

# anaïs mitchell: the brightness

(lyrics from the forthcoming album)

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## 1. your fonder heart

come out, come on, come outside  
don't you hide your handsome face from me  
I want to see you half-lit in the half-light  
laughing with the whites of your dark eyes  
shining  
darkly

way over yonder I'm waiting and wondering  
with your fonder heart lies

come out, the streets are breathing  
heaving green to red to green  
come with your nicotine and wine  
tambourine keeping time  
come and find me in the evening

way over yonder I'm waiting and wondering  
with your fonder heart lies  
way over yonder I'm waiting and wondering  
whether your fonder heart lies

come out, come inspired  
you will not come to harm  
if I cannot take you for a liar or a lover  
I'll take you for my brother in arms

way over yonder I'm waiting and wondering  
with your fonder heart lies  
way over yonder I'm waiting and wondering  
whether your fonder heart lies

## 2. of a friday night

just across from the hospital  
still in sight of the red lights  
a couple blocks from the orthodox church  
that's where the old poet lived  
in his eyeglasses and his necktie  
at the window looking down  
on the young men passing by  
on the fullness of the town

full of them good time gamblers  
full of their restless wives  
full of them midnight writers  
out in the quarter on a friday night  
out in the brightness of a friday night

and the big horns blowed and the pianos  
played  
and the music rose to the old man's ears  
I guess those were the olden days  
I guess those were the golden years

and now the town is empty  
empty as a mirror  
empty as the harbor and the barber's chair  
where did the old poet go?  
I asked around  
nobody knows

maybe I came too early  
maybe I came too late  
I'm waiting in the shadows of the scaffolds  
of the old cafés where you told me to wait  
and I've got this lingering feeling  
it's like I've slipped between  
fingers of the century  
I know you know what I mean

I'll be a good time gambler  
I'll be a restless wife  
I'll be a midnight writer  
out in the quarter on a friday night  
call me a good time gambler  
call me a restless wife  
call me a midnight writer  
out in the quarter on a friday night  
out in the brightness of a friday night  
call me the brightness of a friday night

## 3. namesake

I've worn out all of your records  
I've torn out page after page  
I have lain with the shadows you threw  
when you danced with the bright colored  
lights of the stage  
hey and aren't you grateful?  
say and ain't you got fun?  
being so good at what you do  
doing it right in front of everyone  
everybody knows you  
I want to know you!

how you roll like the rolling waters  
you rise like the bright morning stars  
you go fast like the freight train going so fast  
and I don't even know who you are  
but I would not disappoint you  
if you let me kiss your mouth  
if you let me get to the bottom of you  
if you let me find you out

everybody knows you  
nobody knows you!  
everybody knows you  
I want to know you!

o, but I, in the name of my namesake  
am a beautiful fly on the wall of  
your four-chambered heart-break  
a spy in the house of your love

## 4. shenandoah

lord have mercy on my mind  
mercy on my memory  
I'm lying neath the same Virginia sky  
where she lay beside me, bidding time  
trying to abide me  
every night when the night was long  
she was clinging to me  
told me twice that her love was strong  
stronger than the love in old love songs  
she was singing to me

o, shenandoah  
cross the rolling water  
o, shenandoah  
where's your restless daughter?

don't know what I gave them for  
all my little lessons  
how you start the peas before the corn  
how you start before the air is warm  
she was never listening  
I could see it there in her sorry eyes  
hear it in her breathing  
didn't come to me like some surprise  
didn't even ask her why  
when she said, "I'm leaving"

o, shenandoah  
cross the rolling water  
o, shenandoah  
where's your willful daughter?

I brought in the winter squash  
I brought in the melon  
cortland, empire, macintosh  
on the afternoon before the frost  
I could feel it coming  
I can see her now in her flowery clothes  
all those things I bought her  
trailing her perfume wherever she goes  
cross the rolling water  
shenandoah  
where's your reckless daughter?  
shenandoah  
mercy on your daughter

## 5. changer

if I can't keep it  
at least let me call it by name  
that was called falling  
this is called pain  
it's called love, what I'm losing  
I know love is a stranger  
I know that changes come  
I know love is a changer

I'm gonna go quietly  
you don't have to tell me to  
just let me lie a little longer  
next to you  
I'm not trying to bother you  
I'm just trying to breathe you in  
and then I will leave you there  
where you are sleeping

but speaking of loving you, I do  
I'm telling you stranger to stranger  
whatever changes come to you  
I'm telling you changer to changer

morning has stolen your shadow from me  
but I hold its shape in my mind  
it's the shape of your back when you turned it  
on me  
one last time

out in the waking world  
nobody understands  
exactly how light it is  
exactly how free I am  
one minute I'm laughing  
and the next one I'm lost  
I'm watching the birds fly by  
I'm watching the highways cross  
speaking of loving you, I do  
I'm telling you stranger to stranger  
whatever changes come to you  
I'm telling you changer to changer

if I can't keep it, at least let me call it by  
name

## 6. song of the magi

when we came  
we came through the cold  
we came bearing gifts of gold  
and frankincense and myrrh  
and there were trumpets playing  
there were angels looking down  
on a west bank town  
and he so loved the world!

wore we then our warmest capes  
wore we then our walking shoes  
opened wide the city gates  
and let us through

a child is born  
born in Bethlehem  
born in a cattle pen  
a child is born on the killing floor  
and still he no crying makes  
still as the air is he  
lying so prayerfully there  
waiting for the war  
welcome home, my child  
your home is a checkpoint now  
your home is a border town  
welcome to the brawl  
life ain't fair, my child  
put your hands in the air, my child  
slowly now, single file, now  
up against the wall

wear we now our warmest coats  
wear we now our walking shoes  
open wide the gates of hope  
and let us through

when we came  
we came through the cold  
we came bearing gifts of gold  
and frankincense and myrrh  
and there were shepherds praying  
there were lions laying down  
with the lambs in a west bank town  
and he so loved the world!

