

ami d'franco

ON WHICH  
SIDE  
ARE YOU  
ON?

this record is dedicated to my friend and mentor Michael Meldrum 1951-2011

# 1 LIFE BOAT

every time i open my mouth  
i take off my clothes  
and i'm raw and frostbitten  
from being exposed  
i got red scabby hands  
and purple scabby feet  
and you can smell me comin  
from halfway down the street

i remember that old hotel had quite the smell  
where i would go to use the phone  
between the doughnut shop and the pizza parlor  
where i learned to live alone  
sweet sixteen and smiling  
my way out of any jam  
learning the ways of the world, oh my  
learning the ways of man

and i didn't really want a baby  
and i guess that i had a choice  
but i just let it grow inside me  
that persistent little voice  
i guess i got her off and running  
and then run off is what she did  
and that's part of what i think about  
i think about that kid

so now there's nothing left to wish upon  
except the passing cars  
the cacophony of city lights  
is drowning out the stars  
this park bench is a life boat  
and the rest a big dark sea  
and i'm just gonna lie here  
til something comes and finds me

yeah i got this tired old face  
still grinnin most of the time  
just cuz it don't have a better way  
to express what's on its mind  
and i got this running monologue  
entertaining in its outrage  
and i've got the air of an animal  
that's been living in a cage

every time i open my mouth  
i take off my clothes  
and i'm raw and frostbitten  
from being exposed  
i got red scabby hands  
and purple scabby feet  
and you can smell me comin  
from halfway down the street

ani ... baritone guitar, voice, percussion, synth bass  
todd sickafoose ... bowed bass, wurlitzer piano  
adam levy ... distorted electric guitar  
cc adcock ... clean electric guitar

# 2 UNWORRY

i know i've seen you around  
you can't forget that hair  
but i didn't hear you come in  
how long have you been sitting there?  
you know, you can tell me anything  
i promise i don't scare  
let's only ever be allies  
even if the whole background dissolves  
and little pink hearts can pop over our heads  
but we'll keep our cool

i have enjoyed my life  
it's been exciting  
and i've become more peaceful  
no more fighting  
and i ain't gonna waste your time  
wronging and righting  
round and round  
center-bound the grooves on an old LP  
nibbled by minnows  
and licked by a salty sea

i gotta say i'm amazed (not in a good way)  
at how much i don't remember  
i just gotta hope though i'm slow  
it's all part of what i know  
and the facts are pretend anyway  
yeah the facts are pretend anyway

i know i've seen you around  
always in that uniform  
pirate hat just a little stained  
sword just a little worn  
you know, you can tell me anything  
i'm not just tooting my own horn  
let's only ever be allies  
even if the whole background dissolves  
and little pink hearts can pop over our heads  
but we'll keep our cool

teach me to unworry  
i will teach you to unhide  
in the city where they don't need x-rays  
to see each others' insides  
under a big old oak tree  
synchronicity's gathering tide  
round and round  
center-bound the grooves on an old LP  
nibbled by minnows  
and licked by a salty sea

i gotta say i'm amazed (not in a good way)  
at how much i don't remember  
i just gotta hope though i'm slow  
it's all part of what i know  
and the facts are pretend anyway  
yeah the facts are pretend anyway  
yeah the facts are pretend

ani ... guitar, voice  
todd sickafoose ... bass, mellotron, piano, harpsichord  
andy borger ... drums  
mike dillon ... tympanis  
adam levy ... electric guitar

# 3 WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

they stole a few elections  
still we the people won  
we voted out corruption  
and big corporations  
we voted for an end to war  
and new direction  
and we ain't gonna stop now  
until the job is done

come on all good workers!  
this here is our time  
now there's folks in washington  
that care what's on our minds  
come one come all voters!  
let's all vote next time  
show em which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

thirty years of digging  
got us in this hole  
the curse of reaganomics  
has finally taken its toll  
lord knows the free market  
is anything but free  
it costs dearly to the planet  
and the likes of you and me

i don't need no money lenders  
suckin on my tit!  
a little socialism  
don't scare me one bit!  
we could do a whole lot worse  
than europe or canada  
come on mr. president  
come on congress make the law!

which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

they say in orleans parish  
there are no neutrals there  
there's just too much misery  
there's too much despair  
america who are we  
now our innocence is gone?  
forgive us mother africa  
history's done you wrong

too many stories  
written out in black and white  
come on people of privilege  
it's time to join the fight  
are we living in the shadow of slavery  
or are we moving on?  
tell me which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

my mother was a feminist  
she taught me to see  
the road to ruin is paved  
with patriarchy  
so let the way of women  
guide democracy  
and from plunder and pollution  
let mother earth be free

feminism ain't about women  
that's not who it is for  
it's about a shift in consciousness  
that will bring an end to war  
so listen up you fathers  
listen up you sons  
and tell me which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

so are we just consumers  
or are we citizens  
are we going to make more garbage  
or are we going to make amends?  
are you part of the solution  
or are you part of the con?  
tell me  
which side are you on now  
which side are you on?

