

Older
Behind the Songs
By: Nick Slayton

Seducing Ourselves

The song was inspired from observing online interaction between people, mostly on social media, but it's become hard to read about anything that interests you online without seeing a comment section filled with hate and immaturity. It seems people let their emotions and immediate reaction to something get the better of them in comment sections, or message boards. If you're fired up about something pause, wait 10-15 minutes before you respond. Responding out of anger never seems to be the rational thing to do. Is it really worth arguing what the greatest movie or music is? Putting someone down because they're favorite movie is one you didn't enjoy. I believe some should take a step back and evaluate why and what we post online. Is complaining about our jobs, lashing out in hate and anger, starting endless debates that seem to do more harm than good, telling everyone what you had for dinner really doing any good in this world? Are you a different person online than who you are in person? Where does the online courage come from? Narcissism plays a huge role in this whether we know it or not. There seems to be a high people get by getting more and more likes, comments and retweets. There is a better way to feel "good" about yourselves. Love others, show kindness when it's not deserved, serve in the community, serve in your church, find ways to give those less fortunate than yourself. Let's take the focus off ourselves, stop complaining about everything and start investing our time and energy to make this world and better place. If we continue down the path we're on with this online life/profile it seems we'll just keep becoming a more self centered society. Let's put more effort into our real world, relationships and stop trying to impress people we rarely see with our vain actions, words and pictures. Let's evaluate our motives, and stop 'Seducing Ourselves'

Philippians 2:3-5 NIV

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

It's Gonna Be Alright

This song comes from a demo I made in 2007 called 'Waist Deep' I wasn't going to include it on this album because the lyrics never really worked for me. But a couple people mentioned they wanted to hear what this song sounded like as a finished product. I didn't have the heart to tell them it's not on the album, so I wrote new lyrics and changed a couple of other things because I used the solo chords for the another song on this album.

Lyrically this song is about raising a family and getting through stressful times together with your spouse, valuing your spouse. There's highs and lows. When my wife is weak, I'm strong and viscera. Days are busy, the week is busy, the whole year is busy. Set aside valuable time with your spouse, and with the kids. Time goes by fast when you're running kids around, working full time and trying to be a good example for your children. It's easy to fall into the passive parent or spouse mode. But our family needs us to put forth the extra effort and be part of their lives. Not just pay the bills. Invest your time into your marriage and parenting. Try to keep things in perspective, look at the big picture. The words in this song don't necessarily express everything in this note, it just happened to be a week I was

feeling a little burnt out. I thought to myself "I love my wife, I love our life together, our story we're writing together. I want to write some lyrics that will lift her up when she's feeling burnt out".

Ephesians 5:21 NIV

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Genesis 2:24 NIV

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

The Way I See the World

I wrote this song back in 2007, it's still one of my favorites. If I think about the lyrics hard enough I always think it should've been two songs. Does this song make sense to anyone but me? But I let it go and went with my original lyrics I wrote back then, and I'll try to give a little insight into the lyrics here.

As far back as I can remember I've always been fascinated with the tragic stories from history. The Kennedy assassination in 1963, the Titanic sinking in 1912, 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Uruguayan rugby teams plane crash in the Andes mountains in 1972. In the song I ask "why" all of these things happened, but I'm not really asking why they happened. (I know why from all of the research I do on these pieces of history) I also remember thinking "wouldn't it be cool to be able to put these stories into a song?" People that know me, always seem to chuckle when they hear those words because they hear me talk about these things all of the time.

Being intrigued by these stories for so long and knowing so much about them, part of me wishes I could go back and stop them from happening. Of course that's impossible, but that's the romance and mystery of a tragic true story. The idea of people being in these tragic situations so unaware of the events about to unfold is just so fascinating to me. Would I have survived? Could I have helped save more people? Would I do nothing? What would my limits be if I was there? I could've stopped Lee Harvey Oswald! I would've seen that iceberg in time! And so on...

The verses to this song come from watching the news, always hearing bad things going on in the world, it's easy to come to the conclusion that we're in a downward spiral.

I want to travel the world, but being so into these tragic events and hearing terrible things on the news makes me not want to out of fear.

But I have peace in my soul, God rescued me from myself when I was a child. I can cast my fears of this world on Him.

