

Autumn's Envy

"*Autumn's Envy* is about experiencing someone drift away as the seasons of love are fickle and change, and the jealousy and insecurity that come along with knowing you are "out of season" while watching someone move on. It's about doubting yourself. About longing and calling out for someone, wanting them to open themselves to you completely and the comfort and relief that brings. I often get phrases stuck in my head and I kept thinking about the Pavement song title *Summer Babe*. What happens to a Summer Babe in the fall? Ultimately, you are left with yourself, looking out at the landscape as winter approaches. Instrumentally, I wanted to create a slow walk through a darkening forest with points of delicate light and ethereal textures. I thought about cave sounds too, and maidens ringing bells in very tall towers, ending with a rapturous cry of letting go, and surrendering.

I wanted to make a video inspired by one of my very favorite artists, Jean Cocteau, specifically the candelabras and forests in his film *Beauty and the Beast*. I also had this image of a wraith-like figure shrouded in white fabric, akin to the Italian statues of veiled women from the 1800s, for example the Veiled Virgin by Strazza. It's often how I describe my own struggle with depression. The veil is also said to be the representation of the separation of the spirit world from the living, which is said to "thin" in the Autumn as everything decays. I loved the idea of wandering in the dark forest, lost and haunted by this beautiful mysterious figure, and ultimately discovering that you are the source and reliever of your own pain, and how that struggle looks from both underneath the veil and outside of it." - Leanna Kaiser

Eve's Hollywood

"I wrote the song during a mushroom trip one summer while I was reading a lot of Eve Babitz, listening obsessively to "Along Comes Mary" by the Association and thinking pessimistically about life in Los Angeles and its people, while also being conscious of the fact that I was, in fact, one of those people." - Leanna Kaiser

Fallen Leaves

"This is a recollection of a memory I have from my early 20s. I spent a lot of time in my basement room being sad and laying on the floor, staring out a small window that was above my bed that looked at the sky. The song is coming from present me, looking back at that time, which was really a low point for me because of some trouble I got myself into. I wrote it on a particularly scorching day in LA wishing for clouds and thought about looking at the Missouri clouds through that little window in "much heavier days", as the song says. I've often thought of this song as my version of Simon and Garfunkel's "I Am a Rock", sort of this dramatic youthful declaration: "I will love no one and let no one love me!"

This was the second song on the album that I wrote and recorded, in 2020. I wanted to record this song very simply because I wanted it to sound innocent and fragile and like Spring. In this period I was referencing, I started learning to play my mom's classical guitar and I was writing

some sad guitar songs, so I wanted to pay homage to those. I really liked the double vocal effect, as it signified both “me”s, past and present, singing simultaneously. I brought Andy on to record some electric guitar licks and Farfisa to provide some depth and contrast and to introduce a few more elements. I recorded my tracks at my house and he recorded his on 4-track, which lends a nice texture to the overall song. I often worry that this song is too naive or earnest, but there’s also something I really love about it when I get over myself and listen to it for what it is. Looking back, that was a naive and earnest time in a lot of ways. Sort of the last of them, in fact.” - Leanna Kaiser

Wishing Well

“This was a rare instance of knowing exactly how I wanted a song to sound as I was writing it, and it actually turning out identically to how I heard it in my head. I kept thinking about this restaurant I went to as a kid called The Wishing Well, which had a faux stone well in the middle of its wood-paneled dining room. I imagined this song playing in that dingy room over some crappy 70s restaurant speakers. I knew I wanted a sort of burnt orange tropicalia vibe, and Andy had gotten a 1960s Maestro Rhythm Jester drum machine that I immediately knew would be perfect for the song. I love finger-picked classical guitar and drum machines together. I paired those with on-the-edge-of-dissonant Shangri-Las harmonies...bursting with energy and then saying “oh well”. It was really important to me to have a strong Motown-esque bassline that was a super groover, and Andy did a great job...it’s my favorite element of the whole song. I recorded most of the track at my apartment, had him send me a few parts, and then on a trip to St. Louis we laid down the live percussion and the Farfisa with Matt Stuttler at the Sinkhole. It was my first time recording there, and one of my first times recording in a studio period, and it was such a great experience. The lyrics are about the dissolution of a crush on a too cool person; when you can see so many reasons that someone is right for you, but you also know they’re on another planet so you just have to walk away with a sigh.” - Leanna Kaiser

