



### **Velcro Heart (2004)**

If I ever  
Got whatever  
I could ask for  
I'd be clever  
I would start  
With a Velcro heart

All this distance  
Makes me crazy  
What I need is to  
Be with you baby  
And all I want  
Is a Velcro heart

When the changes  
Carry me away  
A million miles out of view  
I'd tear out my heart and send it in a card  
So that all my love can stay with you

If you break it  
I can take it  
Dust it off  
And just replace it  
All I want Is a Velcro heart

### **Street Lights (2005)**

Some people fit  
Like pieces of puzzles  
You and I sit  
Through moments of trouble

Trying to figure out how to get  
Your arms around my neck  
My arms around your middle too

My phone rang - shit!  
I was brushing my teeth  
I called you back  
But you'd gone to sleep

And I cannot forget  
The way that we connect

On walks in wintery weather  
With with our fingers wound together  
Who'd have thought that this could sever  
Me from you?

Street lights go out  
Ya Ya Ya  
Street lights go out  
They think it's morning

And I need you like  
A prisoner needs bread and water  
Ease my hunger, friend  
But you need me like  
You need a kick in the head

Street lights go out  
Ya Ya Ya  
Street lights go out  
They think I'm mourning too

### **Two Cars (2006)**

Two cars collide  
On the freeway  
Head to head  
Engine's dead  
But I feel fine

She's going west  
I'm going east  
Doing fifty-five each  
In different directions  
We made connection  
And I feel fine

Not mentally, financially, or physically  
But I feel fine

And I'm thinking it's a sign  
That the steering wheel is in the back seat  
I know that it's not right  
No we weren't meant to meet  
It wasn't meant to be

So if you drive on the freeway

Buckle up  
Watch your stuff  
And you'll be fine  
And if you're losing sleep  
Don't you cross that line

Mentally, financially, or physically  
And you'll be fine

And I'm thinking it's a sign  
That the steering wheel is in the back seat  
I know that it's not right  
No we weren't meant to meet  
It wasn't meant to be

### **Twister (2007)**

Left foot on blue  
All eyes on you  
Your hand in mine  
Bodies twisted up  
As silently a storm brews in your mind

If I stand the weather  
Could we stay together for a while?

Travel off the beaten path  
Make a face try not to laugh  
On our trip to Neverland  
Forever young and fast and young  
You and I are Peter Pan

If I stand the weather  
Could we stay together for a while?

We don't have a name for what this is  
'Cause words are weak and rustic  
For describing dreams quenched with a kiss  
And late-night walks in public places  
Holding hands  
Run into friends  
Who can't quite put their fingers  
On our twisted lives  
On our twisted minds  
Your neck, my lips  
My hand, your hips

Your head, my arm  
I will keep you safe from all the things inside and out that harm you

If I stand the weather  
Could we stay together for a while?

Who'd 've thought that life could be so sweet  
Without a box of chocolates?  
Running in the rain into the streets  
We're crazy kids in college  
Plopping on the grass confusing bats with sticks  
Until your phone rings  
Tell her you're in the shower  
Roll on me and laugh about the flowers

Who'd 've thought that life could be so sweet?  
We don't have a name for what this is

### **Dream Sweet Dreams (2008)**

When I was young  
It seemed to me that  
Love's the only thing that they would sing about  
I'm older now  
And every time I write a song  
That's what the thing's about

Lay your head  
Down on your pillow  
Make believe  
It's a marshmallow pie  
And have sweet dreams of you and I  
Make amends  
And love your fellow  
Man, every time I'm mellow  
Watch this weeping willow will a smile  
When I dream sweet dreams of you and I

Oh me, a moron  
I thought it straight as cupid's arrow  
Had it figured out  
It's so much more  
Ups and downs and ins and outs  
And faults and doubts

Lay your head

Down on your pillow  
Make believe It's a marshmallow pie  
And have sweet dreams of you and I  
Make amends and love your fellow  
Man, every time I mellow  
Watch this weeping willow crack a smile  
When I dream sweet dreams of you and I  
When I dream sweet dreams of you and I

### **Cake (2009)**

You say you hunger for a sweeter life and sweeter things  
On a quest for flavors and scents to fill your openings  
While you're dining out  
I'm left here starving

We were in love fit like a glove that warmed my heart and hands  
But Mao would stress that one repressed  
Should hold her own and stand  
This is not a dinner party

The only clever thing to say  
While I'm waiting wasting away  
Is all you ever wanted to do  
Was have your cake and leave it too  
And I'm your cake

Don't you think it's time I'm served what I deserve?  
Of course you're with your first-course friends  
And friends come first  
And I'm dessert

The only clever thing to say  
While I'm waiting wasting away Is all you ever wanted to do  
Was have your cake and leave it too  
And I'm your cake

Your heart was young  
Your heart was new  
Your heart was warm  
Your heart was true  
Your heart is cold  
Your heart is shut  
You're hard...your heart...  
I filled you up  
Now you're full and tired