Isaiah 41:10 NIV

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Rainy Days

This is just a pure pop song, in music, lyrics and melody. This song is pretty autobiographical, it's talks about my memories as a child growing up in the 80s and 90s. I don't like to live in the past or dwell on it (anymore), that's

unproductive. But I do remember the past quite well, and like to reminisce with family and friends about the past, in a positive way.

The title 'Rainy Days' comes from a memory I have from 1987. We were on vacation in Pennsylvania, it was raining all day. My dad took my brother, younger sister and I to McDonalds and a mall. For some reason I remember being in the McDonald's play place thinking "this is like the greatest day ever". The real rain outside that caused this little trip and the rain sound effects on 'Uncle Albert" from Paul McCartney's 'Ram' album made those 'Rainy Days' my favorite kind of days ever since.

Ecclesiastes 11:9 NIV

You who are young, be happy while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

I'm With You

The older I get and the longer I'm married to my wife, it becomes clearer that we are two individuals growing into one as we age together. When I was younger I lived a more selfish lifestyle, looking out for my best interests rather than putting my wife's first. I'm still learning how to be a better husband every day, but I wanted to write (another) song letting my wife know I'm with her no matter what, I'll be strong when she feels weak or run down and love her unconditionally. Musically this is one of those songs you write in like five minutes. Everything falls into place with little to no effort, which was nice at the time I wrote this song because I was struggling with a couple of other songs on the album. So having this one fall into my lap was refreshing. I wrote the music first and when my wife heard the demo she said "I really like the way that song sounds." So then she got some lyrics written for her because of that encouragement!

Ephesians 5:25 HCSB

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.

God Is With Us

There's a time and place for everything, the good, the bad, the highs and lows. I wanted to write a song that almost everyone could relate to, so I started writing the verses to this song with the "There's a time..." I tried to come up with as many of these scenarios as I could. Hoping to touch on a little bit of everything we've all gone through. Sometimes we can't or choose not to see the big picture, but everything happens in God's time not ours. Musically this is one of my favorite styles of rock music to listen to and play. Fun groove and a catchy melody. This is the song I borrowed some chord changes and guitar solo vibes from 'It's Gonna Be Alright' formally known as 'Waist Deep'.

Ecclesiastes 3

Make Me Holy

I used to sing the melody of this chorus in my head all of the time back in 2007/2008. It's inspired a lot from 'Long Walk Home' by Bruce Springsteen. The vocal line in that song is still one of my favorites that seems to make me think "man that's a great melody". So I wanted to try to make a chorus with a real uplifting feel to it. That's where this song started, it took me awhile to finish it up completely because I wasn't used to writing songs without my brother or friend to bounce ideas off of. But I also liked the chorus so I didn't want to show anyone until I have verses that were really good, lyrically and vibe-wise. Lyrically this song talks about God knowing everything about us, are deepest fears, even are darkest sins. God's will for us is to make morally right choices based on His Word. I need God's grace to change continually, this is just a prayer asking for the grace to become more like Jesus throughout this life on earth.

Psalm 139

1 Peter 1:14-16 NIV

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Cleveland

I love going to concerts. Ever since I went to my first concert when I was twelve, I knew I wanted to play live music for people, and see live music as much as possible. It's such a great experience every time. Of course I have my favorites I like to see live, but I love going to any concert. So, about 10 years ago my sister and I decided to travel to Ohio to see a concert because the band was known for taking 10 year breaks between albums and or tours. Driving to Cleveland to see a concert has become a normal thing for me, as strange as that may sound to some. It's like a mini vacation that only lasts eight hours or so, but so much seems to happen within those hours. A few times I've traveled down to Cleveland by myself for a show, which is a bit odd but it is a nice time to relax and enjoy a show. So musically on this song I tried to create a song that would sound good driving home late at night on the turnpike. The last lyric in the song explains best why I love concerts so much. Seeing a live show inspires me to keep working on my dreams. I still dream of making a career out of my music. And going to a concert here and there helps keep that dream alive, no matter how old I get.

Proverbs 17:22 NIV

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Goodbye

This is a long story.

On January 4, 2012 my friend Bryan M. Humphrey ended his life. We worked together for over a year from 2005-2006. Humphrey and I were very similar in a lot of ways, we got along great. We were both laid off in the fall of 2006 and we went our separate ways but Humphrey and I stayed in touch as much as we could. Life gets busy, he was six years younger than me and I had a wife and three daughters, Humphrey was a single young man trying to find his place still. Humphrey was gifted, he had a lot of natural abilities and talents, I used to always encourage him to go to college and find a career than highlighted those gifts and talents. He had a lot to offer.

