

Bright Eyes

"An Attempt to Tip The Scales"

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Did you expect it all to stop
At the wave of your hand?
Like the sun's just gonna drop,
If it's night you demand.
Well, in the dark we're just air,
So the house might dissolve.
Once we're gone, who's gonna care
If we were ever here at all?
Well, summer's gonna come.
It's gonna cloud our eyes again.
No need to focus when there's
Nothing that's worth seeing.
So we trade for 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
Now you can't even recall
Any names, faces, or lines;
It's more the feeling of it all.
Well, winter's gonna end,
I'm gonna clean these veins again.
So close to dying that I finally can start living.

Interviewer: Hi, we're back. This is Radio ---x.
We're here with Conor Oberst of the band
Bright Eyes. How are you doing, Conor?

Conor: Fine, thanks. Just a little wet.

Interviewer: Oh, it's still coming down out
there.

Conor: Yeah, I sorta had to run from the car.

Interviewer: Well, we are glad you made it. Now, your
new album, Fevers and Mirrors, tell us a little bit about
the title. I noticed there is a good deal of repeated
imagery in the lyrics "fevers, mirrors, scales,
clocks. Could you discuss some of this?

Conor: Sure, let's see. The fever is

Interviewer: First, first, let me say that this is a brilliant record, man. We're really into it here at the station. We get a lot of calls it's really good stuff.

Conor: Thanks. Thanks a lot.

Interviewer: So, talk a little bit about some of the symbolism.

Conor: The fever?

Interviewer: Sure.

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

Interviewer: I see.

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

Interviewer: That's interesting. Uh, how about the scale?

Conor: The scale is essentially our attempt to solve our problems quantitatively, through logic or rationalization. In my opinion it's often fruitless but, always "ah, not always. And the clocks and calendars, it's just time, our little measurements. It's always chasing after us.

Interviewer: It is, it is. Uh, how about this Arienette? How does she fit into all of this?

Conor: I prefer not to talk about it, in case she's listening.

Interviewer: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize she's a real person.

Conor: She's not. I made her up.

Interviewer: Oh, so she's not real.

Conor: Just as real as you or I.

Interviewer: I don't think I understand.

Conor: 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.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Now, you mentioned your depression.

Conor: No I didn't.

Interviewer: You're from Nebraska right?

Conor: Yeah so.

Interviewer: Now let me know if I'm getting too personal, but it seems to me that there's a pretty dark past back there somewhere. What was it like for you growing up?

Conor: Dark. Not really. Uh-actually, I had a great childhood. My parents were wonderful, I went to Catholic school. They had money so it was all easy. But basically, I had everything I wanted handed to me.

Interviewer: Really. So some of the references like babies in bathtubs are not biographical?

Conor: Well, I did have a brother that died in a bathtub. Drowned. Actually, I had five brothers that died that way.

Interviewer: Tahuh.

Conor: 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.

Interviewer: Hm.

Conor: It's kind of like walking out a door and discovering it's a window.

Interviewer: But your music is certainly very personal.

Conor: 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 a-and a part of that is compassion, empathy for other people, and understanding their situations. So much of what I sing about comes from other people's experiences as well as my own. It shouldn't matter. The message is intended to be universal.

Interviewer: I see what you mean.

Conor: Can you make that sound stop please?

Interviewer: Yes. And your goal?

Conor: I don't know. Uh, create feelings, I guess. A song it never ends up the way you plan it.

Interviewer: That's funny you would say that. Do you think that's

Conor: Do you ever hear things that aren't really there?

Interviewer: I'm sorry, what?

Conor: Nevermind. How long have you worked at this station?

Interviewer: Oh, just a few minutes. Now, you mentioned empathy for others. Would you say that that is what motivates you to make the music you make?

Conor: No, not really. It's really just a need for sympathy. I want people to feel sorry for me. I like to feel the burn of the audience's eyes on me when I'm whispering all my darkest secrets into the microphone.

(From the side, two teenage thugs start swearing about the music, talking over the conversation.)

Conor: When I was a kid I used to carry around this safety pin 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 kind of liked that.

Interviewer: Really, you're telling me you're doing all this for attention?

Conor: 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 alright? Do you wanna dance?

Interviewer: No, I'm feeling sick.

Conor: I really just want to be warm yellow light that pours all over everyone I love.

Interviewer: So, uh, you're going to play something for us now. Is this a new song?

Conor: Yeah, but I haven't written it yet. It's one I've been meaning to write, called, "A Song to Pass the Time."

Interviewer: Oh, that's a nice title.

Conor: You should write your own scripts.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know.

(Conor says from the side, "I kept singing today" "It would be eeeeasy...")

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