

FIREBALL AND THE NEW **NORMS**



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TRUE ROMANCE

February Album Writing Month 2020

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** songs never written*

*Stoop then, and wash. How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!*

NORM(AN) ROCKWELL

how many ages hence will there still be cobain shirts
in unknown corners of the world on unborn punky squirts?
what will survive to parade tomorrow's streets?
how many glorious epic songs can we milk out of the teats?

d'ya hafta shake (shake) the world (world) so hard?

d'ya hafta reeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeach so faaaaaaaaaaaaaaaar?

whyyyyyy d'ya hafta shiiiiiiiine such a biiiiiiiiight little star?

d'ya hafta shake (shake) the world (world) so hard?

how many _____ hands will paint the final masterpiece
as testimony to the badlands of cobain and cochise?
will it alter forever the scattering of the light?
how many glorious epic songs do we need to get us through the night?

d'ya hafta rock (shake/rock) the world (world) so well?
d'ya hafta caaaaaaaaaaaaaaaast that speeeeeeeeeeeellllllllll?
hooooooooowww have ya fouuuuuund such a pooooooooowwer tale to tell?
d'ya hafta rock (shake/rock) the world (world) so well?

verse structure – lead and response

solo – electric banjolele and vocal

how many sweet amends will it take to wash this down?
how many hatchets buried? how far underground?
how long till the ghosts of the past have been drowned
in the roar of the crowd and the endless unbound?

d'ya hafta break (break) the world (my heart) so clean?
if you only kneeeeeewwwww what i've seeeeeeeeeeeen ...
it's trueeeeeee there is toooooooooooooo much beuuuuuuuuuuuty between ...
d'ya hafta break (break) the world (my heart) so clean?

LINGUAL FRACAS

how he loves to shock us

with that lingual fracas

and not a single word that we share

but the sounds rock us

at the rockstar caucus

uninspelligible magic in the air

haaaaa

hooooo

where is it telling us to go?

haaaaa

heeeeey

can we bottle it all and make it stay?

or just breathe it in, till it all goes away....

ha! did you hear that chorus?

straight outta the thesaurus

a decoder ring lullaby

all that dark before us

just starts to fluoresce

bilingual bye baby bye

haaaaaa

hiiiiiii

where does the wordy meaning lie?

haaaaa

whooooo

can translate which bit is partly true?

who can breathe it in and know which way it blew?

how he loves to shock us

with that lingual fracas

and not a single word that we share

but the outcomes mock us

like a gonococcus

unindelegible winds through his hair

ohhhhh the winds through his hair

ohhhhh the winds through his hair

ohhhhh the winds through his hair

WHOLE LOTTA RENATA

whole lotta renata *dada dada dadada*

she couldn't get any hotta – *could she?*

we need a whole lotta watta

when she walk in a room

whole lotta renata

she's a minister's daughta

don't wanna but i gotta

sing this renata tune

*i once knew a girl named renata
her card-/phys-iology could not've been hotter
but with all of that heat
from her head/neck to her feet
the hottest was her medulla oblongata*

long way from nevada
and mama and dada
if i just coulda gotta
this foreign land'd be bright

whole lotta renata
straight outta eastern morava
i dunno know but i oughtta
know where she is tonight

whole lotta renata
nobody ever forgotta
she got a little armada
and they bowta her face

whole lotta renata *dada dada dadada*
she couldn't get any hotta – *maybe?*
you need a whole lotta watta
when she walk in a room

PRETTY LITTLE

pretty little girls

sunny afternoon

in a pretty little world

sun sets too soon

i was walking down a gravel road through grass sparkling dew early this morning

i could smell the evening hours coming down the road already forming

pretty little words

pretty little mouths

sounds of the songbirds

soon heading south

i was talking about tomorrow with the shadows as they lengthened with the evening

a slowly forming distant string of headlights on the highway as they're leaving

pretty little left

of this pretty little day

the last of the sunlight

soon be fading away

fading away

buildup harp, snap, vox verse, uke, vox verse w/ synth, whistle, choir, fadeout sundown

JIM

vlm intro

used up the las vegas lightning
moved miles and miles away
outta sight outta mind
so many years behind me
but it comes flooding back when i get a record heat day
and it comes flooding back when i hear the songs play

i hear jim singing songs
only a true lover can
christine renee valerie diane
the 80s have grown hazy
but the song remains the same
i hear jim singing songs
and the chorus *and the chorus and the chorus*
... is her name

we were far from the strip and the casinos
but i was thinking of placing the big bet
and on the radio day and night
till i had to go and buy it
maybe the last thing i bought on cassette

kept hearing jim singing songs
only a true romantic can
christine renee valerie diane
the past has grown hazy
but the song remains the same
i hear jim singing those songs
and the chorus *and the chorus and the chorus*
... is her name

the refrain is the name
of a long gone vegas flame
and jim sang the soundtrack *sang the soundtrack sang the soundtrack*
and the song remains the same

and the time has smoothed out the edges
and the dust has grown deep on the shelf
the lives that we live
the songs that we give
still singing someone else's songs myself

