

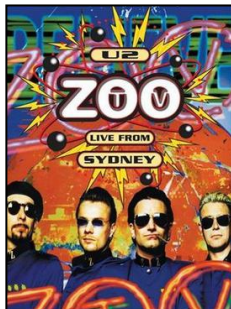
Hallelujah - discovering love

Recently, I have been looking through everything I've kept on backups over the years, and I discovered a folder with some journal entries. This is one entry I felt I had to share.

It's March 21st, 2003, and on this day, one day after the U.S. officially declared war on Iraq, I found myself unable to get a grasp. It's now been about 2 hours after my desire to write this came over me. I had just come home from picking up my son Sascha, it was raining outside, and nothing seemed right. I walked into my apartment to find it feeling, once again, empty. Sherrie had been here the night before and this morning too, but was gone again. Sascha and I settled in. He picked out a VHS tape of **ZOO TV**, a live recording of one of **U2**'s shows from the early nineties. He said, "I like dis one." I popped it into the VCR, a brand new machine that now graced the top of my wall unit, after months of saying to myself, "Do I really need a VCR?". I looked around the room, looked at my son, and felt numb. I felt like I was caught in some sort of "groundhog day."

Feeling very much overwhelmed, looking for direction or answers and questioning what all of this was for, an image appeared, and the sound was heard. It was midway through the show, and a song was just starting, a cover of "Satellite of Love" by Lou Reed. As I sat there watching, listening, I felt myself slipping into what felt right for the first time all day. Sascha sat quietly, absorbing this not-too-familiar song by his favorite band. I sat and watched as Lou Reed magically appeared over a huge television screen via satellite, joining Bono midway through his own song, in perfect sync, a satellite somewhere in space bringing two time zones together for an audience of thousands. I was not aware of it, but I would soon be in a place, a space, a moment that takes me so far away I can hardly get back. The song ended, and I thought, here I am, sitting in my living room with my beautiful three and 1/2-year-old boy by my side, watching a rock band combine music and a message of love with technology while halfway around the globe, a different kind of band is rocking the world with bullets, rockets, bombs and a message to the world, that once again, we just can't seem to get it right.

Sascha sat beside me, obliquely not himself, looking almost like a cat or dog just before an earthquake. I found myself also out of alignment, crooked, and disjointed. The next song, "Dirty Day," said it all. This was a dirty day, a day that cannot be cleaned, that can only be endured until the night runs a mop over it, and you



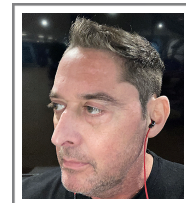
find yourself waking to a completely different layer of dirt the next day. Sascha listens and asks me to sing. So I do. I'm doing my best, but some lyrics escape me. But it feels good to sing. The song does not finish, and another one begins, one of those liberties taken during live concerts. "Bullet The Blue Sky" reverberates across the stadium, the guitar's sound so dark and threatening, like a fighter jet in the dead of night striking down on lands unknown below. I continue to sing. My voice was smooth and powerful and filled with heart and emotion. Pumping out vocals like I know I can but so often forget I can. Vocals that live deep inside me that only come out to play when I least expect it.

Sascha is on the couch, the strobe lights in the concert causing him to twitch as he plays his invisible guitar with violent downward strokes of his arm. It's almost frightening to see him. I realize that I need to write what is happening and translate these visuals, sounds, and feelings into black-and-white text. I want to write so badly, but I can't; I am in the moment, and I cannot leave it. I push record in my head and try to sort out flashes of thoughts, ideas, and emotions whizzing through my mind. I don't want to forget how this feels right now. I want to capture this, but I know that each minute that goes by is acting like a solvent spilled on fresh paint. I find myself on the verge of crying, my eyes filling with water, my son calling out to me as Bono sings the last words, "And we fall into the arms of America." I see my son; he is alive, he is sparkling, he is bouncing and vibrant, unaware that people are dying at this very moment, that little people like him will be losing their daddy's tonight. He calls out to me, arms wide-open, standing on my bed; I rush towards him, concealing my tears, and fall into the arms, the arms of love. The next song starts with "So she woke up, woke up from where she was lying still, said I gotta do something about where we're going...". The song is "Running to Stand Still." It parallels how I felt today, watching Sherrie as she woke up this morning, laying still. I think of the conversation we had and how afraid we are right now to move forward in any direction. Some days it comes easy, and other days, it just doesn't come at all. I know the answer will come, but it just wasn't there today. I felt helpless, almost weak, for the first time, I think, since we've been together. I continue to sing the song, which pulls me closer to tears, but my voice won't quit.



My mind suddenly calls out to me. I understand it all at once. I know it for sure. I believe it. I need it. I want it. I understand why I love to sing. I understand that this is how I met Sherrie, the love of my life. I met her because I love to sing, and through that love, I found true love. It was this yearning inside me that brought me to her.

I walk away from my son as he calls out to me, and I start to cry as I hear Bono ending the song with a repeated chanting of "Hallelujahs." I cannot contain it; I am bursting. In one split second, I remembered what it felt like to stand beside the woman I would fall in love with in the span of one evening at a U2 concert. I remembered how Bono ended "Walk On" with hallelujahs that night and how great it felt to sing out loud at the top of my lungs, to sing *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah*, not even aware that I had found what I was looking for all my life without even looking.



- Written by Patrick Franc

SONG OF THE MONTH "Bullet The Blue Sky" by U2
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