

# Talons'

## *Songs for Babes*

### **Natalie**

*Written for one of my closest friends, though I rarely see her now. Piano (melody from lula) to cassette at the loft in Cleveland, field recording from outside. Rhodes, chimes, and "Sommer" refrain buried underneath. There is a lot in these songs that is recorded and then mixed just below the level of being audible. I hoped it would have some unconscious effect, but it probably is just inaudible.*

### **Maddy**

The fall came fast, hell it ran me down. And the cold wind burned my throat as I ran after you.  
I cross the weeks off but I can't remember a thing.  
So I kiss your forehead, close my eyes and go to sleep.

And getting by has turned to treading water, and every day's another weight tied to my legs.  
I don't wanna be a weight tied to your legs.  
So if you need some time, I will wait for you.

I'll wait

*Recorded in the attic at 267 S Portage Path, Akron; the ambulance was an accident but probably had the biggest impact on talons' recording of anything. This song probably took 4 months to write; it is the second real talons' song. (after chord organ) When I was putting together songs for babes, I added a few things including the sound of the furnace shutting off at the loft in the flats (Cleveland) and the chimney high Rhodes loop that is hidden somewhere in all of the songs for babes songs. I really like the scattered piano and guitar in the bridge.*

### **Erin**

It's kinda like the feeling you get when you're finally peelin' the flag magnet off your car,  
It had stuck to your driver's door since 2001.  
Now it's knotted in an Acme bag, in the bottom of the trash, way back, back, back in the back of  
the garage.  
Oh, when I think of 9/11, I wish I'd a' followed you home.  
Oh Erin, I wish I'd a' followed you home

*The first song written for songs for babes. Trouble books was playing in Chicago and I met this total babe at this bar who liked steely dan and six parts seven. It was a crush and logistical problems which I wont get into because it'll make me mad (thanks taylor...)- kept me from hanging out with her. It was the first time I had even a vague interest in a girl in a year though so it seemed profound. The music was a series of three chords but with a verse of four lines written over top. I like the buzz saw bass accents, and the bowed acoustic guitar and the sound of our old neighbor at Colfax, Rickie's garage closing in the middle. Oh, you can hear Keith recording the Constant Comment "hymns" downstairs in the background.*

## **Angela**

Sleeping with my hand around your waist,  
And I don't even know your last name.  
I bury my face in the back of your hair,

Angela

*I'm not gonna say too much about this cuz Sommer will probably get mad at me, but this was an awesome night when Keith and Weber and I went out to dinner with Linda and Ben and Carrie at this Mexican restaurant and got drunk on margaritas, then Weber bought a bottle of wild turkey, then Linda dropped the three of us off in the woods north of Akron, and we walked, drunk through the woods for an hour until we found the fence that runs around Blossom Music Center, found a hole, and snuck in to see Steely Dan. Drank whiskey, and listened to all my favorite songs. It was great. Then Linda picked us up, we went to Lime Spider, met some band from Chicago, went Thursdays with them, one of their names was Angela. I won't say anymore. I like the mountain of fuzz under this song, very warm. Series of six chords with verses of four for a changing structure that I was proud of. 3/4 time, which is weird for talons'. Standard tuning too, which is weird for talons' (usually CGDF#AD - low to high). I like the ringing ride cymbal and the big tom sound and the Casio too. There is a long quiet field recording of the outside of Colfax at the end, an attempt to settle things and let a listener space out. Maybe?*

## **Rachel**

*An old part, the last song from Falls' Chagrin reworked. I wrote this when I was living with Rachel in Kent (on South Lincoln) so I named it after her. This song is a total mess of instruments, with a field recording from Kent (Lake St.), Glockenspiel recorded in the hallway. Guitar recorded with the window open while it rained. Jake, Jen, Keith, Linda added to it at the last minute.*

## **Mich**

There's something about you, I don't know what, but it drives me to these things.  
I'm going 80  
On the freeway  
In rush hour in the pouring rain  
Racing to get to your work before you get off, just to say,  
"Hey. It's raining. Would you like a ride home?"  
There's something about you, I don't know what, but I wanna know.

*This song was about a girl I liked that lived and worked in Cleveland for a little while before she moved back to Denver (yeah, two girls left me for Colorado). I remember driving from Akron to Cleveland on a whim, as fast as I could, just to see her before she got off work. It was about the excitement of meeting new people, but really new people. The recording has a rain recording that I cut and mixed to correspond with the rise and fall of the song. There is a midi string quintet buried at the end. The Rhodes part that exists throughout the album comes from the beginning.*

## Juice

"I wish you wouldn't quit school."

"You can put your hand on my arm."

"It's getting to cold to keep the windows open at night."

We went for a walk in the woods. It was fall but the leaves were still on. The birds were singing you said it was "nature's ringtone".

