

Ani DiFranco

"Ani DiFranco Complete Album"

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Both Hands

i am walking

out in the rain

and i am listening to the low moan

of the dial tone again

and i am getting

nowhere with you

and i can't let it go

and i can't get through...

the old woman behind the pink curtains

and the closed door

on the first floor

she's listening through the air shaft

to see how long our swan song can last

and both hands

now use both hands

oh, no don't close your eyes

i am writing

graffiti on your body

i am drawing the story of

how hard we tried

i am watching your chest rise and fall
like the tides of my life,
and the rest of it all
and your bones have been my bedframe
and your flesh has been my pillow
i am waiting for sleep
to offer up the deep
with both hands
in each other's shadows we grew less and less tall
and eventually our theories couldn't explain it all
and i'm recording our history now on the bedroom wall
and eventually the landlord will come
and paint over it all
and i am walking
out in the rain
and i am listening to the low moan of the dial tone
again
and i am getting nowhere with you
and i can't let it go
and i can't get through
so now use both hands
please use both hands
oh, no don't close your eyes
i am writing graffiti on your body
i am drawing the story of how hard we tried
hard we tried

how hard we tried

Talk To Me Now

he said ani, you've gotten tough

'cause my tone was curt

yeah, and when i'm approached in a dark alley

i don't lift my skirt

in this city

self-preservation

is a full time occupation

i'm determined

to survive on these shores

i don't avert my eyes anymore

in a man's world

i am a woman by birth

and after nineteen times around i have found

they will stop at nothing once they know what you are
worth

talk to me now

i played the powerless

in too many dark scenes

and i was blessed with a birth and a death

and i guess i just want some say in between

don't you understand

in the day to day

in the face to face

i have to act

just as strong as i can
just to preserve a place
where i can be who i am
so if you still know how
talk to me now

The Slant

the slant
a building settling around me
my figure female framed crookedly
in the threshold
of the room
door scraping floorboards
with every opening
carving a rough history
of bedroom scenes
the plot hard to follow
the text obscured
in the folds of sheets
slowly gathering the stains
of seasons spent lying there
red and brown
like leaves fallen
the colors of an eternal cycle
fading with the
wash cycle

and the rinse cycle
again an unfamiliar smell
like my name misspelled
or misspoken
a cycle broken
the sound of them strong
stalking talking about their prey
like the way hammer meets nail
pounding, they say
pounding out the rhythms of attraction
like a woman was a drum like a body was a weapon
like there was something more they wanted
than the journey
like it was owed to them
steel toed they walk
and i'm wondering why this fear of men
maybe it's because i'm hungry
and like a baby i'm dependent on them
to feed me
i am a work in progress
dressed in the fabric of a world unfolding
offering me intricate patterns of questions
rhythms that never come clean
and strengths that you still haven't seen
Work Your Way Out
lying on the floor

four stories high
in the corridor
between the asphalt and the sky
i am caught like bottled water
the light daughter
i wonder what you look like
under your t-shirt
i wonder what you sound like
when you're not wearing words
i wonder what we have
when we're not pretending
it's never-ending, haven't you heard?
i don't need to tell you
what this is about
you just start on the inside
and work your way out
we are all polylingual
but some of us pretend
there's virtue in relying
on not trying to understand
we're all citizens of the womb
before we subdivide
into sexes and shades
this side
that side

and i don't need to tell you
what this is about
you just start on the inside
and work your way out
undressing for the fan
like it was a man
wondering about all the things
that i'll never understand
there are some things that you can't know
unless you've been there
but oh how far we could go
if we started to share
i don't need to tell you
what it is about
you just start on the inside
you just start on the inside
and work your way out

Dog Coffee

perpetrating counter-culture she is walking through the
park
first light ugly and more muscular than the dark
pushing poems at the urban silence
drawing portraits of the passers-by
sitting on the curb
combining traffic sounds
getting dirty looks and dirty jeans

on the dirty ground
she says i can't figure out what kind of life this is
comedy or tragedy i just know it's show biz
and what if i don't agree
with the lines i have to read
they don't pay me enough
the way i see it
freedom and democracy
that's the word from washington every day
the america's asleep
with warm milk and cliches
and people are expendable along the way
your dollar is dependable
what more can we say
would you like some dog coffee
it's all that we've got
you can have some
you can have not
would you like some dog coffee
it's all that we've got
we're taking care of big business
and meanwhile some of the beans rot

