

LEVERAGE MODELS

W H I T E S

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Written, produced, recorded & arranged by Shannon Fields, with critical input, musical contributions, love and support from the members of Leverage Models, my family, below:

Additional Vocals: Alena Spanger, Andrew Carlson, & Dave Scanlon

Bass Guitars: Andrew Carlson & Rob Lundberg

Drum & Percussion: Jeff Gretz & Max Jaffe

Guitars: Dave Scanlon

Also with: Jon Natchez (*Baritone Saxophone*), Joseph Shabason (*Soprano & Alto Saxophones*), Anthony LaMarca (Simmons and snare drum), & Matt Lavelle (*Cuica*)

Additional Recording: Jim Bertini at Galaxy Smith in Brooklyn NY, & D. James Goodwin at The Isokon, Woodstock, NY; the ending of Day One is a field recording at the Harold Arts/Ohio 8550 art residency program in Chesterhill, Ohio.

Mixed & Mastered by D. James Goodwin at The Isokon, Woodstock, NY

Cover Art: Photograph © Gehard Demetz. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; Artwork - Gehard Demetz, *Stones in my Pocket*, 2013, lime wood and acrylic paint, 67 3/4 x 15 x 12 1/2 inches. Graphic Design and Layout by Benedict Kupstas.

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~ shannon

i. Day One

Little towns revive, then they choke. And failure is a turn-on in every farmland small town I know.
We hate to be talked down to but we love it in song.
I won't tell you it'll be all right, I don't know. But it gets better than this (well, not for certain, but it happens).
At 40 years old, sentimental songs can seem like ethical transactions.

Things have to fall apart some more before we know why we care or what we're here for.
You have dressed yourselves for class war and I am wearing everything that I own.

This is 'last call', where are you going? Is there somewhere safe you can stay?
I make you laugh and you make me laugh,
and I know that we both feel like we are parodies of God.

The airwaves are full of no one like us, of models who brag. Isn't it strange we're inspired by these people so rich
and loud, and so perfect, saying they've *won*?

Day 1: We can do better than this (*I'm trying harder to believe it...*)

2. A Scout's Prayer (*What a Man Knows*)

Shove me around. I was in charge. It's all my fault. Again. Bandage her up. Do you think that she'll come to? Tell me it's all right. Show me how to ask for something bright (or hit me 'til I smile).

Here is my uncle:

He asks me, in the rapture, where I'll land. Asks if I'm a man.

He says:

"You're hardly at the age where you can say that you know precisely DICK about what pain is. Let it go, and think on this:

When the lights go out you'll have to make a fire. You will have to be a Boy Scout when the power lines fall. As the cities get cold we'll have to make a fire, when the lights go out all over the world.

"Turn around. Bodies are facts when they can be used. And you're a tiny sprout...a simple pale of shit and sentiment flailing around. Don't you tell me you know...you *DON'T*. Your mother was strange, she held you too close. I used to think that you was strange, but now I want you to know that here, together, in this hunting blind, well...*I* can see where you'll go (what a *man* knows, when the lights go out):

YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE A FIRE..."

&c.

3. Dark Pools (Music Will Not Save Us)

Directly and gently expose the quantitative signs, data-driven, (and) with no legal blindness (hard labor for the criminal & white).

We don't want your clothes to fail you. You will need surplus funds, one small hedged option (*two* to fall in love).

And then the cannibals won beneath a sky that had gagged on the trees, and they could not eat enough.

I enjoyed every employee my tribe had bought – this defined our love.

This defines our love:

- We may not know our ideals anymore
- We will betray a common goal
- We are unequal

Just take this and go. I know music will not save us.

You wore a mask on the phone and I could *honestly NOT. STOP. DANCING*; and you were trading in dark pools; and my dead mother was there and she could *NOT. STOP. DANCING*.

I was in prison awhile (an unreliable witness spoke up, I was sold out by my friends). And I enjoyed the fever that it brought. I've enjoyed asylum from the top.

We may not know how to feel anymore. This time I won't tell you that you'll heal. You will be harmed by the men who will love you...I know.

I know that words will not save us.

[*Next: a woman I don't know spoke in tongues while my mother and I danced*]

4. When the Money's Gone

I'm coming back when the money's gone. I like you better when you're breaking down and miserable.

You should know this kind of episodic family drama won't just smile and die.

I'm feeling tired and politically exposed.
A cheaper version of my younger self, and lost in my clothes, heaven knows
(But, *Heaven* never had the urge to finally pull the plug).

Are we getting old enough to rationalize that this is 'healthy competition' now?

Let's talk about our feelings:
My body's aging and I'm just another asset away from being bored with life.

There isn't time to operate alone. We have no control.

It seems like we'll sing anything if the melody's good, if you can live in the beat.
[And] it's hard to rhyme about

 'Secret Renditions',
or 'The Final Days of an American Culture War That Will Almost Certainly Take Us Down'.

So this is *healthy* competition now.

Let's talk about our feelings: *my body's aging and I'm just another asset away from being bored with life.*

There isn't time to operate alone. When you see this you'll come home. You have no control.



We have before us *kids* lining the road. Little men with rifles whose *hearts bleed for you*.

We have before us *bombs* lining the road. And little men with rifles.

5. If I Let You Stay

When your flights are grounded
Your wallet is tight and the runway full of hail
The airport is empty
You always come to stay.