## 7. santa fe dream

if it should happen  
if you should wake in the night  
there in the city of faith  
where your true love lies  
asleep like a baby  
with her hands at her head  
and the moon in your window  
sheds her light on the bed

if it should happen  
if you should rise alone  
and go sit staring in the shadows  
of all that you own  
at the cloth on the table  
and the cable bill  
you're too old to keep moving  
you're too young to keep still

all the while the rambling stars  
all the while the roving moon  
all the while the railroad cars  
keep passing by  
passing by you

if it should happen  
if you should turn to see  
the way that moon sheds her light  
on your love where she sleeps  
go lay down beside her  
and wonder again  
that such a small window  
lets so much light in

## 8. hobo's lullabye

o go to sleep you weary hobo  
lay back, lay back and close your eyes  
I know you've seen a lot of sorrow  
I know you've heard a lot of lies

they said, "work hard and save your money"  
you were a worker all your life  
and in the end who got the honey  
but the hand that robbed the hive?  
it's a hard bargain they drive

goodbye, goodbye to main street  
goodbye, company town  
and who can say how far away  
this wayward train is bound?

and though the hounds come round your  
doorway  
and though the viper's at your heel  
well you can dream your rags to riches  
on a stitch of gleaming steel  
on a shining reel-to-reel

goodbye, goodbye to state street  
goodbye, capitol grounds  
and who can say how far away  
this wayward train is bound?

o go to sleep you weary hobo  
lay back, lay back and close your eyes  
I know you've seen a lot of sorrow  
I know you've heard a lot of lies

## 9. old-fashioned hat

summer went the way of spring  
winter's waiting in the wings  
and we haven't saved anything  
but that's alright  
cause we already paid the rent

there's still some money we haven't spent  
go put on something different  
we're going out tonight

I have loved you for so long  
even when I could only do you wrong  
go see if they have our song  
on the jukebox over there  
a dollar gets you seven plays  
I watch you through a smoky haze  
a secret smile on your face  
I'm sorry if I stare

but you look like a stranger  
in that old-fashioned hat  
and I've got a pocketful of change  
and I don't wanna go home yet

clearly I remember when  
I used to scratch my poems  
on the backs of other lovers in  
the darkness of my mind  
back before I made my home  
in the marrow of your bones  
now I know your figure like my own  
even from behind

but you look like a stranger  
in that old-fashioned hat  
and I've got a pocketful of change  
and I don't wanna go home yet

hey and we'll be married soon  
we'll be dancing to this very tune  
then we'll have a honeymoon  
then we'll start to fight  
bring the tonic and the gin  
say what was your name again?  
stick another quarter in  
and stay with me tonight

you look like a stranger  
in that old-fashioned hat  
and I've got a pocketful of change  
and I don't wanna go home yet

#### **10. hades & persephone (from HADESTOWN)**

PERSEPHONE  
Hades, my husband, Hades, my light  
Hades, my darkness  
if you had heard how he sang tonight  
you'd pity poor Orpheus!

all of his sorrow won't fit in his chest  
it just burns like a fire in the pit of his chest

and his heart is a bird on a spit in his chest  
how long, how long, how long?

HADES  
how long? just as long as Hades is king  
nothing comes of wishing on stars  
nothing comes of the songs people sing  
however sorry they are

give them a piece and they'll take it all  
show them the crack and they'll tear down  
the wall  
lend them an ear and the kingdom will fall  
the kingdom will fall for a song

PERSEPHONE  
what does he care for the logic of kings?  
the laws of your underworld?  
it is only for love that he sings!  
he sings for the love of a girl

HADES  
you and your pity don't fit in my bed  
you just burn like a fire in the pit of my bed  
and I turn like a bird on a spit in my bed  
how long, how long, how long?

PERSEPHONE  
how long? just as long as I am your wife  
it's true the earth must die  
but then the earth comes back to life  
and the sun just goes on rising

BOTH  
and how does the sun even fit in the sky?  
it just burns like a fire in the pit of the sky  
and the earth is a bird on a spit in the sky  
how long, how long, how long?

#### **11. out of pawn**

hey uncle louie, I wrote you a song  
I'm glad you got your heart out of pawn  
I'm glad you got your king out of check  
at least that's how things stood when I saw  
you last

it was New Orleans before the flood  
you had just met a girl! you were falling in  
love!  
she lived on the levee and knew the blues  
and played harmonica better than you

in a neighborhood bar  
in the middle of summer  
shoulder-to-shoulder  
setting like sister and brother

all of the sorrows you told each other  
rose like smoke from the room

the heat and the bourbon was in your head  
you were talking in tongues! you were back  
from the dead!  
and the girl and the city were one and the same  
and last call never came

and I can see you swimming out into the street  
I can hear you singing, "when I die, don't cry  
for me"

hey uncle louie, the city is spinning  
she sure is pretty. you sure are grinning  
she's leading you home from the heat of the  
bar  
to lie on the levee and look at the stars

you can hold her hand  
you can kiss her face  
go slow if you can  
cause the world is a very sad place  
and when she leaves she'll leave no trace  
and the world will still be there

the sky is colored in purple and yellow  
you lie on the levee with stones for pillows  
and you and the girl and the city make love  
with the harlequin sky up above