Lost Woman Song

i opened a bank account
when i was nine years old
i closed it when i was eighteen

i gave them every penny that i'd saved
and they gave my blood
and my urine
a number
now i'm sitting in this waiting room
playing with the toys
and i am here to exercise
my freedom of choice
i passed their handheld signs
went through their picket lines
they gathered when they saw me coming
they shouted when they saw me cross
i said why don't you go home
just leave me alone
i'm just another woman lost
you are like fish in the water
who don't know that they are wet
as far as i can tell
the world isn't perfect yet
his bored eyes were obscene
on his denim thighs a magazine
i wish he'd never come here with me
in fact i wish he'd never come near me
i wish his shoulder
wasn't touching mine

i am growing older
waiting in this line
some of life's best lessons
are learned at the worst times
under the fierce fluorescent
she offered her hand for me to hold
she offered stability and calm
and i was crushing her palm
through the pinch pull wincing
my smile unconvincing
on that sterile battlefield that sees
only casualties
never heroes
my heart hit absolute zero
lucille, your voice still sounds in me
mine was a relatively easy tragedy
now the profile of our country
looks a little less hard nosed
but that picket line persisted
and that clinic's since been closed
they keep pounding their fists on reality
hoping it will break
but i don't think there's a one of us
leads a life free of mistakes
Pale Purple
pale purple nipples

goose pimples
she shivers shifts from a walk to a trot
alone in the city
infested with faces
immune to new friendships
interested in places she's never seen
she says everything is gray here
and nothing is green
the girls from down the street
sixteen, seventeen years old
you can smell them getting pregnant
you can hear their rock and roll
that's america
you have to be tough
like a glad trash bag
the government's an old nag
with a good pedigree
but pedigree's don't help you and me
i see the precedent is gray here
and nothing is green
unless something unforeseen happens
i'm surrounded by the haves
they say i can have some too
just because of what i do
do they think a lot

about those who have not
or does it just distract them
from what they do
most of us have gray
except for those who can pay
for green
i'm torn
i'm torn
rejecting outfits offered me
regretting things i've worn
when i was still playing roles
to fill holes
in my conception of who i am
you know, now i understand
it's not important to be defined
it's only important to use your time well
well time is something nobody can buy
and nobody can sell you
so don't let anybody tell you
they have the advantage
because all the gray people can say every day
doesn't mean anything
if your mind is green
pale purple nipples
goose pimples
she shivers shifts from a walk to a trot

alone in the city
infested with faces
immune to new friendships
interested in places she's never seen
she says everything is gray here
otherwise i'd stay here
but i'm looking for green
just like every human being

Rush Hour

rush hour

and the day's dawning
the rain came
and pushed me under the awning
the puddles grew and threw themselves at me
with every passing car
i'm shielding my guitar
and there were some things that i
did not tell him
there were certain things
he did not need to know
and there were some days
when i did not love him
he didn't understand me
and i don't know why
i didn't go

he said change the channel
i've got problems of my own
i'm so sick of hearing about drugs
and aids
and people without homes
and i said, well,
i'd like to sympathize with that
but if you don't understand
then how can you act
i expected summer to be there in the morning
i woke to the alarm
but she was out of arms reach
sneaking out
on silent thighs
that were spent and sore
from the hot nights that came before
he said i looked for you
i don't know why
i said i was wearing black so you could
see me against the sky
take your big leather boots
and your buckles and your chains
put them on a downtown train
i expected he would be there in the morning
i awoke to the alarm
he was still in arm's reach

but his body was just a disguise
his mind had wandered off long ago
you see in his eyes
love isn't over when the sheets are stained
in my head there remains
so much left to be said
make me laugh, make me cry, enrage me
but just don't try to disengage me