Queen of Hearts

“This song is a collage stemming from a live improvised voice memo on my phone. When I was going to CalArts, I lived in this weird desert town called Val Verde where a lot of students live because it’s cheap and out in the middle of nowhere and great to film because it’s an eerie desert. It was nice too because you can play music loud. I was just in a jam trance with my loop pedal and keyboards and recorded the amp with my phone and the keyboard stuff came out. Surely like most people, I have tons of recordings like this with really awesome but way too long jams (I think this one was probably 10 minutes originally) and always want to do something with them but then it seems weird to alter them since they’re sort of a document. But, I listened to this one a lot and decided to just go for it and added some cymbals from another song I recorded and the sample I used in Prince Gloom. I love the way it turned out, it reminds me of a Broadcast song. I would say this is probably the most “typically me” song on the album, as most of what I’ve played and recorded is more akin to this sort of instrumental jam. I called it Queen of Hearts because I used to play the initial recording over some 16mm footage I shot of my friend’s arm in a matte cutout of a heart with flower fabric all around it. Then I realized that the

song sounded good before Prince Gloom, so it was cool that I got the Queen and then the Prince.” - Leanna Kaiser

Prince Gloom

“This song was probably the trickiest to nail as far as what it was “supposed” to be. I wrote this song imagining self-sabotaging but brilliant gloomy music guys that I’ve always seemed to get tangled up with. They remind me of beautiful tragic fairytale princes crying into their rose bushes in the cold moonlight with their Kingly father in their head saying, like, “a prince is unable to love so forget about being happy, ever!”. And this song is sort of indulging them, maybe a slight eye roll... ‘yes, hide away, you’re right, nothing is going to last so don’t even bother.’ I guess that self-sabotaging gloomy music guy could be me, too, if I’m being totally honest.

When recording, I knew I wanted the song to sound spacious and cold like winter. I couldn’t get the rhythm on the guitar how I liked it so I asked my boyfriend, Matt (who is also the best guitarist I know), to play the main classical guitar part. He did such a lovely job of keeping it bouncing and precise but also with warmth and feeling. I went to the Sinkhole in St. Louis and Matt Stuttler and Andy and I recorded Andy’s bass and the cymbals/gong and the disparate bell, as well as Andy’s new toy which was an insane Vox Jaguar organ from the 60s. It sounds amazing, like Question Mark and the Mysterians or some old French song. I loved the idea of it floating in the air on the track all reverb-ed out. I had initially wanted it to be more of a bossanova type song; at the Sinkhole, we recorded a TON of hand percussion for this song but in the end it didn’t come together like that. I had my friend Kate Bollinger come and sing some oohs and aahs with me because her voice is so angelic and breathy and I thought would be a good complement to my alto. Finally, I found this crackly recording from the 30s of a record of this old Dame reading Rapunzel and it had these orchestra parts with glissando strings in it that happened to be in the key of the song! It was such an insane coincidence. So, I asked one of my old sound professors from CalArts, Craig Smith, if he could get rid of the talking on it and he did. I recorded it a bunch of times onto a tape cassette and then ran that through my loop delay pedal and into Pro Tools, so it created this woozy effect. The story of Rapunzel has this part about a Prince hearing Rapunzel’s singing voice in the woods and going towards it and then getting lost in the brambles, and I thought that was such a metaphor for my Prince Gloom. It also tied into the next song, The Dove, which is sort of a version of Rapunzel, so it felt very serendipitous that I happened upon this reading.” - Leanna Kaiser

