

FRANCESCA BLANCHARD

DEUX VISIONS - ABOUT THE SONGS

1. Rame

The title means "Row" in English. I wrote this song during my junior year of college, when everything seemed to be falling apart. It is about endurance, about rowing through the tough time and trusting that I'll eventually hit shore if I keep going. At the time, I had no idea who I was, why I was here...I was lost. This song is an anthem of hope for when I thought there was none.

It has a steady, constant beat, I call it my Neil Young song. As with all of my French songs, I invite American listeners to allow themselves to get lost in the song, in the melody and *feel*. The words will make sense if you listen, but they are not crucial to "understanding the song". You will understand if you allow yourself to hear the music and ignore the fact that you don't speak the language. It's the *music* I invite you to hear.

2. Save A Different Way

This song is about a girl who describes all the different ways in which she can escape to safety when starting a relationship (by running away on the roads or getting soaked by the rain, etc.). When I was younger, I used to often feel trapped when I started dating a boy or when someone else's happiness depended on me. But in the chorus, she talks about how a certain someone saves her in a different way, how she doesn't feel the need to escape when with him. It's about opening up to another person, accepting and surrendering. It's about trusting.

The rhythm is semi folk. I didn't draw from any particular styles, none that I know of in any case. I was playing around with different rhythms and trying not to stay stuck on the finger picking. The organ gives it a warm, rich sound, almost a gospel flavor.

This song was on my original EP. I wanted to bring it back because it had more juice to give, more potential. And because it was one of the first songs I'd written, I felt it needed to be on the album. It is a much more upbeat version than the one on the EP. Chris and I spun it 180° and reinvented it a little. While the version on my EP is soft and moving, this one is more rocking and upbeat. A symbol of how I've grown since the recording of my EP back in 2011.

3. Le Blues

This song reflects on my multi-cultural, multi-colorful family and where I stand amongst it all. With a French father, American mother, and two adopted siblings, I sometimes struggled as a child to find my place...the non-adopted one, the French *and* American one, the *white* one. What is my color? Where do I fit? I think, due to my family's makeup, each of us (my siblings and I) have had to face these questions at one point or another, some more than others. It's all represented through the metaphor of color, what hues each family member sees and leans toward.

"Maman dit faut voir la vie en rose. Papa ne mélange pas le blanc et rouge / My mother tells me To "see life in pink". My father won't mix red with white." refers to my parents' often opposing points of views on things, their personal takes on how I should see life/BE in it..." *J'suis une fille*

qui rarement s'oppose. Perso j'prefere les tons du blues/ I'm a girl who rarely keeps in sync. But shades of blue are what give me delight" is about how, despite my hesitancy to speak up or oppose myself in any given situation, I've chosen the color blue, have found my own personal point of view. I go on to describe my siblings' personalities and color palettes (sticking to the color theme) and how, in the end, we're all part of one big rainbow anyway, and despite opposing views, personalities, colors... we are family.

The song is also about my tendency to relate more towards the melancholic side of things, the "blues". Growing up as a child on my family's beautiful provincial property, I'd often have alone time and sit in my secret hideout (the rock with the tree, overlooking the sea) and dwell on what made life so beautiful yet tragic. As a little girl with *a lot* of feelings, this is what my heart and mind would come up with when staring out onto the horizon: How beautifully sad it all is, how tragically fleeting and deceptively peaceful. Everything will eventually change but that water will still be there, this rock and this tree...I think, from a very young age, I've always had "the blues". It's almost a part of my hereditary makeup, it's a feeling I was born with. And it's beautiful.

This is the first fingerpicking song on the album, a style I adopted from countless playing "Blackbird" by the Beatles. It fits within a country-folk/Americana realm, almost slightly bossa nova.

I remember sitting in my living room at the time, thinking of lyrics and of the song's overall theme. My mother is an avid lover of colors, each wall in our house is painted in a different bright, bold *something*. Not one wall is like the other. Looking back, I definitely drew my inspiration from those walls.

4. Home Is A Cage

I wrote this my junior year of college, when I was playing an 80-year old Polish immigrant in Leah McLoughlin's play *Tongue of A Bird*. Our director at the time had instructed us to come to our first rehearsal with a tangible product representing our character's point of view on *home*. My character, Zofia, had lost her daughter to suicide years ago and had been struggling to find reason ever since. She lived in an old cabin in the woods and would sit in the same chair in her empty living room, staring out the window, waiting for her daughter to return. The play is a cast of women, each character in search of their place in the world; in search of a home. It tackles the question *What is home?* Is it a *place*? Is it the *people* you love? This song has since become a little ode to my theatre training, my personal bridge in storytelling both through theatre and through music.

This is a folk ballade, a melancholic lullaby. It is in 6/8, so lends itself to a different kind of swing, compared to the previous three songs on the album.

5. Mon Ange

This song title means "My Angel" and it was written my freshman year of college, on a rainy afternoon in my tiny little dorm room, with one little window overlooking our red stone Brookline courtyard. It was a very lonely point in my life, I didn't want be in school, I didn't know why I had chosen to study theatre, I didn't have many friends, I was in love with a boy from high school who had quickly and easily moved on.