A day before the feast  
And I expired  
Your flame went out  
And I went up in a fire

The only clever thing to say  
While I'm waiting wasting away  
Is all you ever wanted to do  
Was have your cake and leave it too  
And I'm your cake

### **Mesa and Escalona (2013)**

We met at midnight  
At Mesa and Escalona  
A different context  
Than ever before

I kissed you on the corner  
As the stars fell from the sky

You came to my place  
To wish on stars some more  
The booze told stories  
I'd never heard before

I kissed you by the poolside  
As the stars fell from the sky  
And you said the chills were coming on  
And asked if we could go inside

We sat on my couch  
And I offered you some water  
You looked at me in a way  
You'd never looked at me before

I kissed you on the lipstick  
As the stars fell from the sky  
And you motioned toward the bed  
And asked if we could go inside  
I said I want to take it slow  
You said that you would spend the night

We lay in my bed  
Until morning without sleeping  
The booze told stories

Of a man who'd come before

I kissed you on the shoulder  
As the tears fell from your eyes  
And I realized that we were alone  
Although we were side by side  
And every wish you'd made that night  
Was for something that had passed you by  
And I kissed you goodbye  
When the sun did rise

### **Promises (2014)**

Why'd I give my heart away again?  
Knew right from the start just how it would end  
I'm always the friend  
But I can pretend

Why'd I give my heart away again?  
You told me at the start, you drew a line in the sand  
But in comes the wind  
And out go our plans

I break the rules  
I fall for you  
With every conversation  
And I'll admit  
I lost my grit  
You broke my concentration  
But as for you  
You follow through  
You keep your promises  
You said you'd break my heart and you did

Why'd I give my heart away again?  
Nothing much to it, I'm a stupid man  
I don't listen  
No I don't listen

Here's some truth:  
I'd sell my shoes  
To take you on vacation  
And I'm convinced  
That when we kissed  
I felt your leg shaking  
But as for you



You follow through  
You keep your promises  
You said you'd break my heart and you did

### **I Am Who I Am (2015)**

You and I  
Are inextricably tied  
Born from a stone in the lake  
I still feel the same  
Six years to the day  
When I think of the start of this wave

You sent me a note  
Via telephone  
Quote: "You were close as family.  
And time heals all may not be true at all  
But I thank you for loving me."

I am who I am  
Because we loved and then  
We parted to go separate ways

You and I  
Are inextricably tied  
We come from the same origin  
And all of the songs  
All the things we've done  
We understand  
We forgive

I'll dream of you  
You'll dream of me  
But words we'll rarely exchange  
We're people afar  
And that's all we are  
The ripples in water will fade

I am who I am  
Because we loved and then  
We parted

## **Find Yourself (2017)**

Start over again  
You're not done yet  
It's all in your head  
The chrysalis of blankets  
To answer the call  
Is to learn from the lesson

Start over again  
It's getting easier  
To hold up your flag  
When you walk out  
You count in your head  
The bread unleavened  
The bitter refrains  
The nights  
Etcetera

This heart's not dead  
It's laying in waiting  
For you to command its armies south  
You mapped out your plans  
Tend to the wounded  
With a wave of your hand  
The walls come down

You'll find it again when you find yourself  
You'll feel it again

## Velcro Heart Liner Notes

### Album Overview

The songs on Velcro Heart were written between 2004 and 2017. The album is a semi-autobiographical look at my relationships since high school. The album artwork shows a heart with a line down its center and an arrow pointed away from it. The heart has been broken and repaired many times and retains an almost kintsugi-like scar. The arrow is a retrosynthesis arrow, a symbol used by organic chemists to depict the breakdown of a complex product into simpler starting materials.

### Songs

#### **Velcro Heart (2004)**

This song sets the theme and tone for the album. Velcro Heart considers how much easier life would be if we could send our hearts to our far-away loved ones and could rapidly repair and replace our hearts when they are broken. I wrote Velcro Heart before leaving for college in 2004. I was in a relationship that was about to become long-distance. When I arrived at college, I met others who were dealing with the same issue. I recorded the guitar part to Velcro Heart when I lived in China in 2008. At that time, I was in yet another long-distance relationship and the old feelings bubbled to the surface again.

#### **Street Lights (2005)**

Street Lights also is about a long-distance relationship. When someone doesn't answer our calls we start to wonder if they love us anymore. Our minds can run rampant, sometimes to extremes ("You need me like you need a kick in the head"). When I waited for her call at night, I would go for walks. During one of the walks, a street light went out as soon as I approached it. I thought it knew I was there. Maybe it sensed me mourning. And since street lights automatically turn off when *morning* comes, I had developed a fantastic pun that I had to turn into a song.

#### **Two Cars (2006)**

I was in the car on the way back to school after winter break. An accident had occurred in the other lane. As we passed the car, I could see that it was totaled. The front of the car was so crushed that the steering wheel had to be in the back seat. I couldn't see the driver or the passenger, but it certainly hadn't ended well for them. I thought this would be a great metaphor for people who had different opinions about where a relationship was going. If they were headed in opposite directions at high speed, they were sure to cause each other extreme emotional distress. We need to prepare ourselves for such interactions by staying in our lane.