Humphrey and I were on different paths for the next five years and didn't hang out much, but every time we talked or text each other there was an instant bonding like we saw each other every day still.

In Humphrey's later years he talked to me about the struggles and issues he was going through and ask me for advise, he would always say "you're right but I never seem to do the right thing." I always tried to lift Humphrey up and encourage him, I wish now that I would've tried to do more to help him out.

Unfortunately Humphrey got mixed up in drugs, he would always get a hold of me when he was going into rehab and when we would come out clean. The last time he really seemed to be finding peace and was learning to live a sober life. He told me isn't wasn't easy but he was trying hard so he could see his "baby boy."

The last month that he was alive he started getting a hold of me more frequently, but something was different, he seemed very distant but not at the same time. He started asking me about the "end times" in the bible, in fact he started asking me a lot of questions about God and what life is all about. This didn't seem to odd though because he always would ask me "bible questions."

Two or three days before Humphrey passed he told me about some personal problems and I told him what I thought was the best way to go on this dilemma and promised I'd help him get through it. Things seemed to end on a high note, and I was excited about being able to help Humphrey out and get him through that problem.

The day before Humphrey passed he called me while I was on my way to work, we talked about everything it seemed. He was asking for our old co-workers phone numbers, we discussed what we had the day or two before, and we ended our call with me telling him we were going to get together for lunch Thursday or Friday and I'd come out to Clinton and pick him up. The last words I spoke to him were "I'll see you Thursday or Friday Humphrey"

The next day my friend who knew Humphrey, text me a message that read "Bad news Humphrey committed suicide." I instantly felt sick to my stomach, it's a moment I'll never forget. I kept thinking about our conversation the day before, I was in a total state of shock.

When funeral arrangements were made I reached out to Humphrey's brother and family which I'd never met, but I felt like I needed to do something for his family. I told his brother Humphrey and I both loved music and I'd be willing to play song for him at the funeral service. The family jumped at the idea, which felt great that I could do this for Humphrey and his family. But I'll never forget standing in the copy room at my church thinking "great, now what am I going to play?"

What an experience that was, meeting these people for the first time and singing for them at the funeral. I remember the sound of emotions and tears as I hit a familiar part of the song that day. I was a wreck, and I was freaking out. I remember thinking I need to concentrate on playing and singing so the family could grieve and listen to the song. I was happy I was able to help the family out and give them a time of music that we all thought Humphrey would've liked.

Humphrey's passing had and continues to have a huge impact on my life. After some years previous of struggling with depression myself, and through that experience I was able to put that behind me ever since. Life is precious, life is short and Humphrey's passing has taught me many things. But what I took away from it the most is I finally feel I have depression under control. It taught me to recognize the events or emotions that would start my downward spiral into a depressed state and I could shut them out right away. I believe the grace of God gives me that ability. Not my own will or power.

I wrote 'Goodbye' from the perspective of being Humphrey in the final seconds of his life, and as a conversation between us. What is the last thought? Are there any last thoughts? Is there a second you think what am I doing? Who was the last person he thought about? Why did he think death was the only solution to his problems?

The last short verse is coming from Humphrey and my perspective, me trying to give advice to him and him saying it's too late for him to change his mind. It's also me imagining that Humphrey changed his mind in the last split second but sadly it was too late. So the final words of the song are telling others with the same struggles to turn it around and change what needs to be changed so they don't end up dead. Sometimes one choice, one decision will make that impossible, once someone is gone it's like they're stuck in that moment and we can't see the rest of their story unfold.

Musically I wanted to create an atmosphere that sounded dark and gloomy but also has nice chord changes on the chorus to give somewhat of an uplifting feel. The end of this song reflects a life ended too soon. The chord pattern never resolves to the D chord (which is what our ears want to hear) and feels finished because it seems Humphrey's life ended prematurely and unfinished.

Drugs, suicide and death seem to be in the news all of the time nowadays, talk to loved ones struggling. Let them know there is a way out of the problems this life and our choices can bring. Remember the ones who need the most love are usually the ones it's hardest to love. We can't change people or make adults do something they don't want to do, but we can show compassion and love for them.

If you struggle with thoughts that death is the only solution to life's problems, please talk to loved ones. You will be missed, you matter to the ones who love you even if you don't feel that's true.

