

JANUARY:

1 – Counting Crows – Mercury

We all have songs that were written for us and about us in our own minds; songs we appropriate with an arrogant ease. This is mine. Over the year I'll share secrets with you, shed tears for you, lose myself in myself for you. If I tell you now that this is my song, you'll be half way to understanding me.

She is a victim of her own responses, shackled to a heart that wants to settle and then runs away...
She'll change so suddenly, she's just like mercury yeah, but she's all right with me.

2 - Dusty Springfield – Son of a Preacher Man

Lazy Sunday, hangover gone, just the slow ticking of the clock to remind me that the year is passing already. The apathy of four o'clock twilight nudges me in the wrong direction: back to bed. I'll try again tomorrow.

Being good isn't always easy no matter how hard I try

3 – Simon and Garfunkel – Bright Eyes

Always heartbreaking, always beautiful: I'm reminded, in more ways than one, of a book I couldn't finish. I stand to silent attention and watch twitching ears, ever watchful in the long grass. A dog bounds too close at the top of the path. Fear sweeps like a tidal wave through the family and, in a blur of fur, they are gone.

How can the light that burned so brightly suddenly burn so pale? Bright eyes.

4 – Sondre Lerche – Sleep on Needles

It's a thing I have; a singer / songwriter thing. Second only to a hot bath with wine and bubbles, there's nothing quite like this kind of music for soothing away discontent, which is strange as most singer / songwriters ply a strong and steady trade in tunes of disaffection and despair. This is simply a great little song. Last year's album passed me by for the most part; I should pay more attention – who knows what else I missed. This is taken from his first album, and the chorus is just divine.

If I treasured the truth, I would tell it to you

5 - Tori Amos - A Sorta Fairytale

I heard this song today on Radio 2 and it just fitted in so well to the damp, heavy tone of the day. I woke from a dream about him and was feeling wistful. I'd been thinking about him all morning when I heard this song. It just felt right.

I knew then it would be a life long thing, but I didn't know that we could break a silver lining

I love that about music; that something you're really familiar with can suddenly seem inside out and mean something totally different to you in another space and time.

6 - Manic Street Preachers – Another Invented Disease

The album's been going round in the car CD player for months now but today I've been air-drumming like a good'un to this! (The hi-hats incidentally seem to be in swing time while the drums are quite definitely straight 4/4 rock, for those that care I would imagine this is quite difficult to pull off!)

Daylight bores the sunshine out of me, I need to feel, I need to feel...

...We need, and we will always need, another invented disease.

7 - Damien Rice - Cannonball

This always makes me a little tender, it's just lovely. It came out of the blue on the radio and left me contemplative and a touch fragile. I don't think of someone in particular when I hear the words, but still they break me. And I guess that's the appeal; without evening knowing why, you're torn apart by someone else's feelings, and what they did with them.

Still a little bit of your words I long to hear

8 – Bob Dylan – You're A Big Girl Now

A friend at work told me I needed some Dylan in my life and recommended '*Blood on the Tracks*' as a good place to start. My first experience of Dylan was reading *Tarantula* years ago, and I consequently took the exploration no further! I don't think he's ever going to be a big favourite, but after a few days of trying, this track is sticking in my head – I guess that's a good sign...

I'm going out of my mind with a pain that stops and starts
Like a corkscrew to my heart ever since we've been apart

9 – Remy Zero - Save Me

Smallville is back! Sunday afternoons just haven't been the same. Kristin Kreuk really is the most exquisite creature... A lazy afternoon spent dreaming of small town adventure and a beautiful woman.
I feel my wings have broken in your hands...

10 – Peter Gabriel - Solsbury Hill

The last few days I've been having those kinds of dreams where everything is so clear - right there before you in sparkling reality. The feeling kind of carries on into the day - it's a positivity borne of an unconscious mind, and it feels alien, but good.
In waking thought, my moments of clarity are few, but they give me the peace I need to remember my own strength. Signs come and go. And I smile inside.
When illusion spin her net I'm never where I want to be and liberty she pirouette when I think that I am free
Watched by empty silhouettes who close their eyes but still can see

11 – R.E.M. - I've Been High.

Today I went to the south of France on a whim to see R.E.M. As you can imagine there were more than a few 'moments' at a gig which I'd been less than enthusiastic about attending. If I'd known I'd be in the very front row of a completely static audience, affording me a perfect, uninterrupted view of our lord and master Stipe not three feet away, there would have been no doubt at all in my mind!
Michael swung his megaphone and was all sidelong slysmiles and shimmies, Mikey [Mills] was on top backing vocal form and was looking right at me as he sung the opening lines to The One I Love (I know this because I was right in front of him and he smiled at me!).
They played old songs and new songs, crowd pleasers and obscurities. As ever I ran the gauntlet of emotions that R.E.M. lead me through and while I can't pick one stand out track as it really was an amazing gig, my song of today is 'I've Been High' :

Today has been about relearning a part of me lost to the past, stifled beneath a fear borne of apathy and complacency. I didn't come here looking for answers, I don't seek an elusive ideal. I know why I am and why I do and why I will. But somewhere along the line, I hid a part of me away, buried under common sense and caution. It will take a while to relearn old pleasures but this time I have wisdom on my side, and the faith in my heart I used to seek, is the weapon by my side.
For now I am whole again.
Have you seen? Have not will travel. Have I missed the big reveal?
Do my eyes, do my eyes seem empty? I've forgotten how this feels...
Was I wrong? I don't know, don't answer. I just needed to believe...
I've been high, I've climbed so high, the light, sometimes it washes over me.
I close my eyes so I can see. Make my make believe, believe in me.

12 – R.E.M. - I Wanted to be Wrong

There's no good reason for my choice today, other than this struck me anew last night - it just seemed more poignant in a country so outspokenly anti-war.
I only hope that sometime, on one of my more eloquent days, I will muster half the poetic beauty Michael Stipe can.
Mythology's seductive and it turned a trick on me that I have just begun to understand.
I told you I wanted to be wrong, but everyone is humming a song that I don't understand.

13 – Athlete - Chances

I wasn't prepared for this. I like to know that if I'm going to have my heart broken it will be by someone I love and admire. And then came Athlete.
This is taken from their forthcoming album '*Tourist*' which I didn't want to get sucked into. I fought it as long as I could but my resistance is low and I finally succumbed this afternoon. I just sat and listened and was spellbound. I am merely the latest in a very long line to fall for this.
Take all your chances while you can, you never know when they'll pass you by...
I need some more of you to take me over.
You know I did 'cause I can't calculate how to start again. It's all about you.

14 – Everclear - Wonderful

Despite having lyrics that are miserable as sin, I just find this song so uplifting. It makes me very nostalgic for a warm, happy, rose-tinted childhood. It's also a great tune to sing along to - the harmonies are excellent! The perfect happysad song for the start of the weekend...

Promises mean everything when you're little and the world is so big
I just don't understand how you can smile with all those tears in your eyes
When you tell me everything is wonderful now

15 – Motion Picture Soundtrack - In Memory of Her.

The band played a fantastic gig last night and this was definitely the standout track - complete strangers were moshing! There is the sweet smell of progress in the air!

In memory of her, the smell of her skin... Lover, I still feel you

16 – Easyworld - How Did It Ever Come to This

The end of a love affair? Years pass and before you know it you're in that rut you swore you'd never end up in. Except one of you doesn't even realise there is a rut; thinks that the oil in this machine is running hot and smooth. So you try the one-sided conversations and the speaking around the issues in metaphors, and finally you give up. This is not for me, not the rut or the giving up. But I can't be one of a pair, yet driven and determined on my own. That's not for me either.

How did it ever come to this? - you speak of love and I don't know what it is...

17 – U2 - Sometimes You Can't Make it On Your Own

This song was always one of my favourites on '*How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*' and hearing it on every radio station every hour is not diminishing its appeal any. It's just lovely - so simple, and always gets me a little choked up - I think because it's about telling people you love that you love them while you still can.

Listen to me now. I need to let you know. You don't have to go it alone

18 – David Ford – State of the Union

In what is a tirade against the current, erm... state of the nation, Dave has written one of his best and vitriolic songs yet. From a simple acoustic guitar line with broken hearted vocals it builds to a calamitous cacophony of regret and despair. Somehow though, it still seems to me like a love song. Maybe that's why we're in the mess we are...

Clever men know all that and all this, & they will talk and they will talk and they don't fucking listen
It's a shame, it's a shame, it's a shame.

It's no life but god, it's a living. Come on Jesus Christ come back: all is forgiven

We are lost, we are lost, we are lost.

19 – Chemical Brothers - Close Your Eyes

This is a new track from the forthcoming album '*Push the Button*'. It's very laid back and quite beautiful in its simplicity and features the Magic Numbers. I love the way the vocal lines twirl around each other, almost coating the song in a web of soft sound. I find it really soothing - ideal for the end of a long day.

In your eyes I can see that you've had enough. Come in to me.

20 – Tanita Tikaram - Good Tradition

On my 17th Birthday I had my first driving lesson. My instructor told me I looked like Tanita Tikaram. I've since looked into this and found it to be an untruth! I always liked this song though, without knowing anything else about her and I hadn't heard it for years until today when in true fashion it popped up twice on Radio 2! After a few weeks my instructor declared a hidden love for me, which spurred me on even more to pass my test first time and get the hell outta there!

Strong feelings never bother you - you hold your head up while the rest of us try to.

21 – Survivor - Eye of the Tiger

Loud and proud, baby! Somebody once said the mark of a great song is whether you can drive to it. This is a driving song to rival the best of them, replete with chugging bass and steering wheel drums. And you can always pull out the air guitar for when you stop at the traffic lights. Amusingly, an older woman once asked for this track by requesting 'Ivor the Tiger', the Welsh version, presumably!

Don't lose your grip on the dreams of the past, you must fight just to keep them alive.

22 – Paddy Casey - Saints and Sinners

Paddy first featured in my collection nearly 6 years ago when I bought a single on impulse because the artwork was nice! I played it a few times and while I never got into it, and it never lured me any further in, I didn't have the heart to oust it in favour of other impulse purchases. I'm glad because having heard his new material I've revisited the older stuff and I get it now - I guess some music just works well at the right time for the right reasons - who knows what we may have passed up on years ago which would have formed the ideal soundtrack to today.

Ink on sheets making losers and winners - well it's not what your dreams should be...

23 – Massive Attack - A Prayer for England

What a way to start the day - brilliant sunshine, an open road and this tune playing so loudly it shakes the mirrors! It's a very dark, bleak song (vocals by Sinéad O'Connor) which works perfectly in the harsh chill of winter.

Let not another search be made in vain

24 – Gruff Rhys - Gwn Mi Wn

I heard this on the radio today and simply had to have it - it just makes me smile! I have absolutely no idea what he's singing about, given that it's all in Welsh, but I love it! (Strangely the only Super Furry Animals album I like is the Welsh one – 'Mwng'). This fills the hole vacated by the Beta Band rather nicely.

25 – The Beatles - Hey Jude

According to a fabulous little book I got for Christmas (Read's 'Musical Reciter') you can hear John or George say 'Fucking hell!' after he fluffs his backing vocals. As it's always been my favourite Beatles track (and I've never noticed it before) I thought I'd check it out. And it's true! It happens at 2 minutes 58 for those of you who want to verify for yourself in digital!

26 – Idlewild - El Capitan

Another one of those occasions when it's impossible to pick just one track for a day.

So I've picked El Capitan - apparently it's a mountain in California where people feel compelled to jump off into euphoric oblivion - it seems apt:

I went to see Idlewild play an acoustic set in London last night and I'm still shaking quietly inside. For a band that cemented themselves firmly as one of my favourite bands many years ago, they've come a very long way. Where the Roddy of the past would flail uncomfortably, tonight he holds the stage with a coy confidence and a sidelong smile.

It was a strange but beautiful experience - the audience responding well to the seated venue, although it was clear that most of us wanted to at least stand up and sway a little. The usual rock and roll etiquette was abandoned in favour of altogether more civilised proceedings: Roddy seemed as amused as the rest of us when a girl politely carried underwear to the front and dropped it carefully on the stage!

Hearing some of my favourite songs in their original organic state felt like a homecoming. I relived anew the desperate delight of the songs that made me apply for a job at EMI and I experienced for the first time the absolute beauty of an album's worth of new songs which have become already like old friends. There's something about live music that makes me feel like nothing else. If you see me with a very wide smile over the next few days, this is why.

Circled by your secrets... at least I'm in good company because there's no-one else around except me.

27 – Beatles - Two of Us

There's a 'hidden' bonus track at the end of the new Idlewild album (sorry, sorry... it'll probably take about a month for this to wear off so I apologise in advance!) which the band played last night - Roddy saying that it didn't make the album proper as it was rather too jaunty and he's not altogether comfortable with jaunty it seems. Anyway, I have no idea what the song's called but the melody at the end really reminded me of something else... All the way home from the gig I had disjointed lyrics and fragmented melodies running through my head and I just couldn't think what it was (my gig partner helpfully suggested it may have been the new U2 single - was he even *listening!*?) After frantic midnight Googling proved fruitless I promised to hunt it out today regardless... and low and behold it was the Beatles all along!

You and me chasing paper...

28 – U2 - Vertigo.

Ticketmaster sucks! After an hour spent nurturing my RSI hitting redial, I gave up. Thank goodness for friends in the fanclub!

Just give me what I want, and no-one gets hurt...

29 – Poor Old Ben - Found Myself A Clown's Mask

Forgive them a terrible name and even worse song titles, because the music really is rather lovely. In that fragile Scottish vein not unlike the Reindeer Section this chugs along with an appealing melancholy. The website is pretty too: <http://www.pooroldben.org/>

Safety from this messed up world and safety from your messed up words
And she feels some other way

30 – Willy Mason - Oxygen

The world needs more protest songs: particularly in the face of impressive propaganda from the Middle East at the moment. He's only 19, with so much to say. For a change, it seems like it's worth listening.

I wanna hold up my head with dignity
Proud of a life where to give means more than to take

31 – Manic Street Preachers - No Surface All Feeling

Not quite sure why really. I woke up today with an inexplicable sadness (it happens every now and then!) And then halfway through the day a friend gave me a late Christmas present - the Forever Delayed book of Manics photos. Flicking through has made me a little wistful (see tomorrow's song, no doubt) but very contented! Such beautiful boys!

Tell me forever just to go

FEBRUARY

1 – R.E.M. - E-Bow the Letter

Ten years ago today the world lost a very fucked up young musician. And I say lost because to this day we don't know why and where and if. But it still touches us, those of us who haven't quite been devoured by cynicism and despair, as much as we may profess to have been. Whatever you might think about the disappearance of Richey Edwards, he was a poetic genius, and the world isn't quite so beautiful without him.

Nothing was ever going to fit today. It's been strange and disjointed. This is as close as I can get right now.

This fame thing: I don't get it.
I wrapped my hand in plastic to try to look through it,
Maybelline eyes and girl-as-boy moves.
I can take you far. This star thing: I don't get it...

I don't want to disappoint you, I'm not here to anoint you,
I would lick your feet but is that the sickest move?
I wear my own crown of sadness and sorrow,
and who'd have thought tomorrow could be so strange.
My loss. And here we go again.

2 – Foo Fighters - Everlong

I woke with lyrics from Monkey Wrench going round in my head 'I still remember every single word you said'. There's something about memory and the things we choose to remember. I can recall certain conversations in their entirety: every word, every nuance. They bathe me in the warmth of moments shared and dreams discovered. I played *'The Colour and the Shape'* first thing this morning and through force of habit I put on Everlong first. And this line hit me. Which melded with the whole memory thing and hey presto, I was off down that particular spiral again... At least I'm consistent!