The patios are closed now and at home we're digging out our scarves, and in a few weeks we'll leave them at the bar; where if

we've got the nerve to try and share this part of life, we'll run out arm-in-arm, drunk, scared, and bare-necked into the night

Into the night

I set out for a hike on my own. Ended up just driving through the Metropark. Thinking "this is better than nothing right?"

Nevermind,  
maybe it's not.

*Juice is an Akron legend, probably the funniest person ever to live there, and central to the creative community. One fall we'd go to the gorge metropark sometimes and talk about stuff and she would make jokes about ringtones, and "nature's toothbrush". It is also about how people tend to couple up in the fall so they have someone to cuddle with during the winter. And it's about failing at getting close to what you think is important (for me, nature sometimes). The recording has a long field recording of a rapid train going by in Cleveland, there's some clarinet by Keith and some reverse reverb guitar he did. There's some pitchshifted and panned music box, and a long, pitch shifted loop that was an old 4track recording from the accidental music series (2002). The guitar part originally was written for the great shortlived freak folk band "black clover", with juice, me, and Keith on drums. It was rad.*

## Sam

Watching 'Cast Away', Sunday at work with Rotten-tooth-Rick

This would be hard if I gave a shit.

Another night of staring at my cellphone, finally the bar lights are on.

Now I'm sitting in my Scion, alone in line at Taco Bell.

It's just as well

Buying scratch-offs or bumping meth down Mogadore Road.

Life is sad but at least its short

Sam says, if she misses one more payment, they'll take away her dolphin-plated jeep

She hopes she'll win the lottery first.

I hope she wins the lottery

*Gyro song, about two of my coworkers; two of the realest and kindest people I've ever met. Rick and I worked together all the time till his girlfriend won a 10000 scratchoff and he quit (this was after the song was written). It's about Thursday's lounge in Akron and the taco bell that's nearby. It is about how hard life is in the poorer Akron suburbs (like mogadore) and the impact of meth on life there (summit county is the meth capital of Ohio). It's understandable though, it makes you feel happy and energetic and worthwhile- then it starts ruining your body. It's about Sam's white Blazer with dolphin seatcovers and license plates. I agonized over this recording more than any other ever. There are so many versions of this stupid song and the one on Honey Gold is probably the best cuz it doesn't have a bunch of shit on it. I like parts of this one though: I played drums, so did Keith, and there's drum machine, sub bass, 5 tracks of electric guitar. I like the techno sparkles at the end of the bridge, the banjo, and the whistle. I think there are 42 tracks on this song. Oh yeah, the microkorg techno explosion at the end might be my favorite part and it was an afterthought.*

## Taz

Taz is talking about raising her girls, and the sister who just threw her out on the street. She's all bags of clothes now, No Doze, Bud Ice and bootleg DVDs. Working second shift, she said, "I never saw my kids but at least they got things." She, "never did nothing but try".

And I should have asked you out a long time ago, but I'm a coward  
Well, let's just say I've forgotten how  
So I guess it's up to you to make the first move,  
And I know you won't

So I'm drinking coffee with whiskey, at midnight, singing along with Steely Dan's "Aja", alone, "I learn to work the saxophone. I play just what I feel. Drink scotch whiskey all night long, and die behind the wheel."

*My favorite coworker at gyro insisted on being called "taz". We talked (mostly she talked) allday, listened to 97.5 WONE and cooked together. She was full of stories and acted kind of like a mother or a bad influence on everyone at work. The second half is not about taz, but about me (as I guess most of the songs end up being. I don't think it's being selfcentered, I was just trying to write songs that were true so the easiest way/hardest at times was to write about myself). It's about cowardice and losing opportunities and about how much I fucking love the album 'Aja' by Steeley Dan. Recording is interesting on this song too. There are 4 panned chord organs that are turned on and off at the beginning to move the chords. The janky harmonies in the background are straightup ripoff/tribute to Ben & Bruno, the best band from Grand Rapids. The end is Steeley Dan of course, "deacon blues", with Sommer and angie singing harmony over cellphone from NYC.*

## Nicole

She's in the lobby with her baby, Braylon (after the Cleveland Brown).  
She'll pick up my hours when I go, and I hope... No, I won't get into that now.  
You see I haven't told her or anyone else here I'm quitting yet, which hasn't really helped much with this feeling of someone standing on my chest.  
I'm sick of just getting through time, drunk-driving home from karaoke; still singing, "Jeremy"

Jeremy

Truth is I hate it here, but I kinda feel like this is where I oughta be

*Another Gyro song. Sad. Also about my inability to confront people and thus waiting too long to tell people that I'm quitting at work. Also about singing Pearl Jam at Thursday's karaoke. About driving Weber and me home in his car wasted (really not proud of that but it happened). Jake Trombetta makes this song. He did the piano and lapsteel, which I love. What else? Of there is a fake pearl jam guitar part in the background. And the Rhodes. I guess the end is about how all the people that want to change things move to new york or Portland when the places that really need them are places like Akron or Cleveland.*