The song is about laughing in times when nothing in life is particularly funny, forcing one's self to smile despite the odds. It's about hope. *My Angel* is the light at the end of the tunnel, the promise of a soon-to-be real, genuine smile.

"Mon Ange" was originally on my 6-Track EP but holds such a profound and important place in my musical life that it had to be on the album. Similarly to "Save A Different Way", Chris and I dissected it a little more, added more intricate layers and created a fuller, more whole sound. This song is my personal favorite on the album.

6. Wanderer

This song is about a wanderer (me), searching through life for a home. This is the catalyst song for all my years of having to adjust to different cultures and surroundings, of suffering depression through college, of searching for love...It is the little bohemian ode to my wandering soul, my overly sensitive and melancholic self. It is dramatic, but I'm an actress ☺

It's another 6/8 song, a bit of a waltz. It swings and swirls, yet stays to the steady stomping of the beat. This song has followed me through the last four years and can fit any scenario in my life. It is the truest representation of ME in a song.

7. Now That You Are Gone

This is my Romeo & Juliet song ☺. It is about the first person I'd fallen in love with. I had secretly held a crush for four years in high school and we finally, towards the end of our senior year, came together. Our fling was symbiotic to the coming of spring, the end of high school...to new beginnings, independence, new chapters. While those last two months of school were filled with excitement and a yearning to GO, I had finally gotten all I'd secretly wanted and change was the last thing I needed. Summer came and went, and before I knew it I was in college in Boston, far enough from what I knew, far from *him*, all the while knowing he didn't take a second look back...he was ready and excited for college. To him, I was just a temporary summer fling and for me, he was the man I dreamt of marrying. This song is about heartbreak, and about how, despite others I will eventually love down the line, I will never love someone the way I loved him.

There's something so pure, innocent, and tragically naive about a first love. That feeling is never translated to another human being, but stays in the heartbreak archives. It is there to remind us of how we've loved, and hopefully learned.

8. Tu N'existes Pas

This song is about a non-existent lover, the title translates as "You Don't Exist." I've been having an affair with an imaginary person, and I'm coming to terms with the fact that I have to tell them they don't exist. It's partly a parody on my profoundly romantic tendencies and my need to always be in (some kind of) love.

I remember writing this song. It was summer of 2012. I was sitting out on the grass by the waterfront in Burlington. All around me were happy couples cuddling, sharing a picnic, enjoying the sun...and I began to think about how, instead of yearning for that person I don't have, instead of believing I'd be happier if only I had someone in my life, what if I lived as if I had my own little lover, a personal, imaginary companion. And then I started thinking about how this little imaginary

boyfriend would start to believe he was real, and about how I'd have to then break the spell and tell him the truth: he only lives in my head.

9. Empty House

This song is about taking the time to notice how full my life has been. It is about the people along the way who have marked me and guided me, about hope in the hard, hectic times. I was inspired to write the song when I spent two weeks alone house sitting for our house. The family was in the process of moving to New Delhi, India, so our house was vacant and empty. Furniture was sparse...I could hear my voice echoing in each new room I walked into. I was also in charge of our pet cockatiel that would chirp endlessly through the night. It was very much an in-between place for both my family and myself. By the second week, I felt like I was going crazy. I had no one to talk to, no chair to sit in, yet all this *space*...so I filled it with music.

10. Papa...Père

"Papa...Father" is an ode to three different fathers; mine, my cousin's (my uncle) and my friend's. It was written one night after talking to my friend who had lost her father from heart failure when she was two. Her whole life, she'd grown up without a father. She told me the story of when she was 14. It was the eve of her birthday and she was lying out on the grass, staring up at the sky, crying out to her father "where are you, dad?" And right then, she saw a shooting star. To her, that moment told meant her father was watching over and despite how she'd never known him the way she'd wished, he was with her. Her story reminded of my uncle's passing in 2006, my cousin and best friend's father. The shock was so huge for her. I remember witnessing the aftermath, how much she'd changed and grown after the fact. This all made me so grateful to have my father alive and well, and thankful for the beautiful relationship we share. We've had our difficulties, like all families do, but this song is about finding the beauty in the hardships and finding the strength to forgive and move forward.

11. Pas D'sa Faute

This song tells the story of a working class prostitute living in the outskirts of Paris and how, despite the hardships of the job, she wouldn't change a thing. It is light. It's a tease. It's fun and not meant to be taken too seriously ☺. The title means, "Its not her fault."

12. The Sea (Zach's Song)

This song is about yearning for something that is moving away from you. More specifically, I yearn for a man to love and want *me*, while *he* yearns for change as he stares off into the ocean. I remember performing this during a concert sometime back in 2013, and locking eyes with my very good friend Zach's mother. Zach had drowned the previous winter in a tragic accident. The lyrics are so close to home and strangely relevant to Zach's story, that when we made eye contact, we both knew it was for him. In that instant, Zach was with us. The song was written before this moment was shared, but it was as if it was predestined to be Zach's Song. I will never forget that feeling of looking into his mother's eyes and *knowing*.