And I wonder...
If everything could ever feel this real forever
If anything could ever be this good again

3 – Teitur - Rough Around the Edges

I've just been doing a lot of thinking, so not much music recently... Sometimes, much as I love it, music is just too much, and silence becomes the only comforter. While music offers points for pondering and streams of sound to lose oneself in, silence alone leaves you space to think things through.

Its ok. I'm alright

I'm just a little rough around the edges of this life.

4 – Maroon Five - She Will Be Loved

For a commercial record done to death by airplay this still manages to catch me every time. Despite the wisdom of the lyrics 'It's not always rainbows and butterflies, it's compromise that moves us along', I'm always tempted more by 'I drove for miles and miles and wound up at your door'. It's plaintive, honest and straightforward, and I never quite know whether to smile or cry.

5 – Athlete - Wires

Just heartbreaking.

Got to get to you. Got to see this through.

6 - All About Eve - Martha's Harbour

Sat in a French cafe overlooking the Mediterranean, sipping coffee, watching passers by, whiling away the afternoon in the winter sunshine.

You are an ocean wave my love, crashing at the bow...

7 – Juliet - Avalon

I don't know anything about her (despite an initial hunch it was Juliet Lewis, since proved wrong) but this dance track is firmly under my skin. Every now and then those kind of records come along that make me want to get leathered and go clubbing and dance for hours. Not often, mind! Brilliant vocals, dark string line and a great package of remixes too. And she sounds pretty dirty - I think I like her! The irony of the lyrics is not lost on me:

We'll take a holiday, you know I'd love you better.

8 – Bobby Womack - Across 110th Street

Every time I hear this I want to put on some platforms and flares and sashay through a bustling city at the height of summer. OK, so it's not quite that warm, but I think I did this some justice today!

I've been struck with how right the French are with some things and how they don't seem to have a clue in other respects (nothing like sweeping generalisations!). On one hand I haven't seen a single fat person since I've been here - kids in pushchairs chewing on bread and apples with seemingly no desire for sweets and crisps. But at the same time people drop litter with a careless abandon and no regard for the pollution they cause. (And I realised I haven't had to dodge dog mess like this since the 80s!).

9 – Natalie Imbruglia - That Day

The first thing I see as I step through my front door - Ms Imbruglia smiling coyly from the front of this week's Music Week. Good Morning! Looking forward to that particular return...

I made myself play this as soon as I got in - she hesitates in all the right places! There are so many tracks you forget about which are absolutely great... this is one.

I walked into that cloud again and I lost myself...

10 – Idlewild - I'm Happy to be Here Tonight

I love the feeling of capability and empowerment that comes from a long conversation with someone special.

My friends keep me grounded. In the midst of everything there's the peace of friendship - thank you.

You and me talk freely at night. This is my chaos.

11 – The Pogues - Tuesday Morning

This is such an infectious song - it verily bounces along and never fails to make me smile. But it wasn't always mine. This song came from another. And I've had to try hard to disassociate from that; I've found in the past that songs can become tainted by the stories around them, by loves gone wrong or friendships lost; here is an emotional attachment to the origins of the song which detracts from the song itself. Who knows how I'll feel about this song in the future; I suspect it will prove difficult for a while. More often than not though, the songs are strong enough to win through.

But I knew that you, with your heart beating and your eyes shining, would be dreaming of me...

12 – Ben Christophers - Healer

Ben has the voice of an angel with the darkest of hearts. I hadn't heard this for a while, and then it cropped up on a homemade compilation I was playing earlier. I stopped. I listened. I took it all in. Perfect.

You're the best thing, healer, save me ...

13 – The theme music to The Lord of the Rings.

He wanted to watch all three director's cuts back to back.

I mostly sat in front of the fire reading, but the tune has wormed its way into my psyche regardless...

14 – Jane Wiedlin - Rush Hour

A friend was talking about the great response he got when he slotted this into his DJ set at the weekend.

It is a great tune! It reminds me of laying on my parents' lawn as a child, watching the clouds drift across the vast blue sky.

It's so good, baby when you're at the wheel...

15 – KT Tunstall - Black Horse and the Cherry Tree

I think this is going to be a real love it or loathe it record - not the best song on the album but the one everybody seems to be raving about. She's not the first to do the whole handheld sampler thing, but it seems she's going to get all the credit.

No, no, you're not the one for me...

16 – House of Love - Love You Too Much

I had been thinking this was an excellent comeback single. Until, that is, I played 'Shine On' again - and that really *is* an excellent single!

17 – Bananarama - Robert DeNiro's Waiting

I have no idea why but I've been singing it to myself lots today! I just love the chord progression into the chorus...

Driving through one bleak and dreary seaside town after another, this has really lifted the mood.

This is my only escape from it all:

Watching a film or a face on the wall.

18 – Happy Birthday - Stevie Wonder

It's his Birthday today and as this was what I woke up singing to myself, it's stuck with me all day! (Although I had to fight quite hard to stop the Altered Images track taking over!)

Sing it loud as you can

Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday

19 – R.E.M. - Undertow

A rare opportunity: my favourite band in a small venue with my best friend beside me. But it doesn't always go according to plan. London was so cold tonight, we shivered our way through songs so familiar they course through our veins with ease. And then there were the talkers and revellers who don't realise what they're ignoring as they continue their tawdry inane conversations around us. Undertow was a high point in a fairly low evening. And all I can remember is checking out Mike's fingering in the chorus...

I know how I wanted this to be.

20 – The Stranglers - Golden Brown

One of my all time favourite songs; it brings in the light and heat of summer evenings. Apt then that it should come to me in the depths of winter on a day when I spent most of my time shaking in the cold.

Golden brown texture like sun...

21 – America - Horse With No Name

A day of endings and beginnings. Maybe all we can ask for in death, as in life, is that we touch someone; that someone thinks fondly of us. Maybe even someone we've never met. For Hunter S. Thompson, who inspired in me a creative sort of nihilism.

The heat was hot and the ground was dry

But the air was full of sound

22 – How Deep Is Your Love - The Bee Gees

Oldest Cat was sat in the bath watching me as I took off my make-up this evening (Youngest Cat can't see him in there - they play psychological warfare games in the bathroom...). Youngest Cat walked by and Oldest Cat's eyes grew so large you could see no green - he's pretty small anyway so his eyes kind of take over when this happens... Anyway I got to singing 'how big are your eyes...[big are your eyes, how big are your eyes]... to the tune of 'How Deep is Your Love'.

I quite often sing to the cats but they hate it!

23 – Kate Bush - The Man with the Child in His Eyes

Driving home late I, not for the first time, concluded that Mark Radcliffe is a legend of nearing godlike proportions.

I hear him, before I go to sleep
And focus on the day that's been.
I realise he's there...

24 – Kaiser Chiefs - Oh My God

I don't particularly like this song but today I heard it on the radio as I drove down a long, straight, empty road. Fields stretched into the distance on either side, the earth covered in fading snow. As if from nowhere an enormous flock of starlings flew overhead, twisting, darting in all directions like a shoal of fish, as if as one. It was mesmerising to watch. I felt like I were in a film, and the Kaiser Chiefs were the soundtrack to this scene - dark, bleak, directionless, gothic, and more than a little foreboding.

It don't matter to me
It's all I wanted to be
Is a million miles from here
Somewhere more familiar

25 – The White Birch - Breathe

He described this album as '*sombre, hypnotic, grouchy, slow motion black & white despair*' which had me hooked before I even heard it!

I'm getting a very different vibe though, listening to it today - an uplifting, tender melancholy edged with icy resignation: it is indeed excellent winter music!

26 – Elliot Smith - No Name #1

No real reason for this choice today - I've been listening to '*Roman Candle*' a lot recently, I'd forgotten how much I love its raw, jaunty but painful elegance. If only it was as easy as just slipping out quietly...

Slip out quiet, nobody's looking
Leave alone - you don't belong here.

27 – Rage Against the Machine - Bullet in the Head

Angry driving music for when you can't put your foot down because you have too many points on your licence!
They say jump, you say how high

28 – Stereophonics - Dakota

And so with a considerable amount of hat-eating and pride-swallowing I purchased my first Stereophonics single. It's a bloody good one though (even if the end bit sounds like a Daniel Bedingfield song!) Unfortunately the B-sides are crap so under no circumstances should this be seen as a change of heart - merely a one-off!

Remembering you. What happened to you?

MARCH:

1 – Tori Amos - Sleeps with Butterflies

I'd say twelve tracks is about right for an album - any shorter and I feel hard done by; any longer and I start to lose interest. Albums with fifteen songs plus are just far too self-indulgent, but the main problem I have with them, is that it takes long to process them and make sense of them. Even though Tori Amos is one of my favourite artists, she has been guilty of the Long Album on several occasions. I'm getting there slowly with the new album (nineteen tracks). The songwriting isn't as strong as usual and the lyrics aren't as touching but this is working for me today...

You say the word, you know I will find you

2 – Bob Dylan - Moonlight

So it's snowing. I usually have no charitable feelings at all towards winter, but although this song isn't particularly wintry, listening to it today it's like the soundtrack to a still winter's night: snow falling steadily outside, a fire burning inside, a loved one coming home to open arms and an open bottle of wine... It feels good.

The branches cast their shadows over stone
Won't you meet me out in the moonlight alone?

3 – Sonny & Cher - I Got You Babe

Fucking Groundhog Day. This has always been a particularly hated film of mine and all because of this fucking diabolical song. The boys wanted to watch this last night - thank god for red wine.

4 - Motion Picture Soundtrack - Fake

What a fantastic night! The band played a scorching headline set in a frozen old theatre in Berlin - despite being absolutely exhausted (we're all running on 3 hours sleep a day and plenty of coffee and wine) they sounded amazing and I felt more alive than I have done in a while.

Fake is the quietest song in the set and I usually just get annoyed with the people who talk over the music, but tonight (probably due to a particularly nice Merlot) I managed to lose myself in the song - the guitars soared through the room, nestling among the vaulted ceilings, dripping from the chandeliers; the vocals so distraught they brought tears to my eyes: Alastair sounded like he might just break... A line from a recently read Primo Levi story came to mind - 'so tender and savage it leaves you shattered'.

Fake, but I'm feeling just fine

5 – Goo Goo Dolls - Iris

By popular consensus - one and all agree this is a bloody excellent record. Played loudly today to keep us all awake.

And I'd give up forever to touch you

6 – Queen - The Show Must Go On

Sat in the pub last night wondering whether it was best to call Mum from there and wish her happy Mother's Day or wait until tomorrow and risk her being a bit miffed. I had sent her a card but had managed to forget to call her all day - despite visiting The Other's mother, which should have prompted my memory... Anyway - I rang from the pub, Freddie was warbling on noisily in the background, Mum was already in bed and it turns out she thought I was still in Germany anyway.

I'd also forgotten how lovely this song is - but that won't get me into as much trouble!

Fairytales of yesterday will grow but never die

7 – R.E.M. - Leave

I decided this year I would make more time for reading. And so far I've read some great books, but I'm starting to be a little concerned that books are filled with lessons we don't learn and wisdoms we don't act on. Nevertheless, we continue to read, fervently hoping something will seep past the barriers we build up around us, but which do us no good at all. Our thirst for knowledge and our continuous quest for self-improvement drive us to absorb more and more, but where does it lead us? And why? I'm aware I think too much. But I like it that way...

I suffer the dreams of a world gone mad: I like it like that and I know it.

8 – Silence - So Damn Beautiful

A sleepy lazy nothingday. I needed one. I listened to a few demos I'd been sent. For some reason I've received one by a girl who's had her music played all over the place - this track was used on the Roswell soundtrack, and has a little sparkle about it which seems to work today.

9 – Peter Murphy – I'll Fall With Your Knife

Cascade has been playing loudly in our house for a couple of days. This has always been my favourite track on that album - even before Avril Lavigne, unwittingly I'm sure, ripped the chorus for that 'Sk8er Boi' crap...

When you think your chance is passing by
When you blow your moon away ... I'll be with you

10 – Looper - Mondo 77

It's all about the piano! Great song, and it cropped up on a soundtrack we're working at work (alongside Depeche Mode and Phoenix - brilliant!)

11 – Tom McRae - A Day Like Today

This day has been split in two:

I have so many questions - more than usual. But I also have a peace in my heart, the like of which I haven't felt in quite some time. Whatever the answers to why, how and what now, I know I was right. And I'm right to stay being right for as long as my heart feels this way.

I wanted to be able to freeze-frame this evening, it was so beautiful. In a tomb of stone and stories, to a backdrop of fairy lights and candles, Idlewild played a mesmerising acoustic set to a very small crowd. I felt very privileged and very in awe. What an extraordinary day...

...I can't get today out of my mind

Need to say, need to call, to love someone beautiful. A day like today has stained my eyes.

12 – Rufus Wainwright - Evil Angel

After a very late night and far too much to drink, I woke up very early. I felt like I'd been on amphetamines all night: I lay there with my heart pounding in my chest, trying to keep still to limit the possibility of pounding in my head too. I was thinking about little prey animals and how fast their hearts beat, and how their lives are so short because they use up their supply of heartbeats so quickly. I didn't have a huge heart attack today, but I did have a bad hangover (here endeth this recent spell of wine mis-use). I was teased yesterday with a snippet of Rufus Wainwright so I indulged myself with Poses in the bath when I finally made it home. Evil Angel was the track that felt right today.

When you kissed me on this town square, all the lights came on at sunset

Thought you'd stay...

13 – Now It's Overhead - Blackout Curtain

This is going to be a great summer album. On a day where there's a warm springlike contentment in the air and a familiar unease in my heart, this is just what I needed - the album is full of mantra-like moments where you can lose yourself in a hopeful positivity. His vocals sound like so many other favourites; it's like I've known them for years. Echoes of Flaming Lips, Placebo, R.E.M., all enshrouded in a blissful darkness...

Don't ever go away from here. I will never go away.

14 – McFly - All About You

I've been singing this to Youngest Cat today. He is less than impressed. I understand.

It's all about you baby.

15 – Coldplay - Track 3 (White Shadow) on the forthcoming album

It's all shrouded in secrecy but my god, is this good! Epic takes on a new meaning....

16 – Emiliana Torrini - Sunny Road

She has such a lovely voice, it really fits with the scent of spring floating through my office window. And the words to Sunny Road seem to reflect quite well a thought that has been occupying my mind for a few days now...

Wrote you this - I hope you got it safe.

It's been so long, I don't know what to say.

17 – Janis Joplin - Me and Bobby McGee

I don't fight. I never have. Not even for things that are worth having. I'd rather trust that if they are right for me, they'll come to me of their own volition. A strange attitude for a control freak. I think it's because I hate to fail. This is what I was thinking about today when I heard this song for the first time in a long time. It calmed me down a little and let the sun back in for a moment. And made me wonder whether it might just be worth taking that chance once in a while...

Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose...

18 – Nils Lofgren - Shine Silently

It's a beautiful day today. I've been driving with the windows open, feeling the sun on my skin and the wind through my hair. It makes you feel so much more alive. But there's a heaviness that won't go, that not even the eager sun can drive away. It's something about being made to feel small and incapable, marginalised by those that feel they are better or stronger or just louder in singing their own praises. I hope the weekend affords me the opportunity to feel the warmth of the sun in my soul and to regain my own strength of mind and will.

Nothing left to say, nothing left to prove,
When it's said and done, there's nothing left but you, babe
Shine silently.