The Dove

“The Dove comes from a character in the Nathaniel Hawthorne novel “The Marble Faun”, which I always wanted to read since seeing Grey Gardens. I finally read it before going on a trip to Italy, where it takes place. In the book, The Dove is a painter with lovely blonde hair who lives in a dovecote tending to a Roman church’s doves. I loved that imagery and it reminded me of Rapunzel, a woman up in a tower looking over the landscape and pining away while sewing. And the elements respond to her in turn, taking her voice in the wind, the birds being her confidantes, being apart from someone she loves and wondering if he is thinking of her, too. But

she kind of has to know he probably isn't ever going to come back. I relate a lot to that self-isolation and how people have to sometimes exhaust themselves by climbing up this emotional wall in order to be let in because of some brain chemical witchcraft.

I really love simple, circular guitar compositions and wanted this one to be plucky and bright. I added the electric guitar in there which feels dark to me, in contrast. It reminds me of a dirge or a march but with very pretty, wistful vocals. I recorded everything on this song quickly and in one go, pretty much. It was my first time playing around with synth strings in a significant way and I just improvised all the parts one after another, along with the flute. I got some Medieval feelings which reflected the content of the lyrics, as well." - Leanna Kaiser

The Spirit of St. Louis

"I view this song as a reprise or counterpart of Eve's Hollywood. I love a reprise and it felt right since both titular places are so connected to different parts of my life. They are the same picking pattern and chords but different notes and totally different vibes that I think sonically fit both cities. I think that is a pretty apt description of how I feel about my life in these places. The Spirit of St. Louis was Charles Lindbergh's plane but it's also this ghost for me.

This was the last song I wrote on the album, and I wrote and recorded it simultaneously, using a loop I made of the electric guitar. It went through a lot of iterations. Andy, Matt and I are all playing guitar at the same time, so it's such a mixture of my past and present, and all our parts really intertwine in this lovely soft way. It's about coming to terms with myself, acknowledging past parts of me that haven't been so pleasant and trying to make sense of it all. It's a really honest and direct song for me. Sensing that I'm changing for the better and it's going to stick, this time, and the drive and hope that come from those realizations. I wanted the song to sound really watery and Andy's stark electric guitar is such a perfect counterpart to Matt's serpentine classical guitar line. When I put them together it was this amazing back and forth that I hadn't even planned." - Leanna Kaiser

Lore Green and Blue

"This was the first song I wrote on the album, way back in 2020. It feels like a very young and naive song to me, like Fallen Leaves, which makes sense because I wrote them together. It's about the ups and downs of anxiety and depression, missing the green and blue hillsides of the Ozarks, thoughts on astrology, numbness and apathy, the whole kit and caboodle. It's such a vulnerable song, reminiscing about who I was in the past, thinking about crawling across town drowning in sadness and anxiety, reminding myself to breathe and that I can get through these feelings and they won't be here forever.

The recording of this song was really spaced out. It was my first time playing drums on a song, after taking a few lessons from my friend and one of my favorite musicians, Chris Cohen, and figuring out how to get everything sounding the way a 'proper song' should. It was a bit of a mess but in the end I think that's part of the charm and energy. I wanted the first part to feel very

pastoral but with a tinge of something ominous. I imagined myself looking out a window on a farm at the rolling landscape. Matt's 12 string really drove that feeling home, as well as the layered flute which added some beautiful tension. Since the song is about ups and downs, I wanted the last part to be a lot different and more bombastic, it's like a final cry out. I wanted it to feel desperate and raw but also lead to something more resolved on the horizon. Matt had recently gotten me a violin and I thought it would be cool to have a Velvet Underground "Heroin" moment and he shredded it. I rarely reference songs so blatantly, but I decided to indulge myself on this one." - Leanna Kaiser