singing jim's classic songs
like a true hardened fan
christine renee valerie diane
these days are old and lazy
but the past remains the same
singing jim's classic songs
and the chorus *and the chorus and the chorus*
... is her name

christine renee valerie diane
diane diane diane diane diane

LATITUDE

i used to love it when you sang that tune

about how you love the rain

but everything is dose dependent

like joy and pain

i love the rain... but i miss the cold

and the endless drizzle is getting old

and the water keeps flowing to the sea

i used to love those first few albums

by too much joy

wintertime companions way up north

waiting for the real mccoys

i love the rain... but i miss the snow

and the sting when the subzero winds blow (Fahrenheit)

and the winds blow the answers away from me

i used to love just a little extra pain

to make sure i still feel

when it's forty below and you

put your hands on the steel

i love the rain... but i miss the ice

every step outside makes you think twice (but it's alright, ma)

fills the cracks and slowly breaks down the stone

i love the rain... but i miss the north

the compass needle swinging back and forth

forever pointing the long road back home

FARRAH, TERRI, ANJULI

three fast cuba libres on valentine's day

the bar's filled with beating young hearts at play

and as i fade into the woodwork halfway through number three

i remember farrah, terri, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan juli

there was still so much future yet to come to pass
tho' those distant migrations were coming on fast
it was a three-woman summer back in 93
farrah, terri, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan juli

i remember dreams fading in and out of the mist
three different stories that couldn't quite coexist
it was a three-ring circus, the trapeze swinging free
farrah, terri, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan juli

every bump in the road, every blind curve
unfounded optimism up to the very last swerve
it was a three-car pileup on the road to epiphany
farrah, terri, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan juli

now it's a three-beer morning after, can't get out of bed
possibilities gone by swimming in my head
all the different ways it might've gone down... still a mystery
farrah, terri, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan juli

(it's a magic number)

SPHINGES OF THE WEST

we were all dressed up for the party
there were still bulletholes in the wall
biding our time, drinking cheap wine
waiting for the next star to fall
now my smile may seem bigger cuz i'm long in the tooth
there were never any sphinges in the deserts of my youth
drain my meninges if you're looking for the truth
and wake me for the final curtain call

none of this was ever our intention
i suppose, though, we really should've known
it was grand at the time, with no grand design
let the others build their houses on the stone
no shivers, no shadows, sun high overhead
the wilde open spaces kept us in good stead
too busy with the business for what the soothsayers said
now there's nothing but the pain to call our own

we never could identify the gunmen
all the certainties vanished in the night
and every single body had a motive
every darkened corner hiding from the light
constellations all in motion – patterns too divine
all the different outcomes that saturate my mind
blinders on, straight ahead, never looking behind
too late to give up without a fight

LONGITUDE

tick tock

the bend of the light
and the curve of the world
the fall of the night's
endless banner unfurled

the passage of time
measured in rhyme
measured in pain
one more shiny dime

the satellites tracking
every move from on high
online simulations
everywhere with wifi

the passage of time
measured in rhyme
measured inertia
tequila and lime

in the lands of the fathers
where the antelope play
world getting smaller
and all further away

the passage of time
measured in rhyme
measured in footprints
the scene of the crime

the bend of the light
and the curve of the world
the shape of the darkness
the shape of the girl

NORM MACLEAN

i was lookin down ... at dirty ground

recalling just how good we sang the blues

but time erodes ... the sweetest sound

can't keep it all from stickin to my shoes

things were lookin up ... 'swhat we told ourselves

bound and determined to pull the weight

but he has tales ... he never tells

who were we to set those stories straight?

on the co – old streets ... of chica – ah – go

my mind wanders ... should know better, but even so...

let men be men ... and the waters flow ...

far from the co – old streets ... of chica – ah – go

chronicles from the end of the road

johnny tristan davidson ... a portmanteau man

at the headwaters ... by the great divide

perfect for a moment – balanced on the sand

suspended between the water and the sky

i read the news *today oh boy*... so long ago

and that headline buried deep into my soul

read the book ... watched the tv show

he was beautiful and that's all we need to know

on the co – old streets ... of chica – ah – go

my body wanders ... DOWN HERE BELOW...

men will be men ... while the rivers flow ...

far from the co – old streets ... of chica – ah – go

minstrelsy from the end of the road

DARWIN SHUFFLE

keep – me – wired ... in the nighttime
ball's – on – fire ... in the fightgame
words flow wild ... through the pipeline
wide – ning – gyre ... of the mindbrain

dog eat dog
 dog in heat
darwin shuffle dancing feet
dogstyle keep the beat
short tandem repeat

big – blue – sky ... hemisphering
eye – to – eye ... never nearing
hor – mone – play ... so endearing
D – N – A ... keeps smearing

dog eat dog
 dog in heat
darwin shuffle down the street
chimpanzee spirochete
microsatellite elite

world – gone – wrong ... underrated
old – frog – song ... amphibated
win – means – strong ... cruel traited
time – is – long ... optimated

dog eat dog
 dog in heat
darwin shuffle shredded meat
vašek kalbač viral tweet
the blind watchmaker suite

meet – me – down ... at the station
sweet – beat – sound ... digitation
last – gasp – choir ... as the world turns
dance – on – fire ... as the machine learns

dog eat dog
 dog in heat
darwin shuffle mother's teat
the game is on ... no way to cheat
dead man's hand is hard to beat