19 – Eastern Lane - No.5

Today I'm working on the theory that if you play anything loud enough you'll grow to love it. The main ingredient in the experiment is the forthcoming Eastern Lane album. Results so far are inconclusive.

I know no place else, but I know I don't belong there.

20 – Michael Buble - Home

Yes, I confess - I really like this song. That's as far as it goes though!

And I feel just like I'm living someone else's life

21 – Jeff Buckley - Hallelujah

I hadn't dared listen to Buckley until now. Not since then.

And even now I catch my breath for fear this new hope will drift away with the song... Maybe, just maybe...

Every breath we drew was Hallelujah

22 – Skunk Anansie - Hedonism

Today's observation: Strange how people who shine brightest spend so much time in dark places.

I hope you're feeling happy now...

23 – The Connells - 74/75

I heard this for the first time in about 10 years on the radio today and it took me back to a mountain bike ride with a long lost friend. We stopped half way for beer and were only good for freewheeling back down again afterwards! Incidentally, the best track on the album is called Doin' You, and includes the marvellous line '*doin' you is like doing time!*'

I was the one who let you know, I was your sorryeverafter...

24 – 50 Cent - In Da Club

He keeps 'singing' this today. I may have to kill him.

25 – Haven - Have No Fear

Today a strange thing happened - I had a mystery text message. But not like the regular mystery communications ('I'm just leaving now, see you in a few minutes, or 'Thanks for the call, I'll get back to you soon' etc). No, this was way more profound. And I quote: "Why should some men realise their ambitions easily, others with difficulty, and still others not at all? The cause cannot be physical, else the most perfect men physically would be the most successful, the difference therefore must be mental. The mind hence must be the creative force, constituting the sole difference between men,. It is mind therefore which overcomes environment and every other obstacle in the path of men." What's worse is that I actually responded! I have since found out that the passage is taken from something called the Master Key System by Charles Haanel. I have not found out who felt I should know about it.

I can't be sure it won't go away. I'm gonna be here right until the end.

26 – Jane's Addiction - Three Days

Sometimes I wonder how much more I can fit in my brain. I have such a thirst for new things, regardless of their value or relevance to my life. I absorb useless facts and random trivia like a sponge, but then forget my father's birthday. Surely there's only room for so much in there. I need to streamline the internal filing system...

Today I have just been sitting quietly playing the bassline over and over to myself - it's a great thinking riff - letting your fingers run through the line while your mind drifts off elsewhere. Very therapeutic. It's also one of the most incredible songs I know.

Shadows of the morning light, the shadows of the evening sun
Til' the shadows and the light were one...

27 – R.E.M. - Be Mine

It's Easter. My mother is religious. I played an imaginary conversation with my mother round in my head, in which I tried to explain how music is to me what her religious beliefs are to her. Needless to say she didn't understand! Music gives me everything I need: my crutch in times of sadness, my confidant in times of need, my guide in times of doubt and my inspiration always. Music might not secure me a place in heaven, but it's definitely saved me from a life of hell.

If you make me your religion, I'll give you all the room you need.

28 – Bob Dylan - One Of Us Must Know (Sooner Or Later)

There are a million ways in which I miss you. Not least of these is knowing what music was the soundtrack to your dark days. And now I know, I almost understand...

I didn't mean to make you so sad

29 – Lifehouse - Along the Way

A new album for a new chapter. (Strangely, there is a track on the album called Chapter One, I have just been gazing out onto the dusk, mulling over a difficult decision when I noticed the fading refrain of Chapter One '*Take your chances, turn around, and go.*' Prophetic?) This is a beautiful acoustic bonus track - it sums up rather a lot:

Peace breaks the loneliness and hope fills everything between.

30 – Neal Casal - Raining Straight Down

This love is a rollercoaster ride of concern and relief. Today feels good though; today I am relieved. This is another album I haven't been able to listen to in a long time, but today it's bringing comfort and contentment. And I realise now that I like my roller coaster - because it means I still feel.

I spent a year on the dark side, I lived a lifetime in one day.

I looked for you on the inside, I would have crawled to hear you say.

31 – Goo Goo Dolls - Black Balloon

Yesterday a lot of wisdoms came my way from various sources but try as I might, I couldn't make sense of any of it. For a few hours this morning I felt so numb and dulled by everything that's going on, that I almost felt I'd lost myself all over again. It took one of my favourite songs played very loudly in a misty seaside car park to blow the clouds away and for me to see a little clearer.

Angels fall without you there.

APRIL:

1 – Damien Rice - The Blower's Daughter

There's nothing but white before me. A perfect vista of emptiness. I could take just one step - there is but one left. Mist curls between the trees and they quiver with its touch: only the sound gives them away. From inside the car I hear the song I played you, the one I gave you as you left, the one I've not dared to hear since then. It reaches out through the fog to throw a blanket of sound around my despair, calming my storm with its warmth and constancy.

I do this to myself - this torment. I make it so. It's all I understand.

I can't take my mind off of you...

2 – Queen - Don't Stop Me Now

Shocking behaviour on the dancefloor at a friend's wedding reception whilst 'dancing' to this song resulted in my throwing red wine all over a beautiful new white skirt I was wearing (and that was only the start of the mess)! It was a crazy night - sonar blips of resistance and revelation course through the haze in my head (and I accepted a proposal of marriage. Is that binding, or is being blind drunk an adequate defence?) I'm only now starting to remember more about it - the most embarrassing bits being lost for ever in the ether of insobriety, I hope!

Don't stop me now, 'cause I'm having a good time...

3 – Manic Street Preachers - Archives of Pain

I can't even begin to explain what this song did to me tonight.

You know when you've waited so long for something, and when you finally get it, it's way better than you could have ever anticipated... At that moment, I felt complete.

All I preach is extinction

4 – Nick Drake - Northern Sky

Happy Birthday, sweet thing... Here's to second chances.
I never felt magic crazy as this... but now you're here.

5 – Dave Matthews - Trouble

As I manage each step without faltering, each line without stumbling over my words, I begin to hope all is not lost:
I promised the child I'd return. There are things not yet accomplished, answers not yet learned.
Oh sweet day, leave me behind...

6 – Joseph Arthur - In the Sun

I hear his voice from inside my shell. It echoes around this place with a comforting thoroughness; no corner is left untouched. Behind the glass here it almost feels like summer.
Trying to find anything you can feel that you can believe in

7 – The Music - Welcome to the North

This album saved me today. Energetic, determined, vibrant, with a hint of desperation. It made me pack away the self indulgence and self pity with the introspective melancholy songs I've been listening to over the past weeks. Time to start doing something...
Your minds are always closed
But...your mouths are always open.

8 – Counting Crows - Angles of the Silences

We had a discussion about going blind versus going deaf, and which would be preferable. The sensible choice would be deafness but I don't know whether I could really live without music. This song would be a contender for the last thing I'd want to hear...
Suck my blood, break my nerve, offer me their arms.
Well, I will not be an enemy of anything...

9 – Coldplay - Yellow

I don't have Sky and have only recently had access to the extra Freeview channels so I never get to see music videos. At a friend's house after dinner, I became mesmerised by The Amp and was really quite surprised to see how basic and uninspired the video to Yellow is. Or perhaps understated is the word. But then I guess the lyrics are too...
I came along, I wrote a song for you.

10 – System of a Down - Bring Your Own Bombs

Ali played it loud in an empty shop. He was tired and frustrated. We all were. It worked a treat!
With a hook that would sit perfectly in a polished pop tune and an anger fitting for this age of apathy.

11 – Idlewild - Everyone Says You're So Fragile

And today's award for bloody lovely underrated punk rock genius goes to Rod Jones - go boy!
I can never remember who I am

12 – U2 - Where the Streets Have No Name

I can't remember why this mattered or why it felt right, but it jerked me back into myself as I was sliding off again down my spiral. It's about breaking out, finding your own way. I once told him I wouldn't be beholden to anyone for my own happiness, and yet that's exactly where I found myself with him. Time to re-evaluate. Time to find my own way.
I want to tear down the walls that hold me inside

13 – The Ramones - I Wanna Be Sedated

A fine example of how if I'd only paid a bit more attention, listened more carefully with an open mind, I wouldn't have felt so stupid for not knowing!
I can't control my brain

14 – Indigo Girls - Power of Two

Slow on the motorway - always the same when you're in a hurry. Good opportunity to remind yourself of important things. Just to stay awake. This song always comes back to me when friends are in bad places and you feel powerless to help. There's a lot of that around at the moment. But a lot of hope too.
Smarter than the tricks played on your heart

15 – Athlete - Half Light

I should have been paying attention to more tangible matters today, but my hangover had me side-tracked... I'm glad you were with me, then and now.

The taste of your kiss I still got on my lips...

16 – Elbow - Ribcage

Just as I wanted it. Calm, quiet, controlled. Now all I need to do is look forward...

The sunshine, throwing me a lifeline, finds its way into my room. All I need is you.

17 – Richard Hawley - Born Under a Bad Sign

He said I had the air of spring about me. I like it that way. Spring is positivity and forward thinking. Spring is vibrant and fresh. Spring is bright and warm.

Or he could have just been talking about my perfume...

Are you going to be the one to say you belong to me?

18 – Philip Glass - Uakti

Tonight I travelled back from London in silence. I'd been to see the Manics and nothing on the radio or in the CD player could follow that. So only the hum of the engine kept me awake... Although I was exhausted, it took me a while to get to sleep - there was a ringing in my ears which ebbed and flowed when I blinked my eyes. Yes, I was standing too close to the bass cabs; yes, I should be more careful; and yes, I have now invested in some ear plugs, but rather than scaring me witless it was really quite interesting - like I'd commissioned a Philip Glass symphony for my ears only!

19 – The Darkness - Friday Night

My mother was reeling off her social engagements for the week, trying to fit in time to have lunch with her daughter. It reminded me of the Darkness song (except she hasn't embraced gymnastics yet!). Her social calendar puts me to shame. This is not right.

Dancing on a Friday night...

20 – The Rolling Stones - She's a Rainbow

Today I had my first paragliding lesson. I am now bruised, blistered and totally euphoric! It was everything I thought it would be - close to the sky, at one with the wind - just beautiful. According to my instructor I did well - apparently I'm light and I have youth on my side! Hell, I like that guy!

See the sky in front of you

21 – Coldplay - The Scientist

I read an interview with Chris Martin. He was comparing the way his brain works with a Ferris wheel. I could relate to that pretty well. I think mine works in a similar way. Even as you climb higher, achieve more, gain more ground, you know you're heading for a downward slump. It's not pessimism, it's just the wheel. You can't keep going up for ever. The good thing is, even as you're riding the downward side, you know things will always pick up eventually.

I had to find you, tell you I need you, tell you I set you apart

22 – Toto - Africa

Nothing really happened today - just a day. When I stopped for fuel along the marshes the filling station was playing this over their outdoor speakers. I love this song, although most people laugh at me when I say this. As I drove away I took the song with me - as the fading sun was flitting through the trees, I had that kind of wide-angle lens feeling when you sort of pan out of yourself and see yourself as part of a big picture. I think this was the nicest moment that I experienced today.

It's gonna take a lot to drag me away from you

23 – Radiohead - You Never Wash Up After Yourself

Saturday. Household chores.

I must get out once in a while

24 – Oversol - Just Enough

OK - I'm on a crusade. This band are incredible. They're not even signed yet but they were supporting Athlete recently (I can't recall ever having seen a support band light up Brixton Academy like they did!). This is one of a couple of tracks available to download or stream on their website - if you like epic indie rock then check it out: <http://www.oversol.co.uk/oslisten.php> I'd stake a fair wage (should I ever be paid one) that these guys will be big. Not for the first time, I wish I worked in A&R...
We just don't feel... anymore.

25 – Stone Roses - Waterfall

Travelling through daybreak in a Ford Focus: the day looks bright and full of promise but the air between us is stale. Stories of years ago resurrected with a drunken reluctance; words best left unspoken. It will be the same eventually. But not now. Not yet.
She'll carry on through it all

26 – Crowded House - Weather With You

This track seems to be all over at the moment - you lose a drummer and it seems for all the world as if you only ever wrote one song. I seem to be in the middle of an arthouse film today - I have a heightened awareness of my surroundings, to the point where the world looks like one big conspiracy theory - cars parked in strange places, flags by the roadside, a low-slung Cosworth playing Crowded House... What does it all mean? And all this without drugs?!
Strange affliction wash over me

27 – Ben Folds - Rockin the Suburbs

One of those days where I feel under-rated and under-appreciated by those that really should know better. Ben Folds and my volume control knob helped to remedy the situation short term.
It gets me real pissed off and it makes me wanna say 'fuck'...

28 – Muse - Butterflies and Hurricanes

As ever I set myself ridiculous targets. As ever, I don't give up until I've achieved them. I'm comfortable this way; I know where I stand. And I know when I achieve them, it's been worth the effort... Letting go, even just a little, isn't me.
You've got to be the best, you've got to change the world

29 – Art of Fighting - Easy Part

Another thanks to Grahame for a great recommendation - I've played this album non-stop today and I love it. It evokes open hillsides and open fires. It's earthy, warm and very, very lovely.
What can you say to a dying day - won't you stay here a while, keep the darkness away.

30 – Honeyroot - Love Will Tear Us Apart

On paper, this should never have been allowed to happen. In reality, it's divine. Some say the pretenders have overtaken her. I tend to agree, but there's the odd moment where I doubt my infidelity: His voice dies somewhere between his heart and his mouth, like a firefly going out in the night.
When routine bites hard and ambitions are low, and resentment rides high, but emotions won't grow.
And we're changing our ways, taking different roads, then love, love will tear us apart

MAY:

1 – Jose Gonzalez - Heartbeats

There's a small lane near me that always takes my breath away - it winds through the Sussex countryside to Battle. In the winter it's a picture perfect wonderland - snow scenes and fir trees, dripping in white. In autumn it's a golden tunnel of pirouetting leaves - glorious in the fading sun. But I love it best in May - the startling beauty of vivid purple rhododendrons bursting in bright clusters through the green. For miles.
One night to be confused, one night to speed up truth...

2 – Jane's Addiction - Riches

Just as a Bank Holiday should be. In the street there's a blossom carpet laid out across warm concrete. In the garden I lay for hours on freshly cut grass, reading and watching the tiniest wisps of cloud drift out to sea.
Stretching out in the sun like a cat in the window

3 – Delays - Long Time Coming

Today I considered the notion that successful people are willing to fail. I have some way to go towards both.
Threw your Lego in the lake - why'd you wanna go do that for?

4 – Coldplay - Bonus track on X&Y ('Til Kingdom Come)

I wind through familiar countryside, buffeted by mental markers of journeys taken before. I could make just a small detour; maybe find you there. It feels like I laid part of you to rest among the stones, watched over for always by the sun and the sky.
I will wait for you 'til kingdom come, just say you'll set me free...

5 – Lifehouse - Spin

So, an election. I find the whole process quite interesting, although sifting through the jumble of ego, opinion and hearsay is quite tiresome. What irks me most is apathy. And there's a lot of it around. So you don't like the way things are - that's what your vote is for. Make a stand, even in a small way - go and scrawl lyrics to a protest song over your ballot paper, anything, but you have no right to complain if you've wasted your chance to have your say. What is the power of 'one'? What can we achieve as an individual? Only limited change, limited progress. But as a whole - the possibilities are boundless.
You and I wouldn't change a thing

6 – Art of Fighting - Along the Run

Today, against my better judgement, I've been contemplating my future as the tragic figure of a romantic fiction, lost forever in an unrequited love.
It could so easily happen... This album started off the week as very wholesome and warm. Today it strikes a chill through me. It is, however, still exceptionally beautiful.
I always will see your face, and I always will say your name.

