

Ani DiFranco

"Imperfectly Complete Album"

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What If No One's Watching

if my life were a movie

there would be a sunset

and the camera would pan away

but the sky is just a little sister

tagging along behind the buildings

trying to imitate their gray

the little boys are breaking bottles

along the sidewalk

the big boys, too

the girls are hanging out at the candy store

pumping quarters into the phone

'cause they don't want to go home

and i think,

what if no one's watching

what it when we're dead, we're just dead

what if it's just us down here

what if god ain't looking down

what if he's looking up instead

if my life were a movie

i would light a cigarette

and the smoke would curl around my face
everything i do would be interesting
i'd play the good guy
in every scene
but i always feel i have to
take a stand
and there's always someone on hand
to hate me for standing there
i always feel i have to open my mouth
and every time i do
i offend someone
somewhere
but what
what if no one's watching
what if when we're dead, we're just dead
what if there's no time to lose
what if there's things we gotta do
things that need to be said
you know i can't apologize
for everything i know
i mean you don't have to agree with me
but once you get me going
you better just let me go
we have to be able to criticize
what we love

say what we have to say

'cause if you're not trying to make something better

as far as i can tell

you're just in the way

i mean what

what if no one's watching

what if when we're dead

we're just dead

what if it's just us down here

what if god is just an idea

someone put in your head

i mean what

what if no one's watching

what if no one's watching...

Fixing Her Hair

she's looking in the mirror

she's fixing her hair

and i touch my head to feel

what isn't there

she's humming a melody

we learned in grade school

she's so happy

and i think

this is not cool

'cause i know the guy

she's been talking about

i have met him before
and i think
what is this beautiful beautiful woman
settling for?
she bends her breath
when she talks to him
i can see her features begin to blur
as she pours herself
into the mold he made for her
and for everything he does
she has a way to rationalize
she says he don't mean what he do
she tells me he called
to apologize
he says he loves her
he says he's changing
and he can keep her warm
and so she sits there like america
suffering through slow reform
but she'll never get back the time
and the years sneak by
one by one
she is still playing the martyr
i am still praying for revolution
and she still doesn't have what she deserves

but she wakes up smiling every day
she never really expected more
that's just not the way we are raised
and i say to her,
you know,
there's plenty of really great men out there
but she doesn't hear me
she's looking in the mirror
she's fixing her hair

In Or Out

guess there's something wrong with me
guess i don't fit in
no one wants to touch it
no one knows where to begin
i've got more than one membership
to more than one club
and i owe my life
to the people that i love
he looks me up and down
like he knows what time it is
like he's got my number
like he thinks it's his
he says,
call me, miss difranco,
if there's anything i can do
i say,

it's mr. difranco to you
some days the line i walk
turns out to be straight
other days the line tends to
deviate
i've got no criteria for sex or race
i just want to hear your voice
i just want to see your face
she looks me up and down
like she thinks that i'll mature
like she's got my number
like it belongs to her
she says,
call me, ms. difranco
if there's anything i can do
i say, i've got spots
i've got
stripes, too
their eyes are all asking
are you in, or are you out
and i think, oh man,
what is this about?
tonight you can't put me
up on any shelf
'cause i came here alone

i'm gonna leave by myself
i just want to show you
the way that i feel
and when i get tired
you can take the wheel
to me what's more important
is the person that i bring
not just getting to the same restaurant
and eating the same thing
guess there's something wrong with me
guess i don't fit in
no one wants to touch it
no one knows where to begin
i've more than one membership
to more than one club
and i owe my life to the people that i love

Every State Line

i got pulled over in west texas
so they could look inside my car
he said are you an american citizen
i said
yes sir
so far
they made sure i wasn't smuggling
someone in from mexico
someone willing to settle for america

'cause there's nowhere else to go
and every state line
there's a new set of laws
and every police man
comes equipped with extended claws
there's a thousand shades of white
and a thousand shades of black
but the same rule always applies
smile pretty, and watch your back
i broke down in louisiana
and i had to thumb a ride
got in the first car that pulled over
you can't be picky in the middle of the night
he said
baby, do you like to fool around
baby, do you like to be touched
i said
maybe some other time
fuck you very much
and every state line
there's a new set of laws
and every police man
comes equipped with extended claws
there's a thousand shades of white
and a thousand shades of black

but the same rule always applies
smile pretty, and watch your back
i'm in the middle of alabama
they stare at me where ever i go
i don't think they like my haircut
i don't think they like my clothes
i can't wait to get back to new york city
where at least when i walk down the street
nobody ever hesitates
to tell me exactly what they think of me
and every state line
there's a new set of laws
and every police man
comes equipped with extended claws
there's a thousand shades of white
and a thousand shades of black
but the same rule always applies
smile pretty, and watch your back
a little town in pennsylvania
there was snow on the ground
a parked in an empty lot
where there was no one else around
but i guess i was taking up too much space
as i was trying to get some sleep
'cause an officer came by anyway
and told me i had to leave

and every state line
there's a new set of laws
and every police man
comes equipped with extended claws
there's a thousand shades of white
and a thousand shades of black
but the same rule always applies
smile pretty, and watch your back

