

An Attempt to Tip the Scales

Bright Eyes

Did you expect it all to stop at the wave of your hand?
Like the sun's just going to drop if it's night you demand.
Well, in the dark we're just air so the house might dissolve.
But once we are gone, who's gonna care if we were ever here at all?
Well, summer's going to come, it's gonna cloud our eyes again.
No need to focus when there's nothing that's worth seeing.
So we trade liquor for blood in an attempt to tip the scales.
I think you lost what you loved in that mess of details.
They seemed so important at the time
But now you can't even recall any of the names, faces, or lines.
It's more the feeling of it all.
Well, winter is going to end, I'm going to clean these veins again.
So close to dying that I finally can start living.

[There is a radio interview in the end of this track]

[Radio interviewer (impersonated by Matt Silcock of Lullaby for the Working Class) - R]

[Conor Oberst (impersonated by Todd Fink of The Faint) - C]

[Radio interviewer:] Hi, we're back, this is radio K[beep]x and we're here with Conor Oberst of the band Bright Eyes. How are you doing, Conor?

[Conor:] Fine, thanks, just a little wet.

[R:] Oh, it's still coming down out there?

[C:] Yeah, I sort of had to run from the car.

[R:] Well, we are glad you made it! Now, your new album, "Fevers and Mirrors"... Tell us a little about the title. I know there's a good deal of repeated imagery in the lyrics; fevers, mirrors, scales, clocks: Could you discuss some of this?

[C:] Sure. Let's see, the fever's...

[R:] First, First let me say that, this is a brilliant record, man, we're all really into it here at the station and we get lots of calls, it's really good stuff.

[C:] Thanks. Thanks a lot.

[R:] So talk about some of the symbolisms.

[C:] The fever?

[R:] Sure!

[C:] Well, the fever is basically, whatever ails you, or oppresses you... It could be anything, in my case it's my neurosis, my depression... but I don't want it to be limited to that... it's certainly different for different people. It's whatever keeps you up at night.

[R:] I see.

[C:] And the, and the mirror's like, as you might have guessed, self-examination, or reflection, or whatever form. This could be vanity, or self loathing. I, I know I'm, I'm guilty of both.

[R:] That's interesting. How about the scale?

[C:] The scales are essentially our attempt to solve our problems quantitatively, through logic or rationalization. In my opinion it's often fruitless, but... always, no, not always... And the clocks and calendars it's uh... is just... time... our little measurements, it's like, it's always chasing after us.

[R:] It is. It is. Uh, How about this Arienette, how does she fit into all this?

[C:] Umm, I'd prefer not to talk about it, in case she's listening.

[R:] Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize she was a real person.

[C:] She's not. I made her up.

[R:] Oh, so she's not real?

[C:] Just as real as you or I.

[R:] I don't think I understand.

[C:] Neither do I, but after I grow up, I will. I mean a lot... A lot of things: are really unclear for me right now.

[R:] That's interesting. Ah, now you mentioned your depression...

[C:] ...No I didn't.

[R:] You're from Nebraska, right?

[C:] Yeah, so?

[R:] Now, let me know if I'm getting too personal, but there seem to be a pretty dark past back there somewhere. What was it like for you growing up?

[C:] Dark? Not really... uh... actually I had a great childhood, my parents were wonderful. I went to a Catholic school. They have... they had money, so... it... It was all... easy. Basically I had everything I wanted, handed to me.

[R:] Really? So some of the references, like babies in bathtubs, are not biographical?

[C:] Well I do have a brother who died in a bathtub. Drowned. Actually, I had five brothers who died that way.

[R: chuckles]

[C:] No, I'm serious. My mother drowned one every year for five consecutive years. They were all named Padraic, so, that's: They all got one song.

[R:] Hmm.

[C:] It's kinda like walking out the door to discover it's a window.

[R:] But your music is certainly very personal.

[C:] Of course, I put a lot of myself into what I do. But it's like, being an author you have to, free yourself to use symbolism and allegory to reach your goal and, and a part of that is, compassion, empathy for other people and their, and their situations. Some of what I sing comes from other people's experiences as well as my own. It:It shouldn't matter, the message is intended to be universal.

[R:] I see what you mean.

[C:] Can you make that sound stop please?

[R:] Yes! [a bell that has been softly ringing for the duration of the interview becomes silent] And your goal?

[C:] I don't know. Uh, create feelings, I guess. A song? It never ends up the way you planned it, though.

[R:] That's funny that you say that, do you think that...

[C:] Do you ever hear things that aren't really there?

[R:] I'm sorry, what?

[C:] Never mind. How long have you worked at this station?

[R:] Oh, just a few minutes. Uh, now you mentioned empathy for others. Would you say that that is what motivates you to make the music that you make?

[C:] No, not really. It's more a need for sympathy. I want people to feel sorry for me. I like the feel of the burn of the audience's eyes on me when I'm whispering all my darkest secrets into the microphone. When I was a kid, I used to carry this safety pin around with me, everywhere I went in my pocket. And when people weren't paying enough attention to me, I'd dig it into my arm until I started crying. Everyone would stop what they were doing and ask me what was the matter. I guess, I guess I kinda [unintelligible].

[R:] Really? You're telling me you're doing all this for attention?

[C:] No, I hate it when people look at me. I get nauseous. In fact, I could care less what people think, about me. Do you feel that? Wanna dance?

[R:] No, I'm feeling sick.

[C:] I really just wanna be warm yellow light that pours all over everyone I love.

[R:] So, uh, you're gonna play something for us now. Is this a new song?

[C:] Yeah, but I haven't written it yet. It's one I've been meaning to write, uh, called, "A Song To Pass The Time."

[R:] Oh, that's a nice title.

[C:] [mumbles] No, it isn't. You should write your own scripts.

[R:] Yeah, I know!