7 – Nine Inch Nails - A Warm Place

Today I sat at the far end of my garden in a warm place, sheltered from the breeze, and read the most incredible book - a present from years ago, added to the pile, waiting for its time. Usually I am just frustrated that I can't keep hold of the wisdoms of the written word - they escape as soon as they've left the page, never making it past my eyes or my short term wonderment. But this book was different. I soaked it all in, breathed in the poignancy and the beauty of its descriptions, the simplicity of its message, the gentle urgency of its prose. And it was over in a flash. From cover to cover in a matter of hours. But this time I'll hold it inside me, remembering the effect as one recalls the first touch of a lover - immediate, overwhelming and all-encompassing. (Jon McGregor's 'If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things')

8 – Procol Harem - Whiter Shade of Pale

Today I took my Nan to lunch. She's old and we know that, despite her agility of body and mind, she won't always be here to take to lunch. The others no longer care - preoccupied as they are with work and family and life, but I love my Nan enormously and I intend to make the most of the time I have left with her. The thing that always strikes me about my Nan is her way of breathing. She started it the day my Grandpa died - I remember it then - a precursor to tears. Her breath shakes now, as if the air is a fish, trapped in a net. Every now and then, when I'm on the edge of despair and heading off down my spiral, I catch myself breathing the same way.
She smiled at me so sadly...

9 – Boney M - Brown Girl in the Ring

I watched 'Touching the Void'. It scared me. Why the hell would anyone want to go anywhere near that kind of environment? Definitely not 'fun'.

10 – Ben Folds – Landed

I found a place where we could be; just keep believing. The gardens run deep and green, the wood is old with tales of its own. These pictures fresh in my mind each day, by night my dreams retain. I found a place where we could be. Just say you'll stay the same.
It's ok to call; I will answer for myself .

11 – Muse - Stockholm Syndrome

I've developed a new obsession with this album of late. It's rammed full of ambitious, histrionic, grandiose songwriting, and somehow I knew all that before, but never really noticed until now. From start to finish, through soaring strings, virtuoso piano and insistent, bullish bass, Stockholm Syndrome just blows me away every time. It's all I can do not to resort to air-conducting or accelerator-bassdrum as I drive. Fanbloodytastic!

This is the last time I'll forget you: I wish I could.

12 – Amos Lee - Colours

After an unfeasibly long time, this album has finally 'happened' for me. I'm sure seeing him play last week had something to do with it. I think I remember reading about his background, and that he only started to play because he was getting in with the wrong crowd and needed something constructive to do. Incredible that such a natural talent could potentially have gone unnoticed... The sensitivity of some of these songs leaves me more than a little fragile.

We all got our faults, we get locked in our voids...

13 – Goldfrapp - Black Cherry

We played this album yesterday as we drove out to have lunch in the countryside. And then my dream last night included this song. I can't remember much about it, just that it was important.

All my world in one grain of sand, and I've blown it.

14 – David Usher - Love Will Save the Day

I believe that it all means something. It's more than just coincidence - Fate plays her hand. I am being guided, the path is being shown to me. There is a message behind that song playing at that moment, that advert appearing at that time, that scent in the air. The question is not whether we understand, but are we heeding the message, are we listening? I'm listening online to a long awaited 4th album, and it's right that this has happened today.

I've been looking for a saviour, I've been waiting for a sign.

15 – R.E.M. - Gardening at Night

Today I've been working in the garden - it occurred to me that my mother has a garden seven or eight times the size of mine and not once have I seen her use 'power tools' of the garden variety (even the lawnmower is petrol). But being someone who buys into the time saving, effort saving ethos of the power tool revolution, I equipped myself with lawnmower, hedge trimmer and strimmer for the afternoon's toil. As did all my neighbours. Why do the garden power tool manufacturers not make these things in harmony with each other - imagine - an outdoor symphony each weekend. As it is, my hedge trimmer is a good semitone out with the man at the back's mower - and that's only the start of the cacophony!

They said it couldn't be arranged...

16 – Coldplay - Fix You

A new song to say it all: the things he said, the things she said not to, the things I did and felt all the same. It's very beautiful and has become an anthem for now...

When you're too in love to let it go

Well if you never try, you'll never know just what you're worth

Tears stream down your face

I promise you I will learn from my mistakes

And I... will try to fix you.

17 – Uncle Tupelo - Still Be Around

I sat listening to this track on repeat, watching the cats climb trees. I envy their innocence, their contentment. They sniff the air with a wonderment it'll take me a lifetime to recapture. It humbles me to think that I look after them, when sometimes it's so obviously the other way round.

If I break in two will you put me back together, when this puzzle's figured out will you still be around?

18 – Thee More Shallows - The Perfect Map

I can't remember where I found this - I think it was following an online trail, clicking from link to link without knowing where it would lead me. It must have meant something at the time because I stored it on my computer, and on clearing up some files today I discovered it. I don't know anything about the band but the last minute of so of this track is exquisite - haunting ocarina type sounds, a piano reprise and a lovely bass countermelody - chillingly beautiful.

19 – Moodswings and Chrissie Hynde - Spiritual High

What a fab song! I haven't heard this in ages, and then it appeared on Radio 2 as chosen by Sandie Shaw (who it appears has fantastic taste - having picked The Smiths and Portishead earlier in the week too!)
Bring me to meet your sound and I will bring you to my heart.

20 – Coldplay - A Message

It all sounds so simple in a song. Like it might actually work. I'll listen for hours and be inspired, but courage fails me always. And for a reason. I live in this make-believe world of music created by me, to keep around me, to shield me from reality. In the real world things do not happen this way. But I'm still dreaming...
And I'm not gonna stand and wait, not gonna leave it until it's much too late
On a platform I'm gonna stand and say that I'm nothing on my own
That I love you, please come home...

21 –Keane - Can't Stop Now

I really should know better when it comes to Keane, but something about this song brings tears to my eyes. And it's one of the more lively tracks on the album - I don't understand myself sometimes! It came on in the pub and I had to make myself scarce before I started blubbing... In hindsight I've decided it's all about clever chord resolutions. It has to be. I can't seriously be sucked in by the simplicity of the lyrics. Or can I?
But I can't stop now - I've got troubles of my own

22 – Crosby Stills and Nash - Marrakesh Express

There's a documentary coming up soon on Radio 2 about The Byrds; they played a clip of this behind the trail. And I haven't stopped smiling yet! Summer feels like it's on the way - all effervescent Rickenbackers and wide smiles. Glorious!
Hope the days that lie ahead bring us back to where they've led

23 – Paul Simon – Slip Sliding Away

A quote from the new Star Wars film (don't worry, I won't make a habit of this!): *'Learn to let go of what you fear to lose most.'* (Or something thereabouts; Yoda said it and his grammar is far more logical than the Queen's English). Either way, I've been thinking about it a lot, and trying out the lesson. It does rather imply that you will lose 'it' anyway, it'll just hurt less. But isn't the hurt, or at least the potential for hurt, part of the whole?
My love for you's so overpowering, I'm afraid that I will disappear

24 – David Usher - See You Fall

Echoes of a new and wonderful song fall like rain through the dawn of another new album, separated by two oceans; one of water, one of humility. These things happen around her as she thinks and writes - carefully composed and selflessly intended. And then gone in the blink of a tired eye, with whispers of love to light the way. The words are replaced with a rhyme about rain, from west of here; from where the truth burns brighter. And the circle is closed.
You float so far away, and you know I'm waiting...

25 – Gerry & the Pacemakers - You'll Never Walk Alone

Today I realised that it's not just music that unites people in that special way that transcends so many boundaries. I don't really care for football, although I do appreciate a good game, but seeing so many people so happy tonight was very cool.
Hold your head up high...

26 – The Music - Bleed from Within

Not a good night - On top of a headache and the prospect of staying up in front of the computer way past the witching hour, I took a wrong turn and drove round the park in the darkness, feeling like an idiot for having made the mistake in the first place, for being too proud to turn round and start again, and for giving a voice to things best left unsaid. Not that it really matters. This song was the high point in an otherwise low evening.
I'd like to know what I'm fighting for before I die.

27 – Kasabian - Reason is Treason

This week I am mostly advocating compulsory sterilisation for everyone buying the Crazy Frog single. Or death. Anyone suggesting people are buying this with a certain irony is wrong. They are buying it because they are stupid.
K.I.- LL!

28 – Shout Out Louds - The Comeback

Oh, what fun - my favourite new thing this week. After a Casio-tastic intro, it chuggs along with a Velvet Underground constancy, interspersed with lazy tambourine and a beltingly summery guitar solo. If you can't wait for the album (come on now, show some enthusiasm), you can hear it here: <http://www.shoutoutlouds.com/music.asp>
I'm out of my mind, I'm about to crack.

29 – New Order - Crystal

A good friend's Birthday pub crawl: half a pint in half an hour in every pub in the Old Town! There were arrests and nudity, although no vomiting that anyone can remember. And yes, there is photographic evidence. Every once in a while this kind of Sunday is enormous fun.
Here comes love, it's like honey...

30 – The Police - Roxanne

We used to sing a part each. I don't think we were always drunk either! Back in the days when nothing much mattered... I'd be lost without you, JEM - for one, I could never carry the song on my own!
Put on the red light...

31 – James Blunt - You're Beautiful

And so the worst week of the year so far begins. (By the end of it the tally reaches 8 arguments - which for someone as non-confrontational as me, is 8 too many). Not all that long ago I'd have punished myself in some way for things way beyond my control. It's testament to how far I have come in myself that I'm able, for the most part, not to take it personally.
My life is brilliant., my love is pure.

JUNE:

1 – Eddi Reader - The Patience of Angels

She sat, head in hands, on the cold, damp stone as the sea rushed in to swell around her feet. Here, in the bleak half light, where one cigarette would have saved a thousand tears, the day took its toll.
Would I be any good and if I was would I find that it would try the patience of angels...

2 – Ben Folds Five - Brick

It was a really good show tonight. I couldn't help thinking of him at this point though, wondering how you ever get past something like that.
Can't you see, it's not me you're dying for.

3 – Jem - Just a Ride

Radio 2's 'record of the week' is by Tift Merrit. I hate it. Having endured it all week, I thought at least today I would be otherwise engaged when it played and I could avoid it. Not so. At 10:30 I was in the dentist's chair and the dentist had Radio 2 playing. Just as the drilling stopped, that bloody record began and not only did I have to listen to it one more time, but now I will forever associate it with the dentist. To add further discomfort, he's made me have a clove flavoured tincture thing on my teeth for a fortnight, to draw out any bruising on the gums (apparently I clench my teeth - he says this is a trait of many educated people [it's been a while since I was referred to as educated!], and I have to stop or he warns of a square jaw, not unlike David Coulthard. Nice!). Anyway, I hate cloves. And now I will be tasting them permanently for a fortnight. Fitting end to the week then, really...
Accept that there's no getting up.

4 – Tori Amos - Hey Jupiter

I couldn't have asked for this to be better. A safe place from which to watch the skies fall and the earth rise up all in one evening. His voice soars: love and pain bound together for always. And later, her sideways smile gives her away, all beauty and triumph, as she sings just for us.
Your apocalypse was fab!

5 – Bay City Rollers - Bye Bye Baby

We were talking about the first singles we ever bought (this began because I have a PA next week with none other than Shakin' Stevens - made worse because it's in the town I grew up in - how on earth do I convince long-forgotten school friends that I do actually have a great job, when they see me hangin' with Shaky?!). Anyway, the first single I ever bought was This Ole House. Yes, I was a tragic child, and I have no idea how I grew up with any self respect at all with such poor musical beginnings.

Strange thing though, that the first single he ever bought was number one the day I was born.

Is love the reason why?

6 – Tori Amos - Ribbons Undone

What happened to me? Where did this strength come from? This optimism so unlike me? The songs play over; now old familiar patterns, lightly touching our days with their meaning. The answers are tucked inside the folds of the book, there if you know which pages to turn: The strength comes from trust, and the trust comes from knowledge.

She runs like the fire does, picking up daisies...

7 – Jackie Wilson - Higher and Higher

As I stopped by this evening to catch up with some old friends finally embarking on their calling, this song was playing in the background. As she proceeded to tell me about everything that had gone wrong, and he sat tired and aching beside her, it was obvious that hand in hand they'd make it. They inspire me in so many ways.

And now with my loving arms around you
Honey, I can stand up and face the world

8 – Limp Bizkit - Take Look Around

This lyric has been going round and round in my head for weeks now. Today it seems a little more pointed. A good friend said those things were just coincidence; nothing more than small collisions in nature. But I've always thought there was a reason. And I'll always heed the signs.

Everything happens for a reason

9 – Simon and Garfunkel - Homeward Bound

All I can think about is you. In the midst of this chaos, and it's still you. You bring me shade, you show me light, like the purple poppy I passed this morning; a flash of hope in the eternity of the verge. And when all of this is over, it'll still be all about you. Then we'll walk barefoot in the sand, like we were always meant to do.

And all my words come back to me in shades of mediocrity.

10 – Faithless - Mass Destruction

Standing, hoping, wishing it all meant something. But it's just forty thousand people dancing under the stars.

Inaction is a weapon of mass destruction

11 – Morrissey - Everyday is Like Sunday

An echo of what could have been. For her. She's always with me.

This is the coastal town that they forgot to close down...

12 – R.E.M. - Nightswimming

You're witnessing poetic perfection. What you have before you is the centre of my world. Tread carefully across my heartstrings, with awe and respect - they've earned it. I keep it all inside, where it still feels special.

I'm not sure all these people understand

13 – R.E.M. - Exhuming McCarthy

Staring at blank sheets into the early hours, trying to condense four years of my life into bullet points. Do I really care? Is this really right? Either way, my stubborn reaction is to do it my way, at my pace. So I fight it. I'm getting better at this.

...walking on coals to improve your business acumen

14 – Counting Crows - Blues Run the Game

Weighing up alternatives, preparing for a sometime inevitability. Maybe now. Maybe next year. Maybe we'll just fly away from this; head west; hold hands. Maybe we'll do that anyway. And then a grinding of metal and a muttered apology and I'm standing on the roadside unconcerned. There are bigger things today.

Catch a boat to England baby, maybe to Spain

a song a day, 2005

15 – Magnolia Electric Co. - Hammer Down

A stranger throwing shapes in an oncoming car. Today is about waiting.

16 – Finn Brothers - Won't Give In

Relief, guilt, resignation, concern. The circle is beginning again. This song means a lot of different things at different times. Today it has mainly been a comfort. I read control and empowerment in its folds; soothing away the pains of these days with conviction.

The right time, the right place, right now, turn around.

17 – James Blunt - Goodbye My Lover

Almost there.

Goodbye my lover, goodbye my friend.

18 – U2 - Beautiful Day

An evening spent on the edge of tears; emotion overload for something so big even the vastness of the stadium could not contain it. It meant a lot. But mostly it was just incredible fun.

After the flood all the colors came out

19 – Dashboard Confessional - Hands Down

This was a song for another day, an autumn day a long time ago. But today, under the summer sun, we made it all right. Together. And there was peace around us, and in both our hearts. As then, this song says it all.

Breathe in for luck, breath in so deep, this air is blessed, you share with me. This night is wild, so calm and dull, these hearts they race from self control.

Hands down, this is the best day I can ever remember... the scent of your hair that you twirled in your fingers, and the time on the clock, when we realized it's so late, and this walk that we shared together.

And you stood at your door with your hands on my waist, and you kissed me like you meant it, and I knew that you meant it.

