

Beyond the Frame

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I WILL

Written for you, the listener. May 2012

Nothing. All you hear is silence
Feels like you're alone and
Drifting off of the map
But many souls have gone
Down this road you're on
At least I have
Sometimes people think its better
Feeding you an answer
To what you can't understand

But if you want someone who
Will just cry with you
I can
Some say there's nothing they're ashamed of
They cover up the tracks from
The hell where they've been

But if you're looking
For something broken
I am
The truth is we're all gonna take a last breath
That's not the only sad death
We are meant to feel
If you need a friend to
Do some dying with you
I will

THE SURFACE OF THINGS

Written for my dear friend V.J.G. – a wish for hope in a hurting marriage. January 2012

When's the last time we looked each other in the eyes
Last time we dressed up for the ball
The last time we felt a raging jealousy inside
Or any raging feeling at all
When's the last time we forfeited the last word
The last time we didn't care who won
When's the last time we risked being rejected but alive
Instead of just comfortably numb

We have been scratching at the surface of things
When rivers run underneath
There's a whole world happening just under our breath
Covered by the slinging of mud
There's a pain that doesn't even have a name yet
An injury hemorrhaging blood

There's a fire still flickering from years ago
Unsure if it should comfort or burn
There's a hope that's hidden in the waters below
Patiently waiting its turn

We have been scratching at the surface of things
When rivers run underneath
Put your ear to the ground
And your fist through the wall
Chase the rumbling sound
Saying maybe we're not dead after all

It's not too late to start our hearts beating again
Not too late to wake up to a dream
It's not too late to walk together to the water's edge
Kneel down and take a drink
We have been scratching at the surface of things
When rivers run underneath

ANY LESS TRUE

Written with two different friends in mind whose great losses forced great questions. November 2011

I said I'd love you all my life
Never want to fail you
And though I've done it a thousand times
That doesn't make it any less true

I said I'd be here whatever may come
There's no season we can't get through
Even when I want to run
That doesn't make it any less true

There was a promise loud and clear
I heard it echo in your womb
Though that promise is no longer here
That doesn't make it any less true

Baby say it – Say it back to me
Cause its hard to believe
They say God listens to our prayers
When you're suffering, he holds you
I don't feel Him anywhere
But that doesn't make it any less ...

True
True
True

LINE IN THE SAND

Inspired by my friend and mentor, RayGun, and his wisdom in always reserving the right to be wrong. January 2011

When I was a kid
The second of four
I remember my dad would sometimes
call me by my brother's name
It bothered me then
I thought if he loved me more
There's no way that he'd repeat the same mistake
I swore to him that when I'd finally grown
I would never do that sort of thing
But now that I've got three kids of my own
I love them and confuse them just the same

What I thought was true
What I thought was right
Sure looks a little different after all this time
No the truth won't change
But perspective can
So much for the line in the sand
So much for the line in the sand

There was a time
I was on fire
I had a love for a Word I thought I knew but didn't understand
'Cause I used it as a weapon
To judge from on high
With no love or grace for any who were struggling
But struggles of my own I could not hide
And I found myself among the least of men
So you might imagine my surprise
As I came to recognize myself in them

CHORUS

Nobody knows what he wrote on the ground
Between the men with the stones and the one left to die
But there in the sand in front of that crowd
/ Was the sweep of a hand erasing a line
So give a name to your fear
Put a face to the name
Take a look at the tears in the eye of that face
and feel the pain
Take a walk in his shoes and feel something change
And know it's not the truth
No it's not the truth
It's you

THE SAME SONG

Written in my hotel room at Folk Alliance, inspired by a poignant moment the night before when a room full of friends sang a Robby Hecht song to Robby Hecht. February 2011

There's a mother who is idling
in the elementary school pick up line – singing ooh
And a woman wearing a bright orange safety vest blowing a
whistle in time – singing ooh
And there's a man across the street
at his front window lifting the blinds
To see the kids filing out with their
backpacks dragging behind – singing ooh

There's a couple staring into each other's eyes over their
glasses of water – singing ooh
And a short order cook heading back to the grill
to flip their burgers over – singing ooh
There's the woman with a missing front
tooth and a crooked smile
Counting the cash in her apron getting
ready for closing time – singing ooh

They're all singing, they're all singing, they're all singing
The same song
There's a single father waiting for his kids to arrive for their
monthly visit – singing ooh

And a woman walking around the gate
picking up the trash and abandoned papers – singing ooh
And a man in a camouflage jacket is holding his wife
He's trying to convince her that it won't be their last goodbye
- Ooh

