

lyrics for
things i made up to annoy my (ex)girlfriend

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preface

when i think of that time now, i see the afternoon sun passing through the basement window, as though we might have been doing something right. most days after work, we'd go down there to hang out, have arguments about bullshit, prove theorems, listen to music, and above all else, drink. we'd be at it a while too, because my girlfriend at the time didn't usually get home until about five hours after i did, so there was no danger of the fun police showing up. one day, during one of these after work parties, and for absolutely no reason at all, i picked up my guitar and played something at random. i hadn't played in a long time on account of the guitar being warped to the point that it no longer sounded right, and i never seemed to find one that could take its place. it came to be known as the broken guitar.

the next day i was down there by myself thinking about the day before. that's when "basement music" first came to me. its basic ethos is "press record and play" – it doesn't matter if the guitar is broken, it doesn't matter if you're out of practice, it doesn't matter what you play, it doesn't matter what you sing, it doesn't matter if you are too close or too far from the mic, it doesn't matter how stupid you sound or who you offend, just play because you feel like it at the moment. the first one i did that day was called "basement" and it was all about what me and my friend were doing down there, and perhaps more importantly, why we were down there at all. as i recorded it, i remembered the day before, seeing him tap on an empty wine bottle while i played on the broken guitar, the symbolism was too much.

the more i did it, the more interesting it got. the best basement music wasn't simply improvised – because all basement music was pure improvisation – the best recordings always contained some ambient element that no one could have predicted in advance – a telephone ringing mid song, a dryer buzzer going off, perfectly synchronized with a closing chord, someone cooking with a wooden spoon in a sort of pissed off percussive state that says "you better get the fuck away from me before i throw something at you" – or one time, i got really lucky, and a recording picked up the sound of birds singing along outside my window. they do that you know. if you don't believe me, try it.

so that brings us to the girl, a muse of sorts i suppose. well, this is a little basement music, a collection of eight improvised recordings that she definitely inspired. and rather than attempt to condense the complexity of a love affair into a nice neat paragraph, i think i will just tell you a little about each of the recordings:

1. i was in england at the time, thinking about how much fun it would be if she were there with me. then i stepped back for a moment and thought "wait a minute, she doesn't even like to have fun, you just want to have sex." that thought stayed with me the entire week and eventually led to this recording.
2. before this one, i said "this is the world's dumbest idea", which meant, "i'm about to play something idiotic." but after the fact, when reflecting on its content, i realized that it really was the world's dumbest idea. so i called it that, despite the fact that it is a horrible title.

3. there were different instances of basement music where i set out to intentionally annoy her, and as far as i remember, this is the first of those. i was literally sitting there in a giddy juvenile state thinking “i’ve got to record something that will absolutely send her off the rails.” i could never tell if it really got to her or not, but hey, i tried.
4. so then i came up with a better idea. one night while she was cooking dinner, i sat down on the outskirts of the kitchen and recorded this one. i kept watching, waiting for the moment that she would throw something at me, but it never came. my goal was to record an angry reaction from her, it would have been the best example of basement music ever. the most i got though was a sort of smirk that said “you’re ridiculous if you think that’s going to provoke me.” if you listen, you can hear her stirring with a wooden spoon during the recording, and in the middle where i sort of pause, she’s making noise in the kitchen – it almost broke my concentration, because the whole time i was thinking “damn, what do i sing now?”
5. right, so this one. well, let me just point out that the use of “home/house” is a definite double entendre and leave it at that.
6. she knew a lot about psychological disorders and such, and i’m pretty sure she thought that i had a lot of them. so this recording was a response of sorts, the same one i’d have for any well-adjusted person that goes around judging the perceived instability of others. remember, there are a lot more of us than there are of you.
7. there was a rocking chair in the basement, and one saturday morning she sat there reading while i insisted i could hear something unfamiliar in chords i’d played a million times. then i decided to add a second track to it, she must have waited three hours for me to finish before we could finally leave and go do some thing that i probably didn’t want to do in the first place.
8. same trip to england as in the first track, except now it was the end of the week. i was in a shop when i saw this cool retro apron that said in part “you can have your cake and eat it too” – and i remember thinking, “i’ll be damned if that wasn’t made for her.” she used to wear aprons when she cooked, so i bought it. the cliché stuck in my head though and mixed with a yearning that had been steadily growing all week until it eventually resulted in this track. be sure to listen for the dryer buzzer going off at the end.