20 – Paul Weller - I Walk on Gilded Splinters

My feet are slashed and burned today after walking for miles in the heat in new shoes. I didn't even notice at the time. And it's a very small price to pay.

Walk throughout the fire

Drive throughout the smoke

21 – Mother Hips - Channel Island Girl

And what better way to celebrate the summer solstice than some glorious west coast harmonies.

Today I have a heart shape on my foot, where yesterday there was a blister. I'm still uncertain what this means.

There are more important things happening, but my head needs to catch up. For now, I'll keep singing along... at least my heart is sure.

You've been the only person in my song

22 – Muse - Sunburn

And not for the obvious reason either! (I'm loving this weather!) I was listening to this in the car as I drove through a forested lane on the way home. The sunlight dappling through the trees onto the windscreen seemed to fit really well with the piano part. I love the bassline too - great song!

I feel a guilty conscience grow...

23 – Tracy Chapman - Fast Car

Maybe with time, and a considerable helping of conviction, this will get easier.

Leave tonight, or live and die this way.

24 – The Beatles - The Long and Winding Road

Blazing a trail up the M1 like I always said I would. I'd imagined the circumstances would be different. Needlessly. Who'd have thought?! And then he pointed out that my heart-shaped blister looked more like a Flying V. As if I couldn't love him any more.

The long and winding road that leads to your door.

25 – Damien Rice - The Blower's Daughter

Never could I have imagined us standing in the sun in each others' arms listening to this song drift by on the breeze. I'll never really understand why I wander this way; from elation to doubt, from ecstasy to desperation. But I know you wander with me.
I can't take my eyes off you

26 – Led Zeppelin - Stairway to Heaven

Are you there? I imagine you are; snuggled close, protected, unaware. It was love that did this, or was it? Was it need? Was it circumstance? Was it fate?
You could prove difficult. But always valuable, always loved.
There's a feeling I get when I look to the west,
And my spirit is crying for leaving

27 – Coldplay - Warning Sign

It helps to write: more productive than tears and cigarettes, both of which have played their part. I saw the woman I wanted to be: strong, confident, capable. I think I can get there, but not today. Maybe not for a while, but I think that's OK. I can't quite believe I've started this cycle again; not now, not after everything. But it's so simple. These old feelings return with such ease. For different reasons now, I know, but the root is the same. I'll allow myself this indulgence for just a little while. Just a little while longer.
I missed the good part and I realized. I started looking and the bubble burst
... When the truth is: I miss you

28 – Bruce Hornsby and the Range - The Way it Is.

Buoyed by a glorious piano line, a re-acquaintance (temporary, I swear) with Marlboro, and an uplifting conversation with The Financial Advisor, today has been decidedly more positive than yesterday. Because some things never change. And some things do.
Some things will never change...

29 – Morrissey - Paint a Vulgar Picture

And I'm supposed to be pleased? The only thing I'm grateful for today is that I will forever remain a mystery to you. And life goes on....
Reissue...repackage... they cannot hurt you my darling; they cannot touch you now.

30 – Idlewild - Disconnected

I love it. You know that. And as such I'm pleased it speaks of me to you. But for me it's all about you and her. As three we have laughed and cried, pondered and dreamed. As three we crumble; as three we are strong. When I'm with you both, I know I *do* belong.
You don't belong here; you'll never belong...

JULY:

1 – Counting Crows - Mrs Potter's Lullaby

For no reasons other than I woke up singing it, and have been since then.
I wonder sometimes who Maria is. He's right - there is a little piece of her in everything he does.
I wonder if the threads that weave through my days are so obvious. And I know they are.
And the price of a memory is the memory of the sorrow it brings.

2 – Annie Lennox - Why

The things I thought would melt me, left me untouched. Not this.
Some things are better left unsaid. But they still turn me inside out

3 – Doves - The Cedar Room

Jimi learnt some grammar. Shame; I kind of liked it better before.
If I told you you were wrong, I don't remember saying

4 – Dave Matthews Band - Crash Into Me

Today, for a brief moment between storms and flood, it all made sense. This is all I need: a faithful heart; a bright sky; a country road and a beautiful song.
Lost for you, I'm so lost for you.

5 – Modest Mouse - Float On

We had a conversation (prompted by the surprise appearance and unhelpful comments of a radio pluggger) about what makes a memorable single. It's difficult: the presence of important ingredients (chorus hooks, vocal harmony, sharp lyrics etc) is not enough. There's something more going on. Of all the songs I heard tonight, and most of them I'd heard a hundred times, it was 'Float On' that stayed in my head all the way home. I heard it once and that was all it took.

I ran my mouth off a bit too much, oh what did I say?

6 – Counting Crows - Anna Begins

And so the answer is no. I am strangely disappointed. Today this song feels right in every way - *I'm not gonna bend, I'm not gonna break; I'm not gonna worry about it anymore*!. I'm reminding myself of the silver lining to this particular cloud - the chance to do it right, to do it together.

These seconds when I'm shaking leave me shuddering for days

7 – The Kinks - Waterloo Sunset

And when it comes it's never enough. Anger and loss breathe together, sighing through the cracks in the city streets. Fear cloys in the hearts of many, delight in the souls of the tarnished few. But which am I?

But I don't feel afraid as long as I gaze on Waterloo sunset...

8 – Pearl Jam - Daughter

I think you'd say it's exclusively yours. But I caught myself with a similar thing. And he did too, although I can't remember exactly what he said. It's an ongoing thing, but that doesn't make it any easier to deal with. I think you're managing just fine.

The picture I kept will remind me...

9 – David Usher - F Train

I drive through these roads and try to feel as you might - the familiarity, the sense of home. I am not from here. For me, different places evoke the same belonging, different landmarks track my progress home. I adopted this place, I chose to be here. But you never left. Does that make me more widely travelled, more open minded, more experienced? Or does it make you more loyal?

All the memories died so long ago; time is up but still I'm waiting. Came here of my own volition...

10 – Radiohead - The Bends

Where are you? I feel sick for not knowing; sick for needing to know. I've been here countless times before. But this time the familiar is no comfort. I seek only the opportunity to practice what I now know.

Where do we go from here? The words are coming out all weird. Where are you now when I need you?

11 – Manic Street Preachers - La Tristesse Durerera

Today has been a *'Gold Against the Soul'* day. Contrary to what my addict brain would have my body believe, cigarettes really don't help; they don't make me feel better. It's music that heals me. This music. Like an old friend with sage advice, I learn that sadness lasts. There are breaks in the cloud, that's all. Perhaps all I can hope for is a sunny spell every day. The guitar solo in this song has been my sunlight today.

The sadness will never go, will never go away.

12 – David Ford - Song for the Road

I haven't spoken properly to Dave for a long time; not about anything that matters. He doesn't know anything about my life as it stands at the moment. Not that you'd know it from his newest song. It's everything. I only heard it once and I know it inside out; it breathes within me, pulses through me, urges me on.

The parallels are striking. I only wish I could tell it that way...

Well the day cast down lengthy shadows on unfamiliar towns

I drove 300 miles from the place I call home and I tip my hat to the angel of the north

And the sun, it set fire to the heavens on the hills over Sheffield tonight

As I sail over this countryside with new friends and old, we are nowhere, but hey we're alright

So you can keep your belief in whatever; I wear my cynicism like a tattoo

And while poets try to engineer definitions of love, you know, all I can think of is you

And I can't wait to see you on Sunday, far from the traffic and the smoke and the noise

For this evening I will play back every message that you sent and I will sleep to the sound of your voice

Now I don't like to use words like 'forever', but I will love you till the end of today

And in the morning when I remember everything that you are, I know I'll fall for you over again

13 – Duke Special - Freewheel

A quietly spoken Irishman with dreadlocks and a piano - I was sold immediately!
And as an added bonus you get a crazy old guy on drums who hits things. Anything. You wouldn't mess with him.
But he's cool as shit.
You can hear this song here, if you're interested: <http://www.dukespecial.com/multimedia.htm>
I don't wanna stand still; I just freewheel. I don't wanna lose this.

14 – Brian Wilson - Little Saint Nick

What a strange gig. After spending the first twenty minutes being equally intrigued at the extent of muscle memory at play here, and horrified at the obvious incapacity of Mr Wilson, I realised I was having a great time. The strangest part had to be hearing a Christmas tune in the middle of July, and the whole of the (ageing) audience singing along with the 'Run run reindeer' refrain. I still have to question who needs who more - the band propping up the frontman, the frontman propping up ticket sales, but at the end of the day it was just one fab tune after another.
Run, run reindeer...

15 – Oasis - Cast No Shadow

The evening was long, the sun low in the sky, when I noticed her slender and sultry as she wound through the streets before me. Her steps were graceful, with a defined poise and awareness; her hair grazed the dark contours of her skin as she moved. A lithe forearm raised, lifted a cigarette between long slim fingers.
Shadow envy. Nothing more.
Bound with all the weight of all the words he tried to say,
Chained to all the places that he never wished to stay; as he faced the sun he cast no shadow.

16 – R.E.M. - It's the End of the World as We Know it (And I Feel Fine)

Oh my! I never thought I'd hear this again. Even during the gig, as I steadied myself for another rendition of Man on the Moon, I wondered if they'd save this for the day they hang up the megaphone for good. And then came that drum intro. And I haven't stopped grinning since!
Actually the high point of tonight for me was Nightswimming (which has already been a Song of the Day). I don't think I can come close to describing how perfect this was: Mikey played piano, Michael sang beside him. In the instrumental bit at the end he climbed on the piano and sat facing Mike who, while still playing, just looked up at him with such love and warmth it broke me. At the end Michael leaned down and kissed him, and together they just looked like best friends, still after all these years. Perfect.
Offer me alternatives and I decline.

17 – The Posies - Love Comes

I have no idea how Ken Stringfellow has managed to fit this in (I know it's been six years since their last album, but he's been up to his elbow with R.E.M., lucky boy, since then), but he has. And it's fantastic - their best album yet by a long way. Incidentally, today I have mostly been pondering an Aldous Huxley line: *'time regained is paradise lost'*. I could think about that one concept for ever...
Is that what passes for vision these days?

18 – Echo and the Bunnymen - Seven Seas

Happy Hatchday Baggy, this one's for you!
Kissing the tortoise...

19 – Everlast - What It's Like

I glimpsed your future today. And it scared me. But it's *your* destiny and I have no right to interfere. And will I love you even then? Of course.
This is one of the bleakest, darkest, most heartbreaking songs I know. It never fails to upset me. It's a modern-day Ralph McTell 'Streets of London' number, packed full of social conscience. I can't help but personalise it every time...
You know where it ends, it usually depends on where you start.

20 – Elbow - Forget Myself

A bearded poet with a six-string singing songs of warmth and positivity. Tonight I saw something familiar, in a completely different light. And I saw something new bathed in sunshine and a furious joy. This kind of love leaves me soaring, elated. I can breathe again.
Are you falling in love every second song?

21 – U2 - All Because of You

Not to be outdone: Happy Birthday Ari!
An intellectual tortoise...

22 – The Move - Blackberry Way

Playing with my new toy today (I'm doing that man thing of not looking at the booklet, just pressing the buttons and seeing what happens. I haven't broken it yet!), and I can't stop singing this song! It's cool. I think. Although I've had to turn the vibrate off; my head can't cope with all the buzzing, bleeping gadgets around me these days!
What am I supposed to do now ...

23 – The Alaskan Pipeline - The Sum of You and Me

Another demo. From a local band I met at the Elbow do in the week. A bit ploddy, a bit cautious (the music, not the guys; the guys were pretty nice). But the lyrics are thoughtful and the overall aura of the song is quite lovely.
We can't keep shapeshifting...

24 – The Rolling Stones - Paint it Black

Today I have been painting my house. Not black - oatmeal. But I'm not aware of any 'Paint it Oatmeal' songs... Anyway, it looked great for about half an hour. Then it rained and became mud splattered and nasty. I can only hope the intensity of the rain washes off the mud, and I'm back to looking oatmeal-y again.
I want to see it painted...

25 – Scott McKenzie - San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair)

This was plan B. I thought about it again today, reading the Times travel supplement, and knowing you'd be doing the same. Plan B never happened. At least not yet...
If you come to San Francisco, summertime will be a love-in there.

26 – Tindersticks - Rented Rooms

This is taken from the 'Curtains' album. Today, everything seems to have been about curtains: I bought three books in a charity shop - all with some reference to curtains in the title. Not by design, I might add; it just happened that way.
I could have drowned in those so-called dreams.

27 – Clor - Love and Pain

Excellent gig tonight (apart from getting absolutely pissed on running back to the car, and my notebook got soaked - have spent the last few hours drying it carefully with a hairdryer trying to salvage mashed together pages and scrawled ideas). They played Dangerzone, which pleased me greatly. But I was struck anew with the currently applicable oxymoron of 'Love and Pain'. I think the crowd enjoyed themselves too.
I was in love, but that was yesterday, now I'm in pain and it's here to stay.

28 – Baddiel, Skinner and The Lightning Seeds - Three Lions

I like a good game of football. Nothing more; it's just a good game for me. Over the last couple of days I've been reading Nick Hornby's 'Fever Pitch' and it's made me think about a lot of things. As well as pondering the nature of obsession and the unwavering commitment and dedication inherent in being an ardent fan of just about anything, I'm also plotting a rebuttal: Hornby claims there is nothing like the immediate, unexpected thrill of your team scoring a goal. Well, for anyone who's ever had that moment of ecstatic abandon when your favourite band plays an unexpected favourite song - you're wrong Hornby!
It's coming home, it's coming, football's coming home...

29 – Pet Shop Boys - I Want a Dog

We found a dog! Or rather, she found us. Roaming the back garden at gone midnight she created a minor disturbance. Relieved not to find a burly burglar, just a small, lost yet excitable terrier, we brought her inside. She spent the night eye to eye through the glass dividing door to the hallway with two indignant and unamused cats. In the morning we walked her around the neighbourhood trying to find someone who recognised her. Finally she was returned home, although I have a hunch she would rather have stayed.
Oh, you can get lonely - I want a dog.

30 – The Posies - Could He Treat You Better

What a crazy show! I'd hoped to go with him of course; it's his fault I fell for this band. But he's being obtuse and obstructive as is his wont, so stuff him - I went on my own. (All this a couple of days in advance of a Sunday Times feature on how women at a gig or the theatre etc on their own are perceived as '*a rare breed, mysterious and therefore intriguing, confident and therefore a challenge*' - and there was me thinking I looked like a lonely, bitter freak). Anyway, the gig was great - it featured fab songs, witty stage-based repartee and nudity (well, Ken kept his pants on - but that was a seemingly average sized blessing in a greying nylon disguise). On the way home I convince myself it's all going to be OK.

Is there someone better to walk through this world with?

[Incidentally, mention must be made for the most insipid, god-awful dog of a song heard today: Deanna Carter (Atlanta to Birmingham). By Christ, I hope I never hear this again.]

31 – Tom McRae - Street Light

One of the Posies songs last night reminded me of this, except it took me about 16 hours to work out what it was. That has to be the most frustrating thing: singing fragments of lines over and over, not knowing for sure the words or the tune, just having that vague recognition of familiarity. Eventually I worked it out, but only after being rather heavy handed with both my computer and my CD collection. I don't deal well with not knowing.

Still I feel, that I am envious and obvious and desperate for your love,
And I know the time you're killing is mine. But I... I don't mind.