They're all singing, they're all singing, they're all singing
The same song

Maybe you came with a sad melody ringing in your heart -
Ooh
Maybe your notes are like flickers of hope trying to light the
dark - Ooh

Oh and I bring stories of my own from a broken life
But if we dare to open up to each other I think we'll find
We're all singing, We're all singing, We're all singing
The same song

FAVOR IS A FOREIGN TONGUE

Written for Lisa and R.K.
August 2012

You can't help the world you were born into
Where you learned to walk with a limp that you didn't even
know was there
You were taught not to dream 'cause there's no chance of it
coming true
And to look with suspicion on anyone who seems to care
You don't know what to do with a good thing
Put the money in your pocket and run

You don't know what to do with a good thing
Favor is a foreign tongue
You've got friends trying to help, reaching out to you
But it's not adding up with the little you think you deserve
You're content with a loss 'cause
you've got nothing else to lose
So you burn every bridge 'till they can't reach you anymore

Chorus

I have to imagine there was once life behind those eyes
I have to imagine that you didn't always force your smile
I hate to imagine what happened to that little child
That convinced you that goodness was too good to be true
Who knows what it was, maybe drugs had the final say
When you took any trust and pawned it like a wedding ring
Oh but there's so much more that I wish you would steal away
Like the mercy and peace and forgiveness you can have for

free
Chorus
You don't know what to do
Love is like a loaded gun
You don't know what to do with a good thing
Favor is a foreign tongue

FLASH IN THE PAN

Inspired by Thomas Anderson, Lou Pearlman and my dad.
December 2010

Tom was a guy with a bunch of friends
Now he's just left with a bunch of bands
Whose names start with a "the"
And mostly really suck
So he sold out to the businessman
\$600 million in his hand
And quickly walked away
Just as it became a flash in the pan
Flash in the pan

And Lou had a thing for the singing kids
He knew his way around the biz
A genius and a crook
Looking for a look
He'd find some guys who knew how to dance
Put microphones in their hands
And the name he gave to them
Might as well have been

Flash in the pan
Flash in the pan
Before you know it
It's come and gone
You find yourself at the end of the song
Yeah it's a big deal
But not for long
It's a flash in the pan
Flash in the pan

They stocked up on guns and spaghettios
Filled the bomb shelters down below
'Cause if the world should end
We're gonna need these cans
But the long hand reached 12 o'clock
The TV showed the apple drop
And we all took a breath
Witnessing the death of a flash in the pan
Flash in the pan

Before you know it
It's come and gone
You find yourself at the end of the song
Yeah it's a big deal
But not for long
It's a flash in the pan
Flash in the pan

Well, hindsight's got some kind of power
Makes years feel like half an hour
And troubles melt away as quickly as they came
And I know times are hard for you and me

But hold on, baby
I think we'll see it's a flash
It's a flash
It's a flash
Then it's gone

MY LANGUAGE

Written for Jill in Visby, Sweden. April 2011

From the shoreline of the Baltic Sea
This town fans out with cobblestone
And every person on those streets
Is walking with their head turned down
They scurry past cathedral bones
Born in the thirteenth century
It's quite a history to behold
Oh but it's not where I want to be

'Cause You
Oh you speak my language
The early days were blind and pure
Just splashing in the shallow end
By the time we looked back to the shore
We had drifted where it's hard to swim
But I heard a song there in the deep
Rise from your paper and your pen
A song that I'd heard others sing
Oh but this time I could understand

'Cause you
Oh you speak my language
Step back on familiar ground
I see you waiting at the curb
And there are stories that your eyes are telling
But you don't have to say a word

'Cause you
Oh you speak my language
You
Oh you speak my language

THE OTHER SIDE

Written for all of us. May 2011

All the treasure you hold, you can't take it with you
Any silver and gold, you can't take it with you
You could make yourself a name with fortune and fame
But you can't take it with you to the other side
You could build your mansions high but you can't take it with you

All your hard-earned pride, you can't take it with you
Any plans you made to keep you sheltered and safe
You can't take 'em with you to the other side ... (but)
Love, Real Love, Love
Love, Real Love, Love

When that day comes, don't look back
Love will be the bags you pack
For the other side

All the scars that show, you can't take them with you

And the ones that don't, you can't take them with you
Though your body breaks from years of labor and pain
You can't take it with you to the other side

Chorus

All your worst mistakes, you can't take them with you
All your secret shame, you can't take it with you
At your final breath you see all that's left is...
Love, Real Love, Love
Love, Real Love, Love
Love, Real Love, Love
On the other side