### **Twister (2007)**

In college I developed a crush on a friend in my running club. I was attracted to her optimism, energy, and fearlessness. She liked to roll in leaves, run through puddles, and sit on wet grass. One night after a running club Twister game, I confessed my feelings and we went on a few dates. I learned that she suffered from severe migraines, so she couldn't eat chocolate and on occasion she'd have to hide in her room until the storm in her brain settled. One night we were strolling around campus holding hands and one of our running club friends spotted us. He was shocked. We hadn't told anyone about our relationship because we hadn't defined it ourselves. The relationship was short-lived, only a few dates, but the experience inspired this song about the excitement, turbulence, and ambiguities of young love.

### **Dream Sweet Dreams (2008)**

It used to bother me that so many songs were about love. I seemed ever single song on the radio had the same theme. Love was simple. Too simple. Boring even. I love her, she loves me too. Or she doesn't. It hurts blah blah. There were so many more complicated, more interesting, emotions to write about than love. As I grew older, I better understood the intricacies of love. It was a fun game to play and a puzzle to solve.

In 2008 I fell in with someone and I found an appreciation for sappy love songs.

### **Cake (2009)**

In 2009, I was in another long-distance relationship. I was on one continent and she was on another. Communication began to break down – partially because of time zones, partially technological limitations, but most importantly because both of us had made the choice to prioritize our immediate environments and counterparts over each other. While I sat waiting for her to reply to an email, or to call me, I started to feel like an afterthought, and I became increasingly frustrated with the situation. I felt as though she wanted me to keep me on the hook but didn't want to make time for me. I rationalized I was in a classic “have your cake and eat it too” situation. I wanted to tell her how I felt, but I didn't know how to have the conversation. In lieu of a conversation, I took the cake analogy and wrote a song for myself.

I envisioned that in order to improve our relationship, we would need to do something revolutionary. Mao Zedong wrote “A revolution is not a dinner party...it cannot be so refined...[it] is an insurrection, an act of violence...”

The bridge of the song highlights how she had appeared to change over time and ultimately stopped loving me.

There's a lot of finger pointing here. In retrospect, it might be wise to ask if she felt the same way about me and my behavior.

### **Mesa and Escalona (2013)**

For the first several years of graduate school, I stopped writing songs. I was too consumed by my academic pursuits, imposter syndrome, running, and other social activities.

In 2013 I met a girl who had a great sense of humor and drive. One night I had a few too many drinks and I called her to see if she wanted to go for a walk. She had been drinking too. We met on a corner and I kissed her without thinking. Hey, we were drunk. We walked around the neighborhood for a while and ultimately wound up in my bedroom because it was too cold to be outside, and my housemates were having a party in the common room. She insisted that she would sleep over, and I didn't fight it. But the night didn't end the way one would expect. She opened up about her previous relationship and her enduring feelings for her ex. We spent the whole night talking about how she could get through her breakup. The experience was too beautifully tragic not to write about it.

A single line is added to each chorus section in order to build tension and context as the story progresses.

### **Promises (2014)**

In 2014 I developed a crush on a friend. I told her. She was not interested. And she said that if we dated, she'd probably break my heart anyway, so it was out of the question. But I kept thinking that there was a chance for a while ("I'm a stupid man, I don't listen").

### **I Am Who I Am (2015)**

In December of 2015, my ex-girlfriend (of "Dream Sweet Dreams", and "Cake" origin) sent me an email after several years of silence. She said that she wanted to thank me for loving her unconditionally, that she hoped time healed all wounds, and that she cherished the fact that we had a strong connection at one point in life. The message was unexpected but welcome. We had shared a few of our most formative years together and had found ourselves on our current paths at least in part because of each other. When you throw a stone into a lake, the waves that radiate are intimately related, but fade in intensity over time. Without her, I wouldn't have considered going to graduate school in Santa Cruz. My life would have been completely different. Heck, I may not have started recording music. I am who I am because of the experiences I have had and the people I have met. We have to take time to appreciate the effect that friends and lovers and mentors have on our lives, even if those relationships don't last a lifetime. I love that we were together at one point in time. But I also love the life that came afterward.

## **Find Yourself (2017)**

In 2017 I moved back to California. I started dating again. I met a woman who worked as a lawyer. She liked whisky and her witty-banter game was on point. On our third date, she told me that she was just coming out of a long-term relationship and it was particularly challenging to be vulnerable again. She explained a complicated situation and told me that she just wanted to be friends. By this point in life, I had had a lot of experience with this conversation and I appreciated that she was willing to be vulnerable with me. When I returned home after the date, I wanted to encourage her to keep trying. I wrote a song for her. If she kept trying to heal her heartbreak, if she found her values and confidence again, if she kept stepping up to take chances, if she found herself, then she was bound to find someone to love. Or maybe I wrote the song for myself.