AUGUST:

1 – Matthew Sweet - Millennium Blues

A down day: the lure of GMTV was dangerously strong this morning - Monday morning. Not a coincidence perhaps that today I am feeling restless, vengeful and ill at ease with the world. I'm lacking a plan, a direction. My rut has become too familiar and try as I might, I can't break out; I just keep adding different dimensions to the same old problems. For now, I'll count it an achievement that I managed to get up, and dressed and function as if it was all OK.

Part of me wants to stay in the middle but I know it's old news now
And how far forward will I have to travel to stay ahead of you?

2 – Bob Marley - Stir It Up

My big thing this week has been making a smoothie for breakfast. After talking about it for many months (and being inspired by one of my record shops, who instead of putting the kettle on the moment you walk through the door, have taken to plugging in the blender!) I've finally got round to it. And it's enormous fun - experimenting each day with a different concoction of fruit, juices, maybe a dab of yoghurt... And in my mind at least, it's offset the vast amounts of chocolate I'm scoffing, to render me once again saintly (if still a little deluded) in the health and nutrition stakes.

Quench me when I'm thirsty; come on and cool me down, baby, when I'm hot.
Your recipe is so tasty...

3 – David Bowie - The Pretty Things Are Going To Hell

Do you remember that advert? (Typically with adverts nobody ever seems to recall what the product was, just a vague recollection of what happens in the minute it's on screen). I think it was for deodorant or perfume, where there was supposedly a lovely smelling lady luring all the beautiful men away. I remembered it today as it struck me that I haven't actually seen an attractive man for days. There are plenty of gorgeous girls everywhere I turn, but no men (and yes, I'm aware I'm picky, but still - *none*!?) *Where have they gone?* This evening I helped my friend move into a new flat in Brighton. You can usually rely on there being a generous smattering of totty around town, but in the three hours of driving, loading, unloading, waiting, loitering and people-watching... nothing. What's a girl to do, huh?!

I'm reaching the very edge you know.

4 – Arcade Fire - Wake Up

Tune of the day in the original sense. I can't stop playing it (loudly, so the mirrors shake). I discovered it a couple of months back (U2 were using it to come on stage to - he knows these things, even though it takes a connection of this kind to get him fired up about anything new and interesting these days). Anyway, it's great!

I guess we'll just have to adjust.

5 – Idlewild - American English

We watched together as shadows snaked across stone, as dusk fell on the courtyard, and the songs rang out strong and true. I'm happy to share this with her, what once was mine alone.

She asked where you were in relation to me. She suggested I harboured you inside, like a dirty secret or a guilty pleasure. And maybe I should trust her hunch; she knows me as well as I know myself. She knows what you mean to me, where you take me, how it is when you leave me to tread alone.

I plundered the depths of my obsession in search of an answer, but still none came.

I conclude only that you are everywhere, and nowhere.

And I won't tell you what this means, 'cause you already know.

6 – Fleetwood Mac - Dreams

My pulse was racing when I woke. Still early, the half light of dawn twitching at the edges of the curtains, the pen still in my hand. Clouded with sleep I remembered you; your smile as you took my hand, the strength of your touch as you drew me close. I recalled cherry lip-balm kisses and the sparkle in your eye as you took off my bracelets one by one. You were a possibility once before, distant and aloof, although through shyness or disinterest, I never could tell. But blanketed in dreams, for tonight only, you were mine.

In the stillness of remembering what you had and what you lost...

7 – Longview - Can't Explain

Waiting is excruciating. Not for the first time am I aware that this is what you bring to our table. Whether your aim is to teach me patience or cure me of this passion, I am unsure. Whether my heart is stubborn enough to resist both, is clear. So I stumble through these days as always; unwavering, undeterred, uncontrollably yours.

Waiting for hours, hours turn to days, days turn to years,
I'm still here.

8 – Wire Daisies - Everyman

I thought this album would be OK. It is. She sounds a little like Natalie Merchant, and a little like someone else I can't place right now. This is one of those songs that feels like you've always known it. Sometimes I like that. Today I am bored by how easily pleased I am.

More than you could ever know, my love, you've taken over me

9 – Lifehouse - Breathing

I can't ever leave this place. I see how happy he is here, just to sit and contemplate, sleep and daydream, chase butterflies through the flowers. He and I are inextricably bound, and he loves it here. No reason to stay, in the minds of most, but for him, and for me, we belong here.

I watch him tall and fearless, all the caution of youth buried beneath his pride. I could watch him forever and never tire. This is Stanley's song.

...listen to you breathing is where I wanna be.

10 – Dido - Hunter

I'm a hunter, prowling for prey. Belly close to the earth as I slither through the undergrowth of these days, scenting fresh blood on the wind. Victims are plentiful; a veritable feast for the merciless.

I have sipped of this nectar a thousand times, gorged myself on its sweet relief. But still this thirst rages on.

There are lessons of gluttony and lust to be learned, but those teachings are for another, more receptive day.

This queen you think you own wants to be a hunter again.

11 – Guns n Roses - Sweet Child O' Mine

I don't know why but when I washed my hair this morning I thought it would be a good idea to lace it with gel and scrunch it dry! I finally came to my senses about three hours later when I realised I looked like a relic from the eighties. After considering the possibility of actually pretending I was in fancy dress today (this being preferable to admitting I was being very stupid when I was getting ready for work) I began to get used to it. By the end of the day I was positively loving my new retro 'do'. Until Johnny Walker played Sweet Child o Mine (which you just *have* to turn up very loud and sing along to with the windows down). I had one of those moments where you see yourself from the outside! Other discoveries today: 1) Apparently on an average day we laugh 15 times. My days seem decidedly under par. I count once only so far today. 2) I found my first varicose vein. Christ, it's all over. Who's going to love me now?! Bring on the support tights and burn all my skirts.

...pray for the thunder and the rain to quietly pass me by.

12 – Radiohead - Stop Whispering

This says it all today. I want to shout, I want to write, I want to leave here and I want to stay. I want to tell him everything, I want to tell nobody anything. I want to start again with everything I've broken, I want to find a new way to love things I've grown to resent. I want to be still, inside and out.

And the feeling is that there's something wrong
Because I can't find the words and I can't find the songs

13 – Art of Fighting - Heart Translation

I've been trying to get myself to engage. I've identified this as a problem; I'm only present at the surface of conversations and relationships. I don't want to give too much away, so I flit around the periphery, making the right noises and trying to fit in. I'm having to work hard at concentrating on people, and being part of what's going on around me. I'm hoping the practice will bear fruit.

Maybe we'll see it all as it's fading away.

14 – Bruce Springsteen - I'm On Fire

From down here I can see the smallest of things clearer. Their tiny movements played out on a grand scale with ease and transparency. I admire their tenacity, their resilience. Unaware of their place in this big picture, unaffected by matters of love and longing, they strive, and they die. Or maybe it's me that's missing the bigger picture.

Sometimes it's like someone took a knife baby, edgy and dull, and cut a six-inch valley through the middle of my soul.

15 – Nick Drake - River Man

A friend I haven't seen in a long time called and asked to meet. He wanted some intelligent conversation, some advice and my help. Feeling somewhat incompetent on all fronts, I agreed. The conversation was fun, the advice straightforward and it turns out he wanted me to orchestrate some songs of his. It's only today that I realise how much I've missed having any practical involvement in music.

Betty said she prayed today for the sky to blow away or maybe stay, she wasn't sure.

16 – Tori Amos - Witness

I have become unhealthy (is there any other kind) obsessed with Silent Witness. I want to be friends with Nikki and go out with Harry, I want to be part of their circle, help them decipher clues and collect evidence. I am aware all this is wrong. Not content with the drama in my own life, I want part of a fantasy drama created to fill the void in my imagination. I do not need this, but I want it all the same.

Is there any way? Is there any way forward?

17 – Led Zeppelin - Rock & Roll

Driving home today I hit the usual traffic jam queuing for the Dartford toll bridge. I don't do bridges very well, so to help me along I usually have loud music on. It was hot, my windows were down. This song came on the radio and for one terrible, unforgivable moment I thought the intro was that to Buck's Fizz 'Makin' Your Mind Up! All I could think of was what the hell the people waiting in the adjacent lanes would think of me listening to such a terrible song so loud! (No, I'm cool, honest; I work for a record company, I like Buckley and Paisley Underground bands...I protested loudly in my head, to myself.) The relief was immense, but shortlived as I realised I'd mistaken such a great band for such a bloody awful one. Sometimes I am more tragic than I'd care to admit.

It's been a long time...

18 – Paul McCartney - Single Pigeon

Driving through the town I grew up in today, I passed an old guy on a bike. It was Pigeon. He was our bogeyman when we were kids.

We'd scare ourselves witless following him through the long grass, up the hillside by the railway line and along to the bridge. He collected TVs from the dump and stashed them at the edge of the fields. He'd strap them to the back of his bike and he had to peddle so hard it made him look like a pigeon; backwards and forwards against the handlebars as he picked his way through the streets. I assumed he'd died years ago. He must be nearly 80 now, and he was still on the bike, with a TV on the back, struggling to move forwards under its weight. The fields are gone now - made way for a housing estate, just memories left - for him and us.

Do you need a pal for a minute or two?

19 – Led Zeppelin - Kashmir

He never ceases to amaze me. He was fighting the corner for a scratch hiphop track - Rocket by Herbie Hancock. I was on the side of Led Zeppelin - Stairway to Heaven. He truly believed that take a snapshot of the population and more people will know his track than mine. WHAT?!

The evening progressed with me rolled up laughing, him a bit put-out and both of us really wanting to prove a point by asking the people in our street tomorrow.

The crunch came when he uttered the unforgivable phrase 'but that's rock music. I don't like all that twiddly twiddly stuff'.

a) I think he's referring to Prog. b) How the hell did I ever think he was right for me. c) He likes 80s electronica - what's more twiddly twiddly than that?!

Once again, someone else's music taste determines the success or otherwise of the relationship. I wasn't even going to get into the 'what music means to you' argument.

My eyes fill with sand as I scan this wasted land, trying to find, trying to find where I've been.

20 – Sting - Fields of Gold

It was a nice day. We walked for miles; through fields and forests, across meadows and streams. I remembered when I always used to enjoy his company this much.

I swear in the days still left we'll walk in fields of gold.

21 – Suede - Shipbuilding

Tonight I watched 'The Shipping News' - what an excellent film! Quote of the night: Cate Blanchett's whitetrash character teasing 'Nibble, nibble little mouse...'

I'm left humming 'Shipbuilding' to myself afterwards and it makes me think: If you hear a cover version before you're familiar with the original, do you always like that version better? Kind of like the thing where you see the film before you read the book and get a completely different idea of what the original creator was trying to portray. Anyway... I knew the Suede version of this first, and yes, I do like it better than the original.

Diving for dear life, when we could be diving for pearls

22 – Cardigans - Sick and Tired

Some old crank on a radio talk show alluded to the four states which can nudge someone of fragile disposition onto a downward spiral: Angry, Hungry, Lonely, Tired.

Today I experienced all four and still managed to stay afloat.

I think I'd better stay here on my own, so spare me if you please

23 – Bruce Springsteen - Dancing in the Dark

What is commonly known as a bad hair day. Except with the added delights of ill-fitting clothes and burgeoning double chin (I *must* lay off the chocolate - you can only take comfort-eating so far before one's vanity begins to suffer...)

Wanna change my clothes, my hair, my face...

24 – Erma Franklin - Take a Little Piece of My Heart

This song has always felt so positive, strong and capable. That's what I need today, just a little encouragement.

I'm gonna show you, baby, that a woman can be tough.

25 – Donna Summer - This Times I Know it's for Real

I drive about a thousand miles a week. The stereo is on the entire time. In the summer I have my windows down (the air-con is wasted on me), and obviously I sing along with most things. Today I was blessed with that rare bird - the ability to sing in tune. (There's a story here about how, despite my classical background in choral singing to the highest level, I still sing sharp - I put it down to an old boyfriend and being musically scarred from an early age).

Anyway, I made the most of today's accurate tonality by belting out some top tunes - this one topped the lot: disco-tastic!

Got to find a way to get my message to you...

26 – R.E.M. - How The West Was Won (And Where It Got Us)

I made ice cream. Lime ice cream. Artery-hardening, tooth rotting, cardiac arrest-inducing, thoroughly delicious lime ice cream.

Just add water, stir in lime...

27 – Elbow - Station Approach

Like loving arms to welcome you home, like nestling into your favourite chair, like pulling on a soft warm jumper on a winter's evening.. I can feel the tension ebbing away, replaced by a smile. And suddenly the sun comes up, the world is bathed in hot yellow light and it all makes sense. Elbow are all that matter today, all I need.

Be everything to me tonight.

28 – Simon Webbe - Lay Your Hands

Today, to my shame, I got the Popmaster 3-in-10 on the Lighthouse Family. (Those of you who are unfamiliar - Radio 2, weekdays, 10:30 - play along: it's fun!) As if that wasn't tragic enough, I'd recently commented to a toocooltocare record shop owner that I rather liked the new Simon Webbe single. I was about to elaborate - citing the point about the killer chorus - when I was literally laughed out of the building. Well, I have no shame: I know a good pop song when I hear one!

Will you take me away to a better place?

29 – The Cranberries - Linger

I'll drive myself crazy before I lay this to rest. The chapter is not over; I'm writing the ending as I go, reading the last paragraph over and over, chasing the words across the page until it makes sense.

It's just your attitude; it's tearing me apart.

30 – The Mavericks - Dance the Night Away

I remember you in the strangest of things. It took me two years to go full circle; maybe that was the point. But I still know I was right, in an oblique kind of way.

If you should see her, please let her know that I'm well

31– Nada Surf - Always Love

Great new album due. I remember how we flirted our way through the last... Your smile still quickens my pulse. You joke around it, but I know you don't forget.

It helps to write it down, even when you then cross it out.

SEPTEMBER:

1 – Morrissey - The More You Ignore Me, The Closer I Get

Through the steady haze of midnight conversation I heard the urgent buzzing of reality, pressing in on me ever closer, unavoidable. A culmination of a day's thought on the matter, I realize this is where I've been heading. I am here. This is the house that Jack built; where he can hide within the walls until the storm passes.

...whether you care or do not, yeah, I've made up your mind.

2 – The Primitives - Crash

I had a lovely day. I saw him in away I never before imagined. Comfortable in his father role, soft and at ease with his child in my arms. And the innocence of the afternoon was shattered when I got back to this. I considered smashing my head against the wall just to get away from the noise. From such stillness to such violence, from one end of the county to the other.

Shut, shut your mouth, 'cause I'm not listening anyhow;

I've had enough of you, enough to last a life time through...

3 – Depeche Mode - John the Revelator

Top tune from the forthcoming album. After a conversation a couple of days ago about listening to songs on repeat - I can confirm that so far today I have played this seven times. Loudly.

Who's that shouting?

4 – Herbert Groenemeyer - Keine Heimat (No Homeland)

Tonight I watched 'Before Sunrise' and found myself homesick for Austria. Not just the country, but the feelings of peace and simplicity I remember from those days. The film also raised questions for me about the nature of unconditional love - something I sway between respecting and being abhorred by.

Freiheit, die nichts mehr zaehlt; falschem Traum vertraut.

(Freedom that doesn't count anymore; trusting in the wrong dream)

5 – The Rolling Stones - Rain Fall Down

Annual EMI conference. Highlight: old blokes, rocking. Says it all.

It was all the usual crap
All the usual sleaze

Actually, it was pretty good this year – we heard the long-awaited Kate Bush single, fell in love with Sigur Ros (some of us for the first time), Robbie Williams came and proved he was just a sweet guy with the weight of the company on his shoulders. And Bob Geldof stopped by, told us we were cunts (which henceforth rather became the buzzword of the night – it's amazing how some people never cease to be entertained by the use of the word 'cunt' in formal surroundings), and urged us to jump on the Live 8 bandwagon by way of the forthcoming DVD. Obviously, after the official business, we ate well, drank inordinately and descended to the usual depths. Two hours sleep and a hellish hangover, and it's only Monday...