## *featuring:*

*pete seeger and the rivertown kids*  
*derrick tabb and the roots of music marching crusaders*  
pete seeger ... banjo, backing voice  
ani ... tenor guitar, voice, percussion  
todd sickafoose ... bass, mellotron  
derrick tabb ... snare drum  
andy borger ... drums and percussion  
mike dillon ... percussion  
allison miller ... backing voice  
the rivertown kids ... backing voices  
roots of music marching crusaders ... horns and drums

## 4 SPLINTER

something about this landscape just don't feel right  
hyper air-conditioned and lit up all night  
like we just gotta see how comfortable  
comfortable can get  
like we can't even bring ourselves to sweat

sweat in the summer, shiver in the winter  
just enough to know that we're alive  
watch out for that tv  
it's full of splinters  
and remember you can always go outside  
(really really really far outside)

some might call it conservation  
some might call it common sense  
and maybe it's because i am libra  
but i say balance balance balance balance  
i say balance balance balance balance

who put all this stuff in my apartment?  
who put all this ice in my drink?  
who put the poison in the atmosphere?  
who put the poison in the way i think?

women won't you be our windows?  
women who bleed and bleed and bleed  
women who swell with the tide  
women who change when the wind blows  
show us we are connected to everything  
show us we are not separate from everything

so here's to the trials of living  
here's to feeling our share of pain  
all the way from childbirth to dying  
here's to being connected to everything  
here's to staying connected to everything

ani ... guitar, voices, keyboards  
todd sickafoose ... electric bass, piano, theremin  
andy borger ... drums and percussion  
mike dillon ... vibraphone, tympanis, tubular bells  
adam levy ... electric guitar  
michael juan nunez ... pedal steel guitar

## 5 PROMISCUITY

promiscuity is nothing more than traveling  
there's more than one way to see the world  
and some of us like to stick close to home  
and some of us are columbus  
what can i say  
nature always gets her way  
nature always gets her way

and seeing the world through another's eyes  
is like busting a window in a house of lies  
and in the end you make up your own mind  
and there's wide open spaces  
and little cordoned off places  
check em out  
check em all out  
take your time

how far is too far?  
how much is enough?  
you gotta test this stuff

how you gonna know  
what you need, what you like  
til you been around the block  
a few times on that bike  
how you gonna know  
who you are, what you feel  
til you felt a few things  
that just don't feel real

promiscuity is research and development  
evolution begs embellishment  
and baby you're a star  
you got to invisibilize society  
when society gets cruel  
just make like you are nature's tool  
which you are  
nature always gets her way  
nature always gets her way

and monogamy is that carnival trophy you earn  
when you throw that ball  
into that urn  
it's somewhat dumb luck  
somewhat learned  
and you just know when it's your turn

and honesty is the hardest part  
yeah honesty is the highest art  
and honestly i myself just started  
and eureka i'm less broken-hearted

how you gonna know  
what you need, what you like  
til you been around the block  
a few times on that bike  
how you gonna know  
who you are, what you feel  
til you felt a few things  
that just don't feel real

ani ... guitar, voices  
todd sickafoose ... bass  
allison miller ... drums  
mike dillon ... vibraphone  
adam levy ... electric guitar

# 6 ALBACORE

look here i just tattooed  
a wedding band  
on what looks like to me  
my mother's hand  
i'm no blushing girl  
no innocent dove  
it took me a long time to find love

but now i have no doubt  
and i never will  
that i am meant to be  
loving you  
and it fairly blew my mind  
to be so sure  
when that little needle said i do

my love gives me hope  
my love gives me pride  
my love gets me past  
the land mines inside  
when i am next to you  
i am more me  
inside me is a room to which you hold the key

look at that honeymoon  
in the albacore sky  
look with all of you  
not just your eye  
look at its dancing light  
through the whispering trees  
look how i love you and you love me  
look how i love you and you love me