Philippians 4:8-9 NIV

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Psalms 40:1-3 NIV

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.

Hebrews 4:14-16 NIV

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Older

Older. I wrote the opening riff to this song at my church while I was setting up my gear and waiting for the other band members to arrive. I'd got into this pattern of playing these new riffs that I thought were great and never doing anything with them. But this one I just couldn't let go. It had an uplifting feel to it and I thought it could for sure turn into a good song, and it turns out that it's my favorite on this album.

There's very few things in my life that I create that I feel totally confident in, but this song is one of them. I have terrible insecurities about people liking the music I write, but this song and one I wrote for my metal band 'Slayton' called 'Live 'til Death' are the two songs I've written that I feel totally content with. It's easy to write a song, but the fear in writing songs is are people going to feel the way I do when I wrote and play them while they listen from an outside point of view? All I can do is write the best I can, the rest is in your hands (Or ears).

It took me six months to finish the lyrics to this song, I knew I wanted the words to be epic, because I felt the music deserved that. But what do I write about? One night I pulled my car over while listening to the demo to start typing lyrics into my iPhone because the words seemed to be flying through my head and they were so great I just couldn't forget them... Well, none of those words ended up on the finished song. This song was such a huge deal to me I just couldn't accept anything that I didn't feel 1000% confident in. I wanted this song to inspire people, help the find the peace I have in my life finally. "How do I do that?"

This album was going to be called 'Seducing Ourselves' inspired by Roger Waters 1992 album 'Amused to Death's' title track. I wanted to put my lyrical version of 'Amused to Death' out and try to challenge people to live unselfish lives and try to put things into perspective. Well, in the summer of 2014 I searched Seducing Ourselves as a joke on Amazon and saw that there was a book of the same title and artwork I came up for this album. So now what do I do? I told some people close to me about that and they helped me (unknowingly) change the album title to 'Older'. I always wanted this to be the closing song of the record because of its lyrics and the message it sends. So my tribute to Roger Waters now is that the title track is the last song on the album just like 'Amused to Death'. Somehow I feel that if you listen to 'Older' first and go backwards on the album it wouldn't be as effective. This album is a journey through life, my life. There are darker places I could go with my life in these songs, but this album was written while I was and am I a good place in life. When Paul Vuocolo (my photographer and creative partner I go to for comfort and criticism). Asked me what the album was about before the photo shoot, I told him it was about the last 15 years of my life, the good, the bad, and the ugly. The ugly didn't surface as much as I thought it would. In 'I'm with You' the line - "There's been a river of tears" expresses the dark times in my life that I wouldn't change now but if I could I would go and do it all over again I would do things different. I'm Older now, wiser (I think). I was the man I am now I in 2001 the "river of tears line" probably wouldn't exist. I say all of this because now being 'Older' I've learned and grown in ways I never thought I could, maybe I'll explore some of these stories on the next album.

So I decided I would call the album 'Older' since it was my favorite song and I thought people could identify with getting Older. Who doesn't get Older? Who doesn't remember their childhood? Who doesn't remember their teenage years? Who doesn't remember falling in love? Everyone right? Ok so how do I add myself into all of these questions? I add myself. I started thinking about what made me what I am today, the good, the bad and the ugly. I tell my wife now that I wouldn't change anything that I've done in the past which sounds selfish. That's only because I'm so content with where I am now that I wouldn't want life any different. But, as the man I am today if I married Caty today, or became a father for the first time today I would do things different because I'm a different person now than I was in my early twenties. (That make sense?) I was always attached to the line "I'm getting older but everything's changing" which I loved but thought it sounded to emo. But whatever I wrote that line was always my favorite. After months of contemplating about the lyrics I realized there was a non-emo way to sing that line. "I'm getting older, everything's changing". That was perfect because the word BUT was holding me back because I thought it sounded

like I hated my life or something like that. Now that I'm 'Older' I try to choose my words more carefully, I don't want to give people the wrong impression of me. I want to tell people how I really feel inside. I want people to live fulfilled lives, not living a miserable existence but really thriving and really living life to the fullest. You will get more out of life by serving others, not by pleasing ourselves 24/7. That's a lie. Know who you are, know what that voice inside of you is. A conscience can't come from nothing. We were created in the image of God, God served us by coming to earth as a human to take away our sin. Not to just save us from hell, but to sanctify us, change us and give us a life worth living.