## Lula

*Written for Ben and Carrie's daughter, based on a 6/7 song I wrote that we never used. Bass and banjo and a mountain of other stuff. This song is the whole songs for babes album condensed into one collage. There are elements from most songs and loops from the United Colors of Trouble Books, part of the "ice fisherman" (that sommer wrote) and the birds from 'Natalie'. This song was meant to bring the album to completion or at least the sensation of it. Then things were supposed to clear and the last song would stand alone.*

## Sommer

Maybe we could build a fort, I don't know where, it's just if things got all effed up, I'd like to know where you were.

I've got some milk crates: we could make stained glass with them, these green 2-liters and duct tape for trim.

And we'll paint mud under our eyes.

And you'll tie weeds in your ponytail.

And through a skylight that I'll make from scraps of old plastic wrap, we could watch the moon pass from the holes in the canopy,

Sommer

*This song is about the end of the world or maybe just wanting to run away from it with a babe and make believe and live in the woods together away from the mess of everything. I guess it's about love, like all these songs but it actually worked out for once. The recording features Jen singing harmony into a coffee cup, chimes from my bedroom in Cleveland, and tons of vocal tracks. Originally this was on "okracoke" and titled 'ponytail'.*

## Hello:

*It is fall again. A good time to work on projects or finish the ones from last year. A good time to make plans that you'll never end up doing. A good time to drive up 271N from Richfield to Boston Heights and look at the leaves against the dark grey skies, listening to 'Ys' by Joanna Newsom. Bundling up for the first time to walk up to the Matinee to drink with your friends. Putting off turning the furnace on for longer than you probably should. I'm far away from Akron but that was where I spent the last five falls of my life and where this band called talons' came to being with a song called "September".*

*The idea was to write folk songs, but not in the normal way. I love folk music but I have some problems with it too. Mainly the idea of "song structures" is confining and makes for some boring songs, but also this prevailing aspiration to write timeless or universal songs to me feels always distant and impersonal. This is not to say that I don't like songs like that, but I don't want to write them. I write deconstructed folk songs, often without a chorus or maybe without more than one verse: direct songs that get to the point and then end. I feel like every word and note should have a purpose or be removed, and I feel that I have stuck to this idea throughout. I have also experimented with applying other elements to the songs that are less common in folk songs, like odd chord progressions and wandering vocal melodies. The lyrics are mostly personal and mostly direct from my life, usually written as things are happening. I hope that this can lend some sort of real feeling to the songs, something more personal. It is not at all easy to write these words, and it is even harder to sing them afterwards, so I have left some of them to the recordings. But despite this, I feel that there is a value in there. I've had a hard time emotionally through the course of this project and I find some respite in the fact that somehow the songs borne from these bad times will help someone who is maybe feeling similarly shitty. Oh yeah, another thing, I had this idea of being anti-literary- thus the boring or boringly narrative lyrics, but anyway the band's name was supposed to be talon's (music) but I didn't understand how to make the possessive the right way so the band name is a grammar error. The point is: it's funny, and in a way anti-literary and it points to an underlying goal of the project, which was to show everyone how stupid I really am.*

*There is not much more to say for the project. A decent number of songs: some of which I am really proud of, but all of which I feel hold some importance in the progression of the band, however embarrassing or painful they are now. So I've included it all here and tried to reflect as much as I can on what has been my life's biggest, hardest, and most important project. More than anything, these tiny songs kept my shit together when I was on the brink of giving up over the past years. Laying on my back in bed, playing three chords over and over, singing the same line:*

*"Why can't it all make sense?"*

*I'm not sure how or if things will progress from here. I'm in Madrid, going to school and I have just these few minutes a night, when my eyes are too tired to read anymore to work on projects. I'm happy now too. I'm gonna get married in less than a year to a girl that lived in these songs before I ever talked to her; the last "babe" of "songs for babes" babes. I guess the songs wont stop though. Now I'm writing for "songs for boats", and ep that you could probably predict the contents of. The first song goes like this: "there is a sailboat out in a field, on a rusty trailer covered in weeds, and when the banks fail, you can hike out there with me. We can't tow it to the lake, so we'll sail thru the fields all day. Fishing for beet greens in the weeds, teaching the kids to swim, watching for smoke beyond the hills. And at night we'll put the anchor down. Paddle into shore (swim in if it's warm) and set up the tent that you painted camouflage, under stars that haven't shone here for a hundred years. Then sit by the fire, talking 'bout old times, when we didn't have time to talk about anything.*

*And we'll sing"*

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