ani ... guitar, voice, synthesizer  
todd sickafoose ... bass, piano, sk1  
andy borger ... drums and percussion  
dave rosser ... electric guitar

can't sit on my porch and smoke a j  
 and remember how peaceful life can be  
 but all night long are a bunch of pushers  
 selling drugs right there on my tv  
 drugs that whether or not i buy  
 are going to end up in my water supply  
 along with who knows what else  
 who knows when  
 just gotta take a deep breath  
 and drink it in

round here if there is one thing people know  
 it's that government ain't there for you  
 it's all for show  
 and i'm tryin to tell em  
 it don't have to be so!  
 but i can understand that their confidence is low  
 cuz round here people so high they can see  
 over the tops of the tall pine trees  
 down to the mouth of the mississippi

blood ignited in a blighted sky  
 blood on the water like we all could die  
 blood in the reeds glistening in the sun  
 blood on our hands each and every one

here in the calm before the wars  
 when the earth shrugs us off like dinosaurs  
 here in the sunset days of yore  
 the first signs washing ashore

...

goddess come and lift us  
 here in deepest louisiane  
 in the gut where hunches come from  
 a message goes out loud as it can

...

and you'd a thought we'd a come more far somehow  
 since the changing of the guard and all  
 i mean, dude could be FDR right now  
 and instead he's just shifting his weight  
 and the disappointment is the knockout blow  
 filmed in torturous slow-mo  
 oh hope please come where i can see  
 don't let the poison get the best of me

...

goddess come and lift us  
 here in deepest louisiane  
 in the gut where hunches come from  
 a message goes out loud as it can

...

truth is for telling  
 truth is foretold  
 truth is for those with the guts to behold  
 we got vampires down here in louisiane  
 we need voodoo dolls  
 we need talisman  
 we need wooden stakes and shards of light  
 we need harbingers riding through the night  
 we need fountain pens  
 we need whale harpoons  
 to overthrow the oil tycoons  
 cuz there's no fish in the water  
 no birds in the sky  
 no life in the soil  
 no end to the lie  
 no time like the present  
 and it is passing us by  
 but it's never too late  
 never too late to try  
 cuz if we all had to change  
 we all just would  
 and we would move closer  
 and that would be good  
 and we would buy local and we would buy less  
 and we'd realize that wasn't our happiness  
 no that wasn't our happiness  
 no that wasn't our happiness  
 no that wasn't our happiness  
 no that wasn't

...

goddess come and lift us  
 here in deepest louisiane  
 oh goddess come and lift us  
 here in deepest louisiane  
 oh goddess come and lift us  
 here in deepest louisiane  
 in the gut where hunches come from  
 a message goes out loud as it can

...

ani ... guitar, voices, harpsichord  
 ivan neville ... keyboard bass, synthesizer, backing voice  
 cyril neville ... drums  
 anaïs mitchell ... backing voice  
 jeffrey clemens ... percussion  
 ashley toman ... harp

## 8 IF YR NOT

if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not getting happier as you get older  
then yr fuckin up

if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not aware that what you put out  
is what you get back  
that you make the world  
through the way you act  
you can't harness the awesome power of that fact

and it builds up  
it builds up  
it builds up  
it builds up  
yeah your luck builds up til it's bigger than you  
then it just carries you through  
you better ready yourself cuz what you gonna do  
if yr not

if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not  
if yr not getting happier as you get older  
then yr fuckin up

ani ... electric guitar, voices  
todd sickafoose ... electric bass  
andy borger ... drums and percussion  
mike dillon ... tubular bells  
ben ellman ... tenor saxophone  
mark mullins ... trombone  
matt perrine ... tuba

## 9 HEARSE

i don't wanna strive for nothin anymore  
i just wanna lie here with you  
keep the wolves outside the door  
there is nothin in this world you could ever show me  
that could ever matter more

little baby in the next room dreamin  
is just icing on the cake  
there is nothing like dancin  
our dance of give and take  
one step forward  
one step sideways  
that helpless feeling when the earth shakes

i will always be your lover  
even after our atoms are dispersed  
we'll be pushing up daisies  
and my crush will just be gettin worse  
and i will follow you into the next life  
like a dog chasing after a hearse

i just don't wanna strive for nothin anymore  
i just wanna lie here with you  
keep the wolves outside the door  
there is nothin in this world you could ever show me  
that could ever matter more

ani ... guitar, voice, drum  
todd sickafoose ... bowed bass, piano, bells, pump organ  
mike napolitano ... drum loops