Fire Door

i opened the fire door
to four lips
none of which were mine
kissing
tightened my belt around my hips
where your hands were missing
and stepped out into the cold
collar high
under the slate gray sky
the air was smoking and the streets were dry
and i wasn't joking when i said
good bye
magazine quality men talking on the corner
french, no less much less of them than us
so why do i feel like something's been rearranged?
you know, taken out of context i must seem so strange

killed a cockroach so big
it left a puddle of pus on the wall
when you and i are lying in bed
you don't seem so tall
i'm singing now because my tear ducts are too tired
and my brain is disconnected but my heart is wired
i make such a good statistic
someone should study me now
somebody's got to be interested in how i feel
just 'cause i'm here
and i'm real
oh, how i miss
substituting the conclusion to confrontation with a kiss
and oh, how i miss
walking up to the edge and jumping in
like i could feel the future on your skin
i opened the fire door
to four lips
none of which were mine
kissing
i opened the fire door

The Story

i would have returned your greeting
if it weren't for the way you were looking at me
this street is not a market
and i am not a commodity

don't you find it sad that we can't even say hello

'cause you're a man

and i'm a woman

and the sun is getting low

there are some places that i can't go

as a woman i can't go there

and as a person i don't care

i don't go for the hey baby what's your name

and i'd alone thank you

just the same

i am up again against

the skin of my guitar

in the window of my life

looking out through the bars

i am sounding out the silence

avoiding all the words

i'm afraid i've said too much

i'm afraid of who has heard me

my father, he told me the story

and it was true

for his time

but now the story's different

maybe i should tell him mine

all the girls line up here

all the boys on the other side

i see your ranks are advancing
i see mine are left behind
i am up again against
the skin of my guitar
in the window of my life
looking out through the bars
i am sounding out the silence
avoiding all the words
i'm afraid i can never say enough
i'm afraid no one has heard me
and despite all the balls that i've been thrown
and forced to drop
on the social totem pole
i'm preciously close to the top
they put you in your place
and they tell you to behave
but no one can be free
until we're all on even ground
and i would have returned your greeting
if it weren't for the way you were looking a

Every Angle

i'm imagining your frame
every angle
and every plane
i'm imagining your smell
the one that mingled with mine

once upon a time
thoughts of you
are picketing my brain
they refuse
to work such long hours without rest
in unstable conditions at best
they're out there every day
holding up there signs
and thoughts of no other man but you
could possibly get through
the picket lines
to enter into my mind
i'm imagining your laugh again
the one you save for your family
and your very
close
friends
i'm imagining the way you say my name
i don't know when
i'm going to hear it again
my friends can't tell
my laughter from my cries
someone tell this photograph of you
to let go of my eyes
i'm imagining your frame

i'm imagining your smell

i'm imagining your laugh again

and the way you say my name

Out Of Habit

the butter melts out of habit

the toast isn't even warm

the waitress and the man in the plaid shirt

play out a scene they've played

so many times before

i am watching the sun stumble home in the morning

from a bar on the east side of town

and the coffee is just water dressed in brown

beautiful but boring

he visited me yesterday

he noticed my fingers

and asked me if i would play

i didn't really care a lot

but i couldn't think of a reason why not

i said if you don't come any closer i don't mind if you
stay

my thighs have been involved in many accidents

and now i can't get insured

and i don't need to be lured by you

my cunt is built like a wound that won't heal

and now you don't have to ask

because you know how i feel

you know how i feel
art is why i get up in the morning
but my definition ends there
and it doesn't seem fair
that i'm living for something i can't even define
there you are right there
in the meantime
i don't want to play for you anymore
show me what you can do
tell me what are you here for
i want my old friends
i want my old face
i want my old mind
fuck this time and place
the butter melts out of habit
Letting The Telephone Ring
i am letting the telephone ring
cause i don't want to know why
i don't want to hear you explain
i don't want to hear you cry
i have written so much about you
so much i thought i knew
words like water used to flow
now what could i possibly have to say?
she is someone i don't even know
and all the things that you've given to me

i see now were simply reparations
they were gifts of your guilt
they were my preparation
i know i should be mature
keep my feet on the floor
but for some reason,
i just don't want them anymore
i know this shouldn't be important
compared to you and i
but i can still hear my questions
and i can still hear you
i can still hear you
lie
now vicariously i have her in me
i want to peel off my skin
let the water wash in
you always said that i was hiding
that i was hiding from you
but you are capable of things i could not do
you are capable of things i could not do
i remember how you pretended
how you pretended to touch me
i remember how i couldn't bring myself to believe
i remember wondering,
what was wrong

what was wrong

how could i be so naive

how could i be so naive

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