If I let you stay you might never leave, [and] finally believe what I believe.

Tonight could get cold and I've got nothing to eat
It's been years now and the machinery has crushed me faster than you
You had to lie
Like you were calm in the ground
And *I* was never very good at keeping my worst opinions down.

Only *this* time (one more night to sit and smile), and you might *finally* believe what I believe.

And maybe you can give me something to help me sleep.

Tomorrow the day will just beat you down. Until then I'm around.

This city plays plays a vicious host.
Some days it feels like you're wearing someone's ghost.

You were such a strong kid
Now it seems like you get thinner every year
If I could, I would get fat and happy *for* you
(a satire of control).

If I let you stay you might never leave.

6. Very Small People

Emergencies recede before emerging properties: a 'Crisis of Authority'.

You lie before the lessons of economy.

Enough

Enough

Enough

This isn't helping at all

We're *not empowered* by the underdogs.

Very smart people have written (*and very smart people are often wrong*):

This country was "built to hide the bodies

It's healthy to be out of hope".

These are the fish that rot from the head down (*it had to be said, so put your hands down*).

He saw you from the car

The aristocracy you are

There's nothing to respect in how you "started from the bottom", now you're animals and stars.

Enough

Enough

Enough

They write the mystery out of us.

Tonight your aspirations die.

Stuck on the ground, we speak the language of the fluently *down*.

Here's where they sell a public service to a private hotel.

Very small people have fallen and

Very smart people are often wrong.

7. Senators

I am a raft on the ocean with undocumented eyesight
And I feel the Gulf Stream
High on that kind of midmorning sunlight,
the kind of light that sells a lie.

And *you* feel “alright”.

Okay, so,
We made coffee on the hotplate
We ate ramen in the hallway
We identified the exits (*just in case*).

I know you don't do this most days,
And you're falling for the 'wrong kind',
But does it feel all right?
Do I remind you of your dad?

When you were born your father wondered what kind of drunk you would be.

We have spoken up and savaged
I'm an [Object]

You're a [Measuring Tool],
an [Instrument For Shaking Down a Government in Turmoil].

I have left my body.

You are breaking someone's bread for “Progress”.

I am a [Raft On the Ocean]

You are an [Animal Skin Rug]

I don't expect you to embrace this
(*and we're both drunk*).
If not tonight, maybe next year I'll aspire to something better –
maybe a butcher or a driver –
and I will fill my lungs with you.

**When you were born your mother
(*glittering, mad to see, neurologically lost*),
wondered what kind of Senator you would be.**

We won't speak up
Our language fails to find a hold
Sincerity slides, as advertised
Our brothers joined their fathers...sung for banks
And this is not our protest
This is just the end of Progress.

8. At life around terrified animals

You say you're never gonna leave him alone with anyone else.
And this was right: you brought it all on yourself.

She was a bitter old man by 18, trading a gun for a suit
(*You go feral and blind, and are broken, by too much school*)

There was the Hospital
And then the Group Home,
And then the: "*Get your shit together for your baby son...*"
A 'pyramid scheme' to manage in your 20's
Then you broke down:

"Dump me in the quarry on King's Road. Re-mantling the silence in the forest is a full-time undertaking. Undertaken from us were the luminous and heavy condensations. Conversations are the evidence of needlepoint conscriptions. Will you take me?"

(Nonsense.)

We built a life around terrified animals, splayed out in silage and carved into stone
Antibiotics surround every love letter,
dividing the excrement from the blood.

Staring at your son
He's borrowed your resentment and you're begging for him to default.

- (a) A good person
- (b) A good mother
- (c) A friend

PICK ONE.

"Dump me in the quarry on King's Road. I feel tired. I feel crowd-sourced. I feel limbic. I feel like a dual-axle truck that's passing you on the right. I feel like speaking in the language of oppression. Have I? I feel an episode coming on."

9. Your Healthiest Friends

When you get sick,
In the end you hate your healthiest friends.

This is a family if you are drunk enough,
So drink on.

This kind of light says it all: "*Here we are, bring on the fog!
What's more violent than the proteins of a teenage boy?*"

I didn't come here to sing,
I just came to help you get some sleep.

Don't let the sky falling down keep you from dancing.

Here's what we know (*and no one else really needs to know*):
My brother's slow – it took him 40 years to die at a desk
(*lucky for us.*)

Is this a language-game? Is that all that we're trading in? When your hair grows back you will find this:

- (1) Men ruin all this
- (2) Women will wreck their hearts with prayer, ugly hosannas (*that's how*).
- (4) You'll dance in midair.

These boys laugh at all these women who wreck their hearts with prayer.
With ugly hosannas – that's how you dance in midair.

10. Runners

I was on fire
[And] left you to grow up
I meant to call some day
But I'm no longer on fire
The market took a turn
Each of us burns in our own way
Each day is a god
Not *one* of them kind
At least they get off watching us run.

Son, you can't afford this future. So I'm chasing it off.

Watching it run,
You'd never know how there are cables between us we cannot see ,
But which bind our blood to this charred wreck of a city block.

I'd cross the street and move to the country to avoid running into someone I knew back then
And once in awhile you send me your papers
I read these papers but don't understand
You've got a brain that I don't think came from me,
And maybe you get off watching me run.

But you can't afford *my* future so I've been chasing it off.