# 10 MARIACHI

i'll be the right hand  
you be the left hand  
you and me we make  
a mariachi band  
standin on the corner  
waitin for the light  
when you're around i always feel alright  
from the painted desert over to paris, france  
i've followed your pointed finger with my glance  
and i've seen so much more than i would see  
if it was just me  
just me  
if it was just me  
just me  
our first rehearsal was under a redwood tree  
and you brought lyrics and you handed them to me  
and you said here you are  
the only one  
who can sing this  
and i felt kissed and i wondered  
if it was just me  
just me  
if it was just me  
just me  
let's get this party started  
let's squeeze the lime  
the mariachi life is really more than fine  
you know i'll meet you  
you know i'll be flying blind  
at the appointed corner at the appointed time  
at the appointed corner at the appointed time  
what if it was just me  
just me?

ani ... guitar, voice, bells  
todd sickafoose ... bass, piano  
allison miller ... drums, backing voice  
mike dillon ... vibraphone, triangle

# 11 AMENDMENT

wouldn't it be nice if we had an amendment  
to give civil rights to women  
to once and for all just really lay it down  
from the point of view of women

i know what you're thinking  
that's just redundant  
chicks got it good now  
they can almost be president  
but it's worker against worker  
time and time again  
cuz the rich use certain issues as a tool  
and when i say we need the ERA  
it ain't cuz i'm a fool  
it's cuz without it  
nobody can get away with anything cool

and you don't have to go far  
like just over to canada  
to feel a heightened sense of live and let live  
what is it about americans  
like so many pit bulls  
trained to attack and to never give

we gotta put down abortion  
put it down in the books for good  
as central to the civil rights of women  
make diversity legal  
make it finally understood  
through the civil rights of women

and if you don't like abortion  
don't have an abortion!  
and teach your children  
how they can avoid them  
but don't treat all women  
like they are your children  
compassion has many faces, many names  
and if men can kill  
and be decorated instead of blamed  
then a woman called upon to mother  
can choose to refrain

contrary to eons of old-time religion  
your body is your only true dominion  
nature is not here to serve you  
(or at any cost to preserve you)  
that's just some preacher man's  
old-time opinion

life is sacred  
life is also profane  
a woman's life must be hers to name  
let an amendment put this brutal game to rest

trust  
women will still take you to their breast  
trust  
women will always do their best  
trust  
our differences make us stronger not less

in this amendment shall be  
family structures shall be free  
we'll have the right to civil union  
with equal rights and equal protection  
intolerance finally ruined

and then there's the kids' rights!  
(they'll naturally be on board)  
the funnel through which women's lives are poured  
our family is so big and we're all so very small  
let a web of relationship be laid over it all

over the strata of power piled up to the sky  
over the illusion of autonomy on which it relies  
over any absolute that nature does not supply

and the birthing woman shall regain her place  
in a circle of women in a sacred space  
turn off the machines  
put away the knives  
this amendment shall deliver from bondage  
midwives

ani ... 12-string, baritone, and standard guitar, voices, percussion  
todd sickafoose ... bass  
andy borger ... drums  
mike dillon ... vibraphone and atmospherics  
skerik ... tenor saxophone (solo) and atmospherics  
adam levy ... electric guitar  
ashley toman ... harp

# 12 ZOO

i can no longer watch tv  
cuz that shit really melts my brain  
i think i'm what they call sensitive  
and easily thrown off my game  
all that bloodshed and pettiness  
just makes the world seem so insane  
and i just feel drained

i go to do my food shopping  
and all i can see is packaging  
one big mountain of garbage  
about to be happening  
and i walk past my own self loathing  
like i walk past animals in the zoo  
trying not to really see them  
and the prison they didn't choose

and if i should ever quit your spotlight  
i hope you won't think me wrong  
says the poet to the moonlight  
says the singer to the song  
it's enough just to stay upright  
upright in every single way  
and pour your love into your children  
until there's nothing left to say  
pour your love into your children  
until there's nothing left to say

ani ... tenor guitar, voice, atmospherics  
todd sickafoose ... electric bass, wurlitzer piano



all songs by ani difranco  
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except *which side are you on?*  
by florence reece, new lyrics by ani difranco  
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## credits

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recorded by mike napolitano

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assistant engineer and pro tools  
operator extraordinaire ... ben liscio

and at the dugout, new orleans, la

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mastered by brent lambert at the kitchen

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design ... brian grunert, annie stoll,  
and maria taczak

peacock photograph ... michael napolitano  
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funnel and feather photographs ... biff henrich

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