6 – Elbow - Switching Off

Two years on. I wrote about constancy, she wrote about luck. The angel bestowing good fortune on her, was looking my way too. And so it was that I stood trembling in a room full of strangers, dying inside at the absolute beauty of this. One moment to define everything, one song to underwrite the chaos in my head. Like softly smoothed pages, I am calmed, I am anchored. The answer is here. It always has been.

The love of this beauty, this man, this song; the love that saves me in so many ways, will be the ruin of me.

You: the only sense the world has ever made.

7 – Radiohead - Paranoid Android

Me today: Tired; still a little hungover; caffeine ravaged; and very, very paranoid. Not good, although I am aware that cause and effect is at play here.

It has come to my attention that I have lost sight of the things I believe in. Today will be about reclaiming my faith.

The dust and the screaming, the yuppies networking, the panic, the vomit

8 – The Supremes - Baby Love

Hello, and welcome to this crazy life, to baby sisters, born this afternoon. As far as we know, Mum's newly discovered thrombosis (the result of the pressure of carrying twins) didn't migrate to her heart, brain or any other dangerous location during childbirth... And congratulations also to C (who I won't be telling this story to for another 6 months at least), who really will never cease to amaze me. Now keep your overly fertile husbands well away, ladies; some of us are managing our stretch marks just fine through chocolate and binge drinking...

9 – Robbie Williams - Angels

Oh, I know it's blasphemous and treasonous, but I just don't like 'Tripping' (*'You're out of your depth son, have a word...'*) Maybe it'll grow on me. Maybe not. Either way, I got home and played Angels very loud, because it's a great song and because I'm soft like that.

And down the waterfall, wherever it may take me, I know that life won't break me.

10 – Sufjan Stevens - Chicago

Today I am obsessed with the title of his new album *'Come On Feel The Illi-noise'*. Mr Stevens has embarked on the enormous undertaking of writing an album for each of the American states. So far he only has Michigan and Illinois under his belt, but musically he's doing well! Check here for more: www.sufjan.com

...I don't mind; I made a lot of mistakes; in my mind...

11 – Counting Crows - Daylight Fading

A lazy day spent cooking (homemade apple and blackberry pie - all ingredients from the garden), and gardening. Maybe the last beautiful day of the summer.

Moonlight creeping around the corners of our lawn, when we see the early signs of daylight fading...

12 – Booker T and the MGs - Soul Limbo

Another England sporting victory. I didn't actually think I would ever be bothered by this. But it feels good, if only just knowing that it brought a rare smile to your face.

13 – KT Tunstall - Suddenly I See

I have finally realised what number 1 in the Airplay chart equates too. It means that over a 3 hour journey home, station hopping on the car radio, your song can be heard 6 times on 6 different stations, as well as it being used for various sound beds across the airwaves. Overkill maybe, but I still sing along every time!

She got the power to be, the power to give, the power to see, yeah, yeah...

14 – Lemonheads - Kitchen

Only now, ten years on, do those things reveal themselves that have long lain undisturbed. Memories flood back of a hot summer's night, mountain air and a determination not to give in to his desires. He was a chef. We laughed at the *'it all started in the kitchen'* line, me knowing that nothing would be starting here, him thinking he'd get his way. I did indeed stay awake all night. And in the morning I was gone. I'd forgotten these things until now.

We'll stay awake all night...

15 – Franz Ferdinand - Do You Wanna

I really didn't want this to happen, but I really like the new Franz Ferdinand single - far too catchy for its own good! Unfortunately I realised when I saw them perform it on some TV show this evening, that from certain angles the singer looks like Nicky Wire. This has thrown me a little.

Do do... do do do you wanna, wanna go...

16 – Bush - Straight No Chaser

After days in darkness, the rain eases up, the clouds lift and I can feel the blue sky break through. For a while we will walk along this path, sidestepping puddles and warming our soaked skin in the steady sun. But, with one eye on the sky, we will always just be waiting for the storm to break again...

It's all in the face of what we thought we knew before...

17 – The Smiths - You Just Haven't Earned it Yet, Baby

Strange conversations and alcohol naturally go hand in hand. This evening, having not drunk for a few weeks, I had quite a lot of vodka. It turns out that others have noticed my predicament, preempted it even, have been pondering it amongst themselves. It made me feel better; that I was not being irrational, or asking too much. We talked, they talked... maybe things will be different. But that's up to you.

If you're wondering why all the love that you long for eludes you, and people are rude and cruel to you, I'll tell you why...

18 – Chas and Dave - Rabbit

Murray is seven weeks old and very cute. He came to live with us today, having been snatched, not too literally, from the jaws of doom. His family have been condemned to the 'rescue centre' following the marital split of their owners, and the subsequent irresponsible attitude of humans who really shouldn't have animals. That's an argument for another day. Today however, Murray is happily snuggled into his new home (my office), and we are getting to know each other. I am mostly struck by how quiet he is.

You got a beautiful face...

19 – Elbow - Snowball

I haven't felt able to do much today, just move slowly, keep warm. Is this what it'll be like to be old?

We'll come and visit you, when all the pills you take no longer help you.

20 – Boston - More than a Feeling

The first time I met her she said this was her favourite song. When I heard it earlier, I naturally thought of her. I haven't seen her now for far too long, and I worry. She's the happiest person I know and it's not for her to be caught up in matters of pain and despair. She's the girl with the brightest blue eyes, and I long for the days we'd sit and watch the stars shoot over the ocean.

Turned on some music to start my day: I lost myself in a familiar song; I closed my eyes and I slipped away

21 – Del Amitri - Nothing Ever Happens

I've been singing this to myself all day. I think it started with the traffic light lyric, as I sat waiting for an eternity in a roadworks queue, only to find there's nothing coming in the opposite direction anyway. I put the track on when I got home and was delighted to note that, even though I haven't heard it for years, I still know every word. A great song.

Now the traffic lights change to stop, when there's nothing to go

22 – Lynn Anderson - Rose Garden

For some utterly unknown reason I woke up with this running through my head. What the hell happens in your mind when you're asleep that results in me having a song stuck in my head that I don't like, that I haven't heard for ages, and that means absolutely nothing to me? Weird.

If that's what it takes to hold you, I'd just as soon let you go.

23 – Radiohead - Idioteque

It occurred to me today that terrorism is actually a somewhat redundant entity in the world as it stands today. If I were a gun-toting lunatic (and sometimes I'd like to be), I'd be putting my feet up and admiring the destruction all around me without having to lift a finger. The Western world is eating itself (admittedly it's taking the rest of the planet with it) through its established patterns of greed and consumerism. And Nature is the force meting out the punishment. The devastation seen on America's own doorstep over the last few weeks can only be the result of years of inconsiderate, bullish, arrogant consumption of the earth's resources without a care for the consequences. Who needs weapons of mass destruction? Our own lack of respect for the planet we call home is doing the job of a thousand terrorists. Rant over. Step away from the soapbox...

We're not scaremongering, this is really happening.

24 – Natalie Merchant - The Letter

A day spent searching for words. I could send an empty envelope and still say more than I mean to. The paper, untouched, returned to the drawer as the pen traces idle lines across skin. There are no words that fit today. I'll try again later...

If I ever write this letter, the pages I could write.

25 – Pink Floyd - Money

Having a new pet to sing to has proved very exciting! What is even better, is that you can substitute 'Murray' for quite a few words in song titles. Today's favourite is Pink Floyd's 'Money'. (Which when I played it to Dave - he insisted he'd never heard it before?! - he said it sounded like the theme to 'Are you Being Served?!') Either way, it's a relief for all concerned, that I've found something to replace Abba's 'Money, Money, Money', which was starting to drive us all mad.

26 – Elbow - Leaders of the Free World

Waking with the taste of another poet dream on my lips. And still I remember the fire in his eyes. Waves of recollection follow me round today, as I weave through traffic, distracted. William Wharton wrote of being able to control dreams, to steer yourself back in each time you fall asleep. Tonight I'll try...

My thinking isn't driven, but the music always gives me a lift.

27 – Manic Street Preachers - Faster

A sunny day full of promise. First, as always on a Tuesday, he made me coffee with a smile. As I talked I could feel his eyes on me, remembering, hoping for another evening with wine and kisses. As I moved through the day there were others, and I realised I can do this, I just have to let go. Maybe someday soon I'll be able to do just that. Until then, there's nothing better than to slip into top gear and head home singing.

I know I believe in nothing but it is my nothing.

28 – David Ford - If You Only Knew

She's the most beautiful woman in the world. I've always thought so, since the days when we were the same, me and him; before he took his genius and climbed to the sky. I'd gone to see him shine, but I spent the evening watching her move alongside him, perfect behind her dark hair and dark eyes, singing back at her the words 'If you only knew how good it is to see you'. I want to be like her and with her all at once. And to have her throw her pale arms around me and say 'Hi, I'm glad you came' was better than a thousand songs. Even his songs.

29 – Billy Bragg - You Woke Up My Neighbourhood

The marital split next door has provided soap opera style antics in the last few days, culminating in a bit of a row in the street and the police showing up. Talk about lowering the tone!

Things are pretty quiet round here now

30 – Seth Lakeman - The Ballad of Josie

Album of the day is 'Kitty Jay'. It's dark and vibrant, powerful and alive. There are songs here I'll be singing tomorrow, I can feel them now, creeping under my skin, finding a place inside, biding their time...

OCTOBER:

1 – Tom McRae - A&B Song

We were three, standing in the shadows of a spotlight. We all felt it, in our different ways; made mental notes and took pictures with the cameras in our minds. It was bigger than I expected, so much bigger; the swirling and sounds and strings. With every beat, I felt the bass tearing at my spine, and still I wanted more.

And all our time slips away.

2 – Diana Ross - Do You Know Where You're Going To?

A morning song, sung for a crazy rabbit, running with abandon onto and into everything in his path. Gone is the quiet, polite bunny who moved in a fortnight ago, replaced by a whirling, leaping firecracker of an animal, fresh with the frenzy of youth and exploration. He is however, just as adorable.

When you look behind you there's no open door

3 – Ace of Base - The Sign

I had an idea today. Not just a passing thought or a fleeting fantasy, but a real, life-changing enterprise to embrace and achieve. It happens quite a lot with me, but I never seem to find the time or the energy to follow it through. I add it to my list of 'things I really should do', maybe run it by a like-minded friend, but that's as far as it gets. I doubt if today's idea will be any different, but just in case, I'm keeping it to myself! What I will tell you, however, is that it was prompted by a spray painted sign hanging from a parapet over the A27 outside Brighton: 'Wendy, I want a divorce' it said, plainly as day. Innovative, I thought... and that's when it happened.

Is enough enough?

4 – Metallica - Ronnie

We didn't really do much as a family when I was younger, we'd seldom go out anywhere together. There was a weekly routine we followed obligingly; we ate the same meals each week, saw the same faces and watched the same TV. Back in the days before remote controls, Dad was in charge. Programmes that would have given us slightly more leverage in the playground were forbidden (Grange Hill, Top of the Pops), and so we settled down on a Saturday night with a comforting regularity to watch shows like The Two Ronnies together. Today, a comedy genius laughed his last. Goodbye Ronnie Barker; thanks for warm nights in as a kid, curled in front of a fire, the whole family laughing.

Keep your smile and laugh all day

5 – Pulp - Babies

Not being the most maternal of people, I was surprised at how easily I warmed to the two babies, these little people watching and shuffling, their every moment an experience. Don't get me wrong: I was still more than content to come home to my furry dependents, and to sleep through the night with nothing but the tickle of whiskers to break the dark silence. But I think I can see what the appeal is now.

...She looks like you.

6 – Dave Matthews - Grey Street

The age old debate of 'Are we unhappy because we listen to this music, or do we listen to this music because we are unhappy?' came to the fore today. I love this song so much but it does make me very sad. In a good way.

Look at how she listens, she says nothing of what she thinks, she just goes stumbling through her memories

7 – Traffic - Rollright Stones

And so it is that I still remember every word you said, every slight of your hand, every care in your eyes. This place brings clarity, this place brings peace. I came here for strength, and to remember. I am closer to you here, closer to your memory. Today there is no rain, but still that shade of hope in the air. Today I leave the ghost of you nestled between earth and stone, waiting for another season to pass. And I was right: nothing would ever be quite the same again.

Many years has come and gone

Went to see a standing stone

8 – James Taylor - Fire and Rain

Tonight there was the beat of a drum, incessant, determined, keeping pace with the streets and the crowds gathered there. There was a fire lit on a hillside and lights carried to the beach, dripping tar onto the shingle as the march pushed onward. And there on the shore, the ghosts of the year past were burned; one colossal pyre to mark their passing. There were lights, climbing high into the night sky, flashing with a bright intensity for all around to see, before tumbling, spent, to earth; to fall at our feet. The rain came later, to wash away the traces of our play for another year. All this is in memory of a battle lost, a reminder that we are vulnerable and insignificant. The people of this town need no such reminder.

I always thought that I'd see you again

9 – Duran Duran - Hungry Like the Wolf

I... am... so... hungry... today....

10 – Nirvana - Rape Me

There is a place I have seen: a place of white and light and bright steel. The only soft thing here is the tremble of my hand as I sign my name; my mark, my stamp of authority over what happens here. And through the blurred saline tears I know I'll reach afterwards for the same props, telling myself always I am not to blame for this weakness, and knowing all the same that I can never be carefree.

I'm not the only one

11 – Manic Street Preachers - Kevin Carter

In a warm room, away from the complaints of the waiting pensioners, come for their weekly socialisation and attempts to defy the approach of the inevitable, I lie still. There's a static crack from nylon carpet, and a creak from the age old leather of the furniture. She buzzes delicately around me, her strong fingers feeling the marks of my days. With the simplest of movements (fine tuning, she says) and a warm smile, I am mended. I leave the room lighter, my pain crouched withering under that old leather table.

Click click click click click, click yourself under.

12 – Mamas and Papas - California Dreamin'

I feel a rising panic as night falls earlier, as dawn breaks later and as I shiver my way through these days. Winter is coming. And so soon after the last.

All the leaves are brown and the sky is grey.

13 – Aerosmith - Dude (Looks Like a Lady)

You may think with these heels and a touch of lip gloss, that I've arrived. Blossomed they said, elegant, feminine. But I'm a dressed up dichotomy, a schizophrenic style slave, still searching to reconcile my heart with my hand. Behind this groomed and painted facade there's a teenager spoilt for choice: a barefoot hippy; a kohl-eyed rock junkie; a vintage chic academic. I used to reinvent with deliberation, now I just take my chances with the wardrobe god each morning, and see which me wins through.

Never judge a book by its cover

14 – Red Hot Chili Peppers - Venice Queen

Just a great song to drive home to, blowing away the hangover haze as the sun dips below the treeline. I think about home and what it means to me. A place where my favourite people are, a place of comfort and safety where I can let go, and hold tight as I choose. It's Friday and I'm glad to be coming home.

Come again just to start afresh once again, to find a home in the moment of the meantime.

15 – Manic Street Preachers - This Is Yesterday

A conversation in the early hours floats lazily over the top of a soundtrack unintentionally revealing. We are surprised and unnerved, the three of us that notice. The night is cloaked now in memories of then; each of us reliving different moments, smiling in different places. There is comfort in the discomfort this brings.