Circle Of Light

standing just outside
the circle of light
avoiding the pool cues
watching the game
waiting for you
hanging in the doorway
like smoke
like mistletoe
this is where i'll be
whenever you come or go
i'm gonna roll you over
gonna peel you back
expose your tender center
watch the juices flow from the crack
gonna peel you out
of your protective shell

or i might have to break right in there
and raise some hell
i don't have no grand plan
for you and me
just nothing is impossible
nothing is unlikely
i'm just riding the tide
nothing more
and it's bound to take me out some
before it brings me back to shore
when you look in the mirror
do you see visions of your past
i ain't got time for halfway
i ain't got time for halfassed
when i look in the mirror
i see my days to come
and my face is just a trace
of where i'm coming from
just outside the circle of light
is where you've been living
your whole life
you've got to jump into the center
and launch your attack
and then you've got to crawl back
in the corners
where it's really black

If It Isn't Here

standing like john wayne

she is full framed

she is center stage

and my imagination is

rattling in its cage

i didn't really notice

when everything else disappeared

but as far as i'm concerned

if it isn't her

it isn't here

she says do i know you

i say well, no, not biblically

but i've been waiting for you come

and talk to me

i have been playing

too many of those boy girl games

she says honey you are safe here

this is a girl girl thing

i told him i loved him

so he thought i'd roll over and play dead

he was god's gift to hypocrisy

with weak knees and a big fat head

she says honey don't tell me

that old story

you are boring me
just tell me do you like me
tell me what you're gonna do
now that you're free
standing like john wayne
she is full framed
she is center stage
and my imagination
is rattling in its cage
i didn't really notice
when everything else disappeared
but as far as i'm concerned
if it isn't her
it isn't here
as far as i'm concerned
if it isn't her
it isn't here
Good, Bad, Ugly
it was good
good to see you again
good to meet your girlfriend
i'll try not to wonder where you are
when you go outside to kiss her
in the front seat of your car
it is good
good to be back home

how i missed this time zone
strangers are exciting
their mystery never ends
but there's nothing like looking at your own history
in the faces of your friends
and it's bad
to have eyes like neon signs
flashing open open open
open open open open open
open all the time
and it's bad
that i wrapped you in a fantasy
and i carry you with me
but lately it seems like everybody's
joined at the hip
and i'm still fancy
i'm so fancy
fancy free
sometimes the beauty is easy
sometimes you don't have to try at all
sometimes you can hear the wind blow in a handshake
sometimes there's poetry written right
on the bathroom wall
and it's bad
that i took that second look

i guess i'm an open book
you know i didn't really intend
to embrace you that long
but then again i wasn't the only one
holding on
I'm No Heroine
you think i wouldn't have him
unless i could have him by the balls
you think i just dish it out
you don't think i take it at all
you think i am stronger
you think i walk taller than the rest
you think i'm usually wearing the pants
just 'cause i rarely wear a dress
well...
when you look at me
you see my purpose,
see my pride
you think i just saddle up my anger
and ride and ride and ride
you think i stand so firm
you think i sit so high on my trusty steed
let me tell you
i'm usually face down on the ground
when there's a stampede
i'm no heroine

at least, not last time i checked
i'm too easy to roll over
i'm too easy to wreck
i just write about
what i should have done
i just sing
what i wish i could say
and hope somewhere
some woman hears my music
and it helps her through her day
'cause some guy designed
these shoes i use to walk around
some big man's business turns a profit
every time i lay my money down
some guy designed the room i'm standing in
another built it with his own tools
who says i like right angles?
these are not my laws
there are not my rules
i'm no heroine
i still answer to the other half of the race
i don't fool myself
like i fool you
i don't have the power
we just don't run this place

Coming Up

our father who art in a penthouse

sits in his 37th floor suite

and swivels to gaze down

at the city he made me in

he allows me to stand and

solicit graffiti until

he needs the land i stand on

in my darkened threshold

am pawing through my pockets

the receipts, the bus schedules

the matchbook phone numbers

the urgent napkin poems

all of which laundering has rendered

pulpy and strange

loose change and a key

ask me

go ahead, ask me if i care

i got the answer here

i wrote it down somewhere

i just gotta find it

i just gotta find it

somebody and their spray paint got too close

somebody came on too heavy

now look at me made ugly

by the drooling letters

i was better off alone
ain't that the way it is
they don't know the first thing
but you don't know that
until they take the first swing
my fingers are red and swollen from the cold
i'm getting bold in my old age
so go ahead, try the door
it doesn't matter anymore
i know the weak hearted are strong willed
and we are being kept alive
until we're killed
he's up there the ice
is clinking in his glass
i don't ask
i just empty my pockets and wait
it's not fate
it's just circumstance
i don't fool myself with romance
i just live
phone number to phone number
dusting them against my thighs
in the warmth of my pockets
which whisper history incessantly
asking me