SKINNY JEANS

Inspired by H.C.R. September 2011

I want to be remembered by the work that I've done
Want my name to reside on the front of the mind
And the tip of the tongue
And I want the attention of the powers that be
Want them fighting with each other
Over who's gonna get to work with me
I want to leave the stage with them on their feet
At a sold out show
And I'd do just about anything to make it so

But I don't wanna wear those skinny jeans
So maybe there's no hope for me
I don't wanna wear those skinny jeans
Maybe it's just not meant to be
Still I want to be content with just doing my best
I wanna be taken seriously without having to shave my chest
And I wanna hang out with celebrities
Who are singing my songs
But apparently my strategy is failing me
And I think I know what's wrong

I don't wanna wear those skinny jeans
So maybe there's no hope for me
I don't wanna wear those skinny jeans
How can they even breathe?
I guess that's why they sing up here
You're beautiful
Now a man of conviction, that's not who I am
I fold like origami every chance I get
But sooner or later everybody's got to draw the line
So man, hand me your eyeliner pencil
I'll show you where I draw mine

I don't wanna wear those skinny jeans
So maybe there's no hope for me
I don't wanna wear those skinny jeans
Those women's jeans
Are not for me

SLEEPING SOUND

Written for one of my best friends, B.B. July 2010

You're tossing and turning in your bed
'cause you can't slow down
You wake up every hour 'cause you can't stop thinking about
How the plans you had are different now

You're finding you're a lot more fragile than you thought
inside
Don't want to talk about it 'cause it makes you want to cry
And it hurts the most in the dead of night
But at the bottom of your stairs there is a hallway
That leads to everything you worry about

If you walk it to the end you'll find the doorway
To the room of a boy sleeping sound
He was listening to a mix that he made of his favorite band
He fell asleep holding the headphones in his hand ear
He's still happiest when you are near

At the bottom of your stairs there is a hallway
That leads to everything you worry about
If you walk it to the end you'll find the doorway
To the room of a boy sleeping sound

Were you more surprised to find the expectations
Or to find the expectations had to change
Or that somehow in the midst of all that's changing
That boy is still the same
Well, even if turning back the clock was a choice you had
You couldn't give him any more love than you already have
And that's all he needs from his dad

At the bottom of your stairs there is a hallway
That leads to everything you worry about
If you walk it to the end you'll find the doorway
To the room of a boy sleeping sound
It's ok 'cause your boy is sleeping sound

NOWHERE TO BE FOUND

Written with and for Nate. March 2012

I took a fall with no safety net
I felt my face hit the ground
After a second to catch my breath
I felt you kick me when I was down
Losing a loved one is hard enough
Three pushed it over the edge
So I carried the footprints of my daughter and son
To the place where they say you live

You were nowhere to be found
Nowhere to be found
When the long line of dinners came to an end
We made a meal of our own
Out of cold habit we both bowed our heads
And felt the silence of our home
Where you were nowhere to be found
Nowhere to be found
Nowhere to be found
Nowhere

Am I not shouting loud enough?
Is there more than the top of my lungs?
Oh I used to feel your love
Where has it gone?
Nowhere to be found
Now I look at the world like a crystal ball
Usually from the outside in
I see people I love get the life that I lost

And I try to be happy for them
But it feels like a town unacquainted with grief
Protected like a child in the womb
Oh and looking for you hanging around on those streets
Is like looking in your tomb
Where you are nowhere to be found
Nowhere to be found
Nowhere to be found
Nowhere

GRAND CANYON

Written for the Taskers, June 2012

There are endless tears
And suffering we can't explain
There are dark grey clouds
That never seem to drift away
There's despair in the morning
That will tie us to the bed
But the story isn't over yet
There's a white flag raised

Saying we can't bear anymore
There are silent nights
Because nothing's like it was ...
And our dreams retell the sadness
So we cannot forget
But the story isn't over yet
I took a picture of the Grand Canyon
So I could remember that day

There are cards and letters
All letting their love be heard
Sympathetic smiles
From those at a loss for words
In our wake there are whispers
That tell of where we've been
But the story isn't over yet
I took a picture of the Grand Canyon

So I could remember that day
Oh but the beauty of the Grand Canyon
Stretches way beyond the frame
I can't sleep
There's too much weighing on my mind
But there's a bird out there
Still singing in the dead of night
Like it knows there's a season
when the sun's gonna set
But the story isn't over yet
The story isn't over