i did think a little about re-recording these, because now that i know what i’m supposed to play, it might be possible to improve them. but you can only do something for the first time once. and in my case, this is what it sounded like.

if you were here

on to the airplane
in a drunken fit
i don't want to travel no more
i just wanna quit
and later on in the evening
i'm in some pub again
i can't stand to live my life like this until the end

but if you were here
i'd buy you a beer
even though i know that you don't drink
and if you were here
i'd buy you a prostitute
even though you don't have fun (i think)

i'm wandering down these lonely streets
i am desperate on the inside
there's nothing but heartbeats

but if you were here
i'd buy you a line of coke
even though i know you don't like drugs
and if you were here
i'd slip some spanish fly in your drink
even though i know you're afraid of bugs

on to the airplane
in a drunken fit
i don't wanna live like this no more
i wanna quit
and later on in the evening
i'm in some pub again
i cant stand to live my life like this until the end

but if you were here
i'd buy you a second line
even though i know that you don't dance
and if you were here
i would give up most anything
that would get me inside of your pants.

the world's dumbest idea

i like the way that we
rip each other apart
and i like the way that you
break my heart

and i like the way i ain't
seen you since eight (am)
and i like the way that you
don't think i'm great

oh i'd buy you a new pair of shoes
if you'd take off your clothes
and i'd buy you a brand new dress
if you'd let me play with those

oh i'd buy you a diamond ring
if, uh, you would let me in
and i'd give you all my money
if you'd let me do it again

progressive

i got a girl that likes
all the things that i like
she loves it when i wake her up in the middle of the night
she likes it when i wake her up
for cheap and drunken sex
she knows that these things are really deep
in the middle of the night
i'm there with my cellphone
watching the tv
she doesn't get pissed when i call her by her mom's name
in the middle of the night
one day she got tired
i bought her some dresses
and got her to do what i wanted in bed
in the middle of the night
that don't make her a prostitute
'cause i'm her only client
she loves it when i wake her up in the middle of the night
one day she got tired
i ran out of money
i said "hey honey, would it be okay if i got myself
an immigrant maid to live in the basement,
she could help you clean up and when you were too tired,
she could take care of me at night."
and she said that was alright
and i thought that was really really progressive of her.

barefoot and pregnant

cooking with pots and pans
cooking with arms and hands
cooking things that no one understands

i wish i was barefoot and pregnant
in the kitchen tonight
and i wish that i had myself a husband
to cook something for tonight

cooking with pots and pans
cooking with arms and hands
cooking things that no one understands

well he'd get home from the coal mine right after work
and i'd have one baby on my hip
and i'd be tired but i'd give him all my love
and i would never give him none of my lip

i wish that i were barefoot and pregnant
and had a husband to cook for
i wish that i were barefoot and pregnant
and had a husband to cook for

cabernet blues

well i just got jacked by my girlfriend
she stole my house won't let me in
and i can't get those keys
until i get on my knees
but i
i don't say please
in my own home

well i got those cabernet blues
and they seem impossible to lose
but i don't need no keys
as long as i got these
and the lord
he said "please, don't go home"

“manic depressive”

now how come you're unhappy when you get paid so much money
when you're free to do anything you wanna do on any day of the week?

and how come you're not happy when you have a lovely girlfriend
that will do any god damned thing you want her to do on any day of the week?

'cause i'm a

wrist slashing
suicidal
schizophrenic
manic depressive
and damn i need a drink.

i'm a

self-mutilating
alcoholic
medicating
psychopath
and damn i need a drink.

smoking cigarettes and drinking
passed out on your basement floor
don't you want something else in life?
don't you aspire to be more?

like what, like what?
like what, like what?

oh your god is in my shot glass
your families are all clones
there's no poetry in your escapist lives
or passion in your bones.

like what, like what?
like what, like what?

where they sell the pretty dresses

sex and chocolate
chocolate and sex
do you know which one that you like best?

at the time your valentine confesses
in the store
where they sell the pretty dresses.

cake

i resolve
that this world is nothing
but lady you are something
that i would like to keep
in a dress and smiling
in a dress and smiling

oh maybe you
can have your cake
and eat it too

i resolve
that this world is nothing
but lady you are something
that i would love to keep
in an apron and smiling
in a dress and smiling

oh maybe you
can have your cake
and eat it too
('cause there is nothing i wouldn't do)

i resolve
that this world is empty
but lady you have plenty
that i would love to keep
in a dress and smiling
in paris and smiling

oh maybe you
can have your cake
and eat it too

[well, they weren't all meant to annoy her.]