where were you
i lower my eyes
wishing i could cry more
and care less,
yes it's true,
i was trying to love someone again,
i was caught caring,
bearing weight
but i love this city, this state
this country is too large
and whoever's in charge up there
had better take the elevator down
and put more than change in our cup
or else we
are coming
up
Make The Apologize
my breast is cradled
in the curve of my guitar
i'm breaking strings
and other things
playing hard
no i'm not on the rag
but i'm not on the run
i am matching the big boys
one for one

and i must admit,
i'm having myself some fun
because the music business
is still run by men
like every business
and everything
but we can sing like a sonofabitch
make them twitch around their eyes
make them apologize
he had a mean streak
three miles wide
it was a long walk
to the other side
she tried to get through it
holding on to her smile
but he wasn't worth the time it takes
to make that mistake
he just wasn't worthwhile
she's been under command
of the wrong man
and she'll give you everything
except the upper hand
she was his mother, and his lover,
and his wife
now she wants the luxury

of her own life
'cause the marriage business
is still run by men
like every business
and every thing
but she can sing like a sonofabitch
make him twitch around his eyes
girl, make him apologize
they all want to lead the fight
and they know what they know all right
but there's so much
they don't understand
what about the other sex
what about the other hand
they only know what they've been told
and they're well cast
but they don't break the mold
and good sources are not enough
so she calls their bluff
yeah, she calls their bluff
'cause the revolution business
is still run by men
like every business
and everything
but we can sing like a sonofabitch
make them twitch around their eyes

until they realize
they just don't realize
The Waiting Song
your basic average super star
is singing about justice
and peace
and love
and i am glaring at the radio,
swearing
saying that's just what i was afraid of
the system gives you just enough
to make you think that you see change
they will sing you right to sleep
and then they'll screw you just the same
but i will wait
yes, i will wait for the truth
they think i make a big deal about nothing
but they still think i'm
kinda cute
they joke about the status quo
to break the ice
once the ice is broken
i hope they all fall through
'cause this is no joke to me
they don't fool me

with their acts of sensitivity
they too shall pass
just like everyone
who's only here for my ass
and i can't wait
oh i can't wait till they get their due
baby i've only got a minute
baby i have to go
a minute is all my life
will ever allow
let's grow old
and die together
let's do it now
because you'll do all the jobs
no one else will do
and you'll step aside
and you will let me come through
you have all my respect
i'll leave it here when i go
maybe i never told you, baby
maybe you don't know
but maybe if we wait
if we wait things will improve
maybe we just wait
and things will improve
you know, they've got to improve

your basic average superstar
is singing about justice
and peace
and love
and i am glaring at the radio
swearing
saying that's just what i was afraid of
the system gives you just enough
to make you think that you see change
they'll sing you right to sleep
and then they'll screw you just the same
he says i know you have to go
you have gone before
we are fighting on two different fronts
of the same war
but no matter what else
i will do
i will wait for you
Served Faithfully
he caresses every bottle
like it's the first one he's had
saying
it ain't love
but it ain't bad
it's the only reward

bestowed upon me
and i have served faithfully
i can see he is scarred
from doing some hard time
but i let alone what is broken
'cause it isn't mine
he strikes out at me
when i am within reach
then he reaches for me
when i draw the line
sometimes it seems like love
is just a fancy word for compromise
you gotta read between the years
you gotta write between the lines
you gotta try to understand
the grandness of the man behind the petty crimes
and let him off easy sometimes
i have only just met
an old old friend
we've been walking around holding hands
i hope some day he can bend
as far as it takes to understand
and risk breaking open again
Imperfectly
i'm okay
if you get me at a good angle

and you're okay
in the sort of light
and we don't look
like pages from a magazine
but that's all right
that's all right
i crashed your pickup truck
and then i had to drive it back home
i was crying
i was so scared
of what you would do
of what you would say
but you just started laughing
so i started laughing along
saying, it looks a little rough
but it runs okay
it looks a little rough
but it runs good anyway
we get a little further from perfection
each year on the road
i guess that's what they call character
i guess that's just the way it goes
better to be dusty than polished
like some store window mannequin
why don't you touch me where i'm rusty

let me stain your hands
when you're pretty as a picture
they pound down your door
but i've been offered love
in two dimensions before
and i know that it's not all
it's made out to be
let's show them how it's done
let's do it all imperfectly

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