

An Open Letter to The Bouncing Souls

You were there, sure, but it's not your story, it's mine; it's my life, my mistakes, my regrets, my laughter, my pain. It was never about you-- you just played the background music. It was there as my heart swelled with young love and there when my heart got broken and there as I scraped up the pieces of my shattered life with bleeding and shaking hands.

It was there, as we crested the hill, and the town and its lazy river laid below us lit gold and red, on fire with the setting sun and I had nothing to do but what I wanted to do, and I had no one to answer to but my own selfish desires, and I was so young and fast and in a band, I had a young heart, intact still, a beautiful girl that loved me, and the song so silly on a tape that a friend made: *I like your mom, and its no fad, I want to marry her and be your dad...* And we drove down that hill into the golden town and I remember this thought arriving in my head: "Jesus man, it's never going to be this good again..." and I looked over at the beautiful girl, and maybe I knew it even then, a little; maybe it was inevitable... But the silly song and the sunset and the young beating heart in my chest fell away a little to make way for an ancient sadness that I was too dumb to heed: "you're right, you know, it will never be this good again..." but for now in this warm golden moment, I'm free...

And you were there too while I was blind drunk clutching the grass screaming in anger and pain at this heartless world and I am jagged and shattered, all sharp edges, cutting, shredding everyone around me, desperately wanting some warm body next to mine and actively shoving all away, screaming into the earth punching the ground smashing my head fuck you fuck you fuck you fuck you... and I'm broken glass shiny and beautiful and dangerous, and I'm flayed wide open to everything and it hurts so bad, the girl is gone, shoved out the door, and I'm left alone in the grass screaming my pain into the uncaring earth, while in a fan of light back in the house, comes the song... *I'm a hopeless romantic, you're just hopeless...*

It was there in my kitchen in Oceanside drunk as hell singing with my friends at the top of my lungs, from my tainted soul, even as the neighbors were screaming for us to just shut the hell up they were going to call the cops, even as my voice cracked and broke, I sang along... *Forget about the things I said, I make no excuse for them, I want to start again, I want to start again*, and there we were, a handful of lost souls on the western beaches of this broken country, a handful of ghosts singing into the night sky the lament of escaped words, this great release praying to God's empty throne please please let me have just one more try at this, I swear I won't fuck it up so badly this time, not this time, just give me another chance, but the words bounce and echo back and the only answer we get is our own desperate voices, I want to start again, start again, start again...

And you were there, too as I look down the road watching taillights recede into the dark, the last remnants of who I was, the last pieces of my shattered heart driving away, the last vestiges of my young fast soul, and I watch as the two taillights get closer and closer together in the dark, then merge, then disappear entirely. And I'm left alone in the dark, breathing, growing a new heart, smaller, more dense, less beautiful, but less easily broken. I stand alone in the dark, and I'm afraid to try, I'm afraid that if I try to sing I'll find that all the music has left, that I'm used up, that I'm empty, but I open my mouth and I sing:

Goodbye to me and you. Goodbye to the life we knew.

One last long embrace. Let go and walk on through.

I'm leaving everything behind for a peace that I can't find.

The ghosts that roam this house like winter air right through our souls.

And it feels like dying. It just feels like time to go.

Sometimes on the beach as you walk you will find glass and you bend to pick it up careful not to cut yourself and you find that the sand and the waves have ground down the edges, softened them and

you didn't have to worry about being cut, time has passed, waves have come and gone, tides have ebbed and flowed, and all the jagged sharpness was worn away, and the glass is no longer as beautiful and dangerous as it was, but it's safe to pick up, it's safe to put in your pocket and take home, but you have to be careful not to break it again, or all the work that Time had put in will be lost.

And yeah, you are here too as I find my way, as I move on, as I grow up. You're here now as I sit in my warm safe life, a little slower and greyer, as I take thankful stock of all that I have, as I wrap my new life around me, soft and beautiful. You're here still in the background and there's a beautiful girl, and I am making new music...I am still chasing it, that freedom, trying to find that feeling of golden descent into a fiery town with its lazy river, and maybe it's gone for good, maybe that's all we get is moments, maybe in the end all we have are our own fallible memories to remind us that we have lived, maybe, maybe... but for now, I am breathing and alive and well, and you're still there and you always will be and I still sing from somewhere deep inside, somewhere that remains untouched by all this madness... *it was a darkness all my own, a song played on the radio, I carried it with me, until the darkness was gone.*