution, from my Uncle Herbie to my folk's recordings to the studio to the "community" created during the pandemic.

Eddie was a gandy dancer He only lasted a week Driving nails, making peanuts, My time ain't worth the grief Took a cab to see his girl Spent the night half alone Drinking wine, making love In somebody's home

Interrupted by the phone

Back in the day, remember Receivers on the wall Voices echo through the building Between apartments in the hall Shady and expensive On the line was a certain man You still working that railroad job? Because I've got a handsome task It was a complicated plan

Gandy Dancer, Gandy Dancer

Eddie was a gandy dancer And tried to keep it cool, but In a day he'd make more money Than a year as a working fool She said, oh, baby don't you do it He ignored her desperate pleas Working on a straight job Was close to slavery Pinching pennies getting squeezed

Gandy Dancer, Gandy Dancer

Little did he know his neighbor Was an eager beaver cop Who loved to play canary And was prone to eavesdrop He never liked Eddie anyways

Had a thing for his girlfriend The cops were waiting armed and ready The bank job met an early end Up the river Eddie was sent

Eddie was a gandy dancer But he only lasted a week Driving nails, making peanuts, he said His time wasn't worth the grief Couldn't see his girl no more Always alone Stuck inside four walls In somebody else's home Always waiting for the phone Gandy Dancer, Gandy Dancer

Chris Benelli drums, congas, percussion Jimmy Bowland sax Dave Coleman guitars, synth guitar Hannah Fairlight vocals Doug Hoekstra rhythm guitars, organ, Wurlitzer, vocals Paul Slivka bass Preacher Boy vocals

Recorded by Dave Coleman at Howard's Apartment Studio and various locations in Nashville, Franklin, and Santa Cruz

# **Keeper of the Word**

This song takes place somewhere in England a chance meeting in a bookstore, between patron and clerk, lovers finding solace in words and deed during a tumultuous time. Somewhat reminiscent of Winston and Julia, but different. In this story, love prevails, as they embark on their adventure.

Often, when out gigging, I wander around into charity shops, record shops and bookstores. And, it made me want to pay tribute to those "bookstore girls," the keepers of the word. But, of course, the sona needed areater context and in the end, the keeper of the word could also be me or the narrator. It's in the story and apart from it and the music shifts to accentuate that and the changing world they are a part of.

This and "Gandy Dancer" were written after the record started, so I was intentional about making them compliment what we already had; this was designed to be a toe-tapper and yet, I still wanted the textures to shift, with the extended chorus/bridge and the outro and the dynamics throughout. In that sense, it was put together like "Late Night Ramble" even though they are completely different songs. Mad props to the band, and Hannah. again, for execution.

Somewhere in Soho, the Village Square Came in from the rain to see what was there Looking for some Shelley or Keats Sorry for myself, lonely and beat Dust on the shelves some kind of proof Of a world that lost objective truth The keeper of the word

Cat eye glasses, hair tucked back Triple pierced ears and a case of

A life preserver when you're lost

A mix of sex and dignity Secrets bound to tantalize My weakness is the very wise The keeper of the word

I ran upstairs to clear the shelves Everything I wanted and something else, to which I return The keeper of the word

She rang me up I asked her

out for tea To talk about what I was about to read She laughed and said I couldn't be done But looking to the future was always fun Autumn was coming we didn't care About the revolution in the air The keeper of the word

Precious and rare like Audubon's birds, the light the day deserved To which I return Keeper of the word

Together we formed a secret code The good kind of tension about to explode Stumbling through her one room Like a dirty paperback

The keeper of the word

Chris Benelli drums percussion. handclaps Dave Coleman lead guitar. "Nashville" strung acoustic. handclaps Hannah Fairlight vocals Doug Hoekstra acoustic quitars. keyboard, xylophone, handclaps, vocalsPaul Slivka bass

## Innovation (a Sedoka)

I also write prose and poetry and people often ask me the difference. to which I say, there isn't much, it's just about the tools or headspace I have at the moment. Sometimes I deal with the same ideas in different mediums because you look at different angles that way. But, "Carry Me" and "Wintertime" are unusual for me, in that they started straight-up as poems and morphed into tunes. This is a  $sedoka\ I$  wrote around the same time as "Keeper," extra credit for this booklet