Do not listen to a word I say, just listen to what I can keep silent.

16 – Dave Matthews Band - Cry Freedom

So where do you live? Where do you spend your time? Me: I'm a future person. I plot and I plan and I trip my way through the present, always looking forward to something still to come. I don't revisit the past at all, and I don't linger long in the present. Ideal I'm sure, to balance all three, but that's not something I've learned how to achieve yet.

The future is no place to place your better days

17 – R.E.M. - I Don't Sleep, I Dream

A cruel world this, which, given the notion of time, turns its thoughts to yesterday. But yesterday is a nothing now, faded into the afterglow of tomorrow. Sleep to dreamier sleep be wed, and so I close my eyes.

You come, deliver my demons

18 – The Smiths - Panic

Ken Bruce went on holiday. For two weeks. And just when I thought it would all return to normal, Steve Wright went away. Not that I begrudge DJs a break now and again, I'm just wish the BBC would find someone less patronising and inane to replace them. Richard Allinson, I'm sick of your condescending, brush-aside manner and the way you state with authority things which are patently untrue. I'd rather listen to static for three weeks. Thankfully I have a wealth of CDs to listen to, and only need to tune in for the pop quiz.

Hang the DJ

19 – Jewel - Foolish Games

A song from long ago, which meant other things to me and had other ties, came back to me today. Am I destined forever to think of you at times like these? I long to claim back these songs for myself, to remember their true value each time they surface, free from the cloud cover you sprinkle over my life.

...always felt I was outside looking in on you.

20 – Catatonia - Road Rage

It's not difficult. You say a week, I give you a week. Don't decide now you haven't had time. I'm not interested in your platitudes and your sullen apologies. I have neither the time nor the inclination to bend myself to your ineptitude. You can keep your 'take a seat', 'help yourself to coffee'; I won't be back.

If all you've got to do today is hesitate

21 – Abba - Waterloo

In my head it would be like the scene from the film; the world in darkness sparked suddenly into action by a light from afar, a message to be passed on with haste. So I went, and I stood in the rain, and I cursed our twentieth century streetlights and headlights and all other lights of the night. I could almost taste the fear, the urgency, the anticipation. Squinting through the darkness, eyes tight to the rain and the smoke, these faces turned skyward, watching the residue of a solar system fading away like the ghosts of dying sailors into the night. Gunshot ricochet, fire and flame, and the course of history was rewritten.

Having learnt most of my history from songs, it's no wonder I'm a little confused about this: It's Trafalgar Day - I know Nelson won the battle but other than that it seems I had all my facts jumbled up (but then, to my knowledge nobody's written a songs about the Battle of Trafalgar). So it seems we were fighting the Spanish and despite winning, Nelson died. A friend, who I was surprised to discover was more knowledgeable on the subject, explained the intricacies. I was just there for the lights in the night.

My my, at Waterloo Napoleon did surrender

22 – Haven - Let it Live

I found them. Those beautiful men that were missing. They're in Islington, crowded into a small dark room, all cheek bones and long fingers and perfectly hung t-shirts. Typical then that I made no effort, that I stumbled in clumsily with straw hair, battered jeans and a thin vest, just there for the music. I'm plotting my return.

You're still soul searching for the right lines

23 – We are Scientists - Lousy Reputation

Fab new album, although I was initially put off by the clutching of kittens on the cover and the implied vivisection, (We Are Scientists... Or is that just the way my mind works?) All that aside it is a really good album, and the kittens are very cute! Lots of top tracks to choose from, but the bass on this is addictive!

Why do I keep finding myself so surprised?

24 – Lisa Stansfield - All Woman

Yes, I laughed. But then I thought about it: there are some things a girl really shouldn't have to go through. And having to confirm that she is indeed a girl is definitely one of them. Some of you (those who have known me for years, who know that I stomp and I swear and I hate frilly, lacey, girlie shit) will understand how such a mistake could be made. I gather it's a question of semantics; that maybe my words were ambiguous. But just to lay the matter to rest:

I may not be a lady, but I'm all woman

25 – Paul McCartney - Fine Line

It's a fine line between hope and delusion, between faith and denial, between me and you. And soon these autumn rains will wash that line away, leave us treading on each other's sides, blurring the marks that define us.

...your decision makes a difference: Get it wrong and you'll be making a big mistake.

26 – Elbow - Fugitive Motel

Countless days I spend counting the hours we spent counting the stars.

Not 'til I can read by the moon am I going anywhere

27 – Weezer - Island in the Sun

The Channel Islands are beautiful, even in October with the bleak of winter looming. Actually today is warm and comfortable and full of promise. We pass rocks and castles and castles on rocks. Everywhere there is sea and sky in various combinations of vastness. There are wild, deserted coves, rugged bays, and swathes of green and flowers cut through this picturesque landscape. I know I'm not going to have time to lose myself in this place, but I know it will lure me back before too long.

We'll never feel bad anymore

28 – Sugababes - Hole in the Head.

I have a hangover. It hurts. Two hours sleep; a slow crawl to the water's edge in the hope that the bracing wind would force my eyes open; a battle of wills with my nervous system as I stumble through the smell of a Full English cooking; a mercifully short ride to the airport, wishing I could appreciate the scenery; crouching in corners and dodging cigarette smoke as I wait...and wait.... and wait. A final scurry for seats, and we're off and up and it's all I can do stop my stomach spilling onto my shoes as I keep my eyes level on the horizon. Pale skinned, black eyed and back on home soil, only an hour's drive home now. I want my cat and I want my bed.

Not feeling this

29 – Pearl Jam - Alive

The part of me that plays with fire was resting tonight. Instead I found myself gathered round a table, mopping soup with people still strangers after all these years. A radio played behind me somewhere, beckoning me to remember that I am more than just a slice of this whole. Some parts of me are simply not reconcilable. Even now.

Is something wrong, she said. Well of course there is.

30 – Paul Simon - Call Me Al

Tired morning eyes, a reading mistake, and a song is wedged into your psyche all day. The best way to exorcise it is to play it loudly and listen carefully. I'd forgotten what a fabulous bass player's song this is. I never did master that slap solo at the end though...

You know I don't find this stuff amusing anymore

31 – Jewel - Hands

I met a man and we shook hands, all business professionals and pleasantries. He was there for another, but we talked over coffee all the same, becoming calm and easy in each others' afternoon. Over so soon, we made plans for the evening, then deep brown eyes held mine as tightly as his hands as he said goodbye.

I did see him later, but I hesitated, stumbled over my words and missed the opportunity. Fate provides you with one chance, the rest is up to you.

In the end only kindness matters

NOVEMBER:

1 – Athlete - 24 Hours

We talk about us in the third person, like we're looking in on someone else's story. We talk for hours, and always with things left unsaid. We talk about nothing, knowing there's a great big something between us. We talk in circles, treading the same paths out of comfort and fear. Maybe with these words we can build a shape for ourselves, to contain whatever this is, whatever it might become. But tonight we just talk.

All I waited for is closing in...

2 – Travis - Sing

It was just a chance to be creative, to relax and be comfortable with this thing that once broke me down to nothing. For tonight, at least, I managed it.

Everything's gonna be fine.

3 – Depeche Mode - Shake the Disease

It's not my place to feel torn apart by this thing inside you, and I don't know you well enough to take your hand and it mean what I want it to mean. But it chokes me to think that you, with your vision and strength and clarity, might have all this stolen from you. And your laughter hides it all; you are amazing and this life is so fucking cruel.

Now I've got things to do and I've said before that I know you have too

When I'm not there, in spirit I'll be there

4 – R.E.M. - Country Feedback

She's the closest thing I've known to understanding. And when she writes that way about that song and that day, I know I can come no closer. She reaches the core of me, across the miles and the wide sky, and just knowing she knows is all I need for now.

I need this...

5 – Moist - Into Everything

(Broad concepts vs. specifics.)

I question why it can't be with people as it is with music; that I find the one thing that works for me and I love it for always, knowing with absolute certainty that that love will never fade. But on closer inspection, I realise I am true to music as a whole, not to just one song. Ask me to pick one track for ever and for always, and one track alone, and I couldn't. I love different songs in different ways at different times for different reasons, just as I do people. The difference is, that a song does not demand my fidelity, does not care if I spend weeks listening to other records and being besotted by new music. I always come back to the ones I love.

Feels so raw, makes me crazy

6 – Madonna - Frozen

Today I have been mostly defrosting my freezer. This, my most loathed of household chores, is long overdue. It got to the point where the thing was so clogged up I could only store the thinnest, smallest things inside (mini pizzas...?), inching them in between the vast swathes of ice. This morning I pulled the plug at ten o'clock, and after spending an afternoon mopping up the floor, getting chilblains and finally attacking the bastard with a hairdryer, the tundra is thawed and the job is done. Winter is bad enough without enduring a miserable Sunday up to my elbows in ice. Is not amused.

7 – R.E.M. - Animal

She talks around me, making more sense than the stillness in this room. I feel whole here. Answers become questions, ideas twist and turn, snaking away from us the more we reach to catch them. And if the purpose of all of this is merely to walk the path, I wouldn't have anyone else by my side.

I'm vibrating at the speed of light.

8 – Tori Amos - Caught a Lite Sneeze

I think I am allergic to my rabbit. Every time I snuffle his soft fur I sneeze. Lots. But he's mine and I love him and being a little snotty is a small price to pay for the crazyfurrylove of my bunny friend.

You get closer and closer

9 – Sigur Rós - Glósóli

If I should die in the winter time, away from the sun and the blue sky and the green leaves of summer, this will be the soundtrack to my last moments here. I listened tonight with the awe of a child: all wide, helpless smiles and spinning stars, with the band before me crafting a beauty so big you can't help but cry quietly into the darkness. This is surely the music of heaven coming to carry me home.

10 – Mercury Rev - Goddess on a Hiway

There are lights; I see them getting brighter, closer. I move quietly through the long grass hiding me, keeping me safe out here in the night. And there's sound too; a roaring, thunderous sound moving faster now, bearing down on me. And if I'm quick and I run as fast as I can, I might just make the safety of the trees on the other side. I go. I keep my eyes on the treeline and I run faster than I ever knew I could. I taste the blood pounding in my chest and I claw onward as it hits me. There is a flood of pain and memory, and the lights go out around me.

When I see your eyes arrive

11 – Delerium - Silence

I believe it was their choice, misguided and misinformed, but theirs. And as I switched off the silence and sank self-absorbed into this week's favourite distraction, I rounded the bend to see a lone old man laying a wreath on the stone memorial. And only then did I understand why. Fighting the urge to stop and stand beside him, to appease my own guilt, I drove on into the day. But I do remember.

I wanted to believe that I'd get caught up when the rage in me subsides

12 – Ben Folds - Not the Same

The view from here is amazing: angles on gardens I've never seen before; angles on the ground in new and slanted shapes. Finches fleet around me, cats look up and wonder, as boughs fall in a heap like hair on the barber's floor. Cold bristles through the bare bones of branches left. Cold buries under my skin and circulates. We will tremble for days, me and this tree.

You took a trip and climbed a tree.

13 – Mark Joseph - Get Through

An achey, shakey wintercold is mine, symptom of a day spent climbing skyward. I stutter through the day from fireplace to food cupboard and back, armed with a book and a new-found appreciation for fleece. Cats cuddle up, like I am warmer, while I sit grateful for their small, purring cushions of heat.

Living in the summer is easy, it's living in winter that's hard, but we'll get through.

14 – Nada Surf - The Blizzard of '77

It's the wine isn't it, that brushes aside your shyness, feeds you lines of love and hope? And those glances you throw my way when you think I'm not looking. You offer to lift me above the crowd, but I'd only choke on the smoke and the haze. Gravity dictates I keep my feet on the ground. I'm not ready to fight that for you.

Now the signal's still getting all mixed up

15 – Magnet - Hold On

Something's coming... I can feel it in the icy drift of winter edging down my street, in the hushed huddle of wings in the eaves of my house, in the crisp blanket of frost muting the fields leading out of this town. I don't know it by name, only by a sense of foreboding at the very heart of me. It threatens to crush and crack. And I'll try so hard this year not to be broken by it, but still it comes...

It feels like it's tearing you up, feels like it's wearing you down.

16 – Linkin Park - One Step Closer

Right. It's been a shit day.

Firstly, another round of whining, moaning record shop owners who seem to hold me personally responsible for Pink Floyd being tossers. Guess what? I can't do anything about it, I really don't care that much and I am FUCKING SICK of you bleating on. Write a letter to Roger Waters for all I care, just get off my case. And a word of thanks for all the arse-busting I do on your behalf on a weekly basis wouldn't go amiss either, you ungrateful bastards.

A similarly apathetic response to an armful of promos I delivered made me question why the fuck I do this job (for the 'glamour' is the official line, I believe), then my nice radio guy had gone home early, leaving me to face the daft mare at reception who didn't seem to know what a CD is, let alone the fact that I had a back-breakingly big box of them to deliver, and if I can just leave it on his desk that would be helpful, and yes he is expecting them, I do know where I'm going and I do come in every fortnight, which you'd know if your fat face wasn't stuffed into a fucking pie every time I see you.

Then I gave myself a hard time for being enough of a retard to leave the car park ticket in the car, meaning I had to walk up 8 flights, then down 8 flights, then back up 8 flights to the bastard pay machine.

Only a brief drive home; surely nothing more can piss me off...? But no, I hadn't bargained on Stupid Old Bastard in a white metro, who should have died years ago rather than still be behind the wheel of a car, going and blocking my exit (my route was clear, his was jammed for about 5 minutes). It was the final straw. I reacted thus:

1) Honked horn loudly, 2) Shouted at the fucker, 3) Made wanker signs (somewhat ineffective as it was dark by this point), 4) Cried, 5) Turned the music up VERY loud and 6) Swerved past him when he did finally shuffle out of the way repeating all of the above.

I remember a while ago having a conversation about writing a Song of the Day on a bad day, but there being no songs called 'You're All A Bunch Of Fucking Arseholes'. And while there still aren't (I may write one just for this purpose), if there were I could really use it today. In lieu of such a song, this is as close as I could get... Here's to tomorrow...

I cannot take this any more... Shut up when I'm talking to you... I'm about to break!

17 – Tom McRae - Mermaid Blues

Man stands in a hail storm, smiles, faces south. Woman sits under crisp blue skies, shivers, faces north.

Only a handful of miles apart, but separated by a world of weather and water and wisdom. Woman wonders how Man can eat ice cream in winter. Man knows his heart is warm enough to enjoy it. Woman wishes it were summer and ice cream wouldn't freeze her up inside. Man smiles, whatever the season.

Over the water... there's you shining bright

18 – Delgados - All You Need is Hate

Today I hate my job. Once again I've shelved my evening plans because work has got in the way, not to mention driven for four hours for absolutely nothing and got an earful from a narrow minded shop owner because he hasn't got any 'Now... 62' posters and who doesn't care that I drove out of my way to collect them, repack them, lug them to the post office, wait in line holding them for 15 minutes to be told they were too heavy, which means I'm now going to have to drive them to him on Monday. Crying into my coffee has not helped. I want my life back.

Hate is everywhere, look inside your heart and you will find it there.

19 – Craig David - Don't Love You No More (I'm Sorry)

And so finally all the things were said that should have been said so many years ago. It's a mess. And I still can't tell right from wrong, progress from a fall.

What now, your gone, my fault, I'm sorry

Feeling like a fool cause I let you down, now it's, too late, to turn it around

I'm sorry for the tears I made you cry, I guess this time it really is goodbye

20 – Simon Webbe - No Worries

Funny how I