ELDERLY WOMAN ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL FOR PNEUMONIA

i see leukocytes ablaze
something familial, yeah, or some hyperplasia
can't prescribe a macrolide to ease your pain
resistant strains are catching up with me

all these pathogenic tastes
a neverending race
don't know where it's taking me

hearts and lungs just wear away
hearts and lungs just wear away

i stare at record charts and tests
ECGs like fingerprints are always tracing
me, i still can't recall the central dogma
must be in some textbook on my shelf
eyes pained to try and read it all
small text on every page
perhaps that's what they were warning me

i just want to scream hey ho
by Jove it's been so long
now the signs have returned
and now here you are
X-rayed again

hearts and lungs just wear away
hearts and lungs just wear away

I HOPE YOU DON'T

**sun comes up bright and it's springtime outside
i am raring to go today
so much on my plate and i just can't wait
for every single thing that's coming my way**

**it's not the same kind of glow that we shared a year ago
we went down so many paths holding hands
but the days fly by fast and a lot of things don't last
in a world full of people all making plans**

**i hope you don't – think too much – about it now ... cuz you never did
when it was ours – to build up – or let it ... all fall down**

**it's a puzzle all the time, so many pieces gotta find
everyday easter, christmas eve, and halloween
mostly proud of what i did and feeling like a little kid
carpe-ing the diem and anything that comes between**

**i am awestruck again, take it slow and breathe it in
staying hungry – gonna get me some
in that pink sunset light, i'll be fast asleep tonight
dreaming of tomorrows still to come**

**i hope you don't – think too much – about it now ... cuz you never did
when it was ours – to build up – or let it ... all fall down
the world's way too big and just keeps spinning around
i hope you don't – think too much – about it now**

BREATH TAKING

dreams of betsy harris
hairdos and airplanes in the wind
london and lisbon and paris
memories from waybackwhen have thinned

fortune plays the crucial card
and i'm finding it so hard
to breathe

dreams of badger meyer
trashy chicks and rocketships by mail
pig burger dancing in isolation
pre-digitation – left no paper trail

good fortune left me scarred
and i'm finding it so hard
to breathe

dreams of 1984
diamond dave and tingley spandex pants
what a childhood we had in the land of breaking bad
hazy future memories – not a second glance

it the becomes past when we leave
and just gets harder to believe
and i can't breathe
... i can't breathe

WE ARE ALL BISSEXTILE

**may take a leap
of faith or famine
talk is cheap
leap like salmon
up the ladder
up the ladder**

what's another day?

**but over time
the moments add up
cumulation
leaves us fed up
getting fatter
getting fatter**

what's the calendar say?

**we are the world
we are bissextile**

ON THE OFF

i've sung the songs of karen michelle johnson

but i abide by john darnielle

three hundred miles west of denton

goin nowhere – hands on the wheel

and on the off chance

you take the off ramp

when you're driving by Odessa like you do

i'll tell you something

in case you're wondering

there's still space in the madhouse for you

i was born near the border of colorado
know the rio grande all the way to the sea
campfires at the big bend of the river
contemplations on the nature of being free

and on the off chance
you want a last dance
when you're out driving aimless like you do
it's getting compressed
out here in the wild west
but there's still room in the looney bin for you

NORM MACDONALD

**a passage through cali – somehow gherkin raucous
mired in jetsam from back before the flood
we have no truck for the mopey and the mawkish
we have no time ... and time is blood**

**the world is not in debt to us
we don't have to measure how hard we tried
it ain't you and me against the world
the world is on our side**

**the norm is neither devil nor destination
the norm is neither friend nor foe
norm is just the fiftieth percentile
norm has no pull on which way i go
and if you're norm, abnorm is the only way to go**

**the world is not in debt to us
the world will go along with what we choose
it ain't you and me against the world
the world won't ever lose**

**facing west from cali – vacation inbetween days
the jetsam slowly sinks down into the mud
postcards from hotels on highways
we have no time ... and time is blood
if i was a german, i would rule the world
if i was a german, i would rule the world**

new ride

**the daily commute
there and back again
has been worn out routine
since i don't know when
but this is not the train
i take every day
though it does feel familiar
in a similar way
the colors are more vivid
with every new ride
the church in štěpanov
adriana on the side
i first came this way
twenty-five years ago
through occasional revisits
i've gotten to know
the factories of mohelnice
the fields of červenka
hecl's hometown – postřelmov
and the mighty morava
something in the railway lines
and the timelessness of trains
dilapidated stations
and the wiring in my brain
and the stitching in the tapestry
draped over everything
bringing it all back home
in the final reckoning
i can't shake the feeling
haven't really tried
the colours are more vivid
with every new ride**