On Charing Cross Road Bookstores line up in a row Beckoning passerbys 2 Stop. Escape the rain Take shelter in flowing words Ideas cast from the past

## **Outside Looking In**

When I was a kid, I used to go to Wrigley Field to watch the Cubs. and we'd sit in the bleachers and look back at the manually operated scoreboard. The guy inside changes big metal number plates to reflect the score, and there are a couple openings, so he can see the game. In Edward Hopper paintings, the windows often hold the subjects in, rather than the reverse. This character in the scoreboard, he's of the park and the action, but apart, as well, outside looking in. I think it's a

feeling lots of us have and one I can relate to. He's working at inclusion, but he doesn't want to give up himself It's a good song to end the record on as he leaves the park, with a glimmer of hope.

This is the only non-band song on the record, me and Dave just handling the instruments as we went; beyond guitars, he played percussion on a mail box and I once again, hauled out the trusty melodica, an instrument I never thought I'd use as much over the years as I have. Eat your heart out Augustus Pablo and Damon Albarn.

Sittin' in the scoreboard, watchin' all the plays go by It gets hot in here sometimes, but I don't really mind Players on the field, others in the stands Leather gloves or cell phones in their hands I got no plans

Hanging up the numbers, I see a girl who comes alone
Shirtless men badger her but she's always in a zone
Like rookies on the bench, they always miss her signs
A motion detector, an invisible line
Sittin' in the scoreboard, I'm doing time

Outside looking in, that's how it's always been for me On the edges of the crowd don't you see

Sittin' in the scoreboard, wondering about the other league In the designated hitter, I'm afraid, they still believe I wish I had a coach who could tell me what to do If I'm shy and nervous and don't have a clue I'm feeling blue on blue

Sunlight paints her graceful hands Holding a pencil keeping score while she tans Sitting in the scoreboard I don't understand

#### Chorus

Sittin' in the scoreboard, she's not satisfied It's the way that she moves when they leave in single file I put away my water, my radio, my chair And climb down the steps, to breathe the evening air

Going home alone, every day is the same Win or lose, its how you play the game

Neither here nor there

Living in the moment, eyes on the ball

I grow strong like ivy on the wall Sitting in scoreboard, ready to heed the call

Outside looking in Outside looking in Don't you see

Dave Coleman guitars, bass drum, mailbox, percussion Doug Hoekstra acoustic guitar, keyboard, melodica, vocals

# **The After Party**

This poem is from my "Unopened" poetry collection, which came out just before I started this record. In the intro, I set up the sections of the book and talk about each representing the indefinable spaces that live "on the page, off the canvas, or between the notes," It's as much about what you leave out, the negative spaces in art, the quiet in a conversation, the dynamics or stops in music. So, here's a poem from that book that reflects some more on that, calls back to the songs, and adds to this special edition booklet, as a closer.

At the Orpheum in Memphis, Waiting for the crew to guide us Backstage to the after party I met legendary songwriter David Porter, and his wife

When soul was soul, there was McLemore Avenue. Hayes and Porter Hold On I'm Coming I Thank You. And later.... I'm Afraid the Masquerade is Over

David was older by that time, Like all of us, but still hip With his black leather jacket and Purple beret, tilted ever so slightly Still working the angles

When he slipped out to the restroom
His wife just smiled, eyes
Affectionate, knowing, as if
Waiting was something she was
Used to and didn't really mind

"I'm sure you get this all the time"
And there are so many good ones
But what is your favorite
David Porter song?" I asked,
Making conversation notes

Her face became thoughtful As the stage hands broke down Rolling and rumbling equipment Flight cases on casters to the Unseen side of the stage

"No, I don't get that at all," she said
"But I'd have to choose,
When Something is Wrong
With my Baby,"
Past the stage lights she gazed
Searching for the shadow of a
young girl

I nodded in agreement, Thinking of past loves, wrong turns Destinations lost and found When something is wrong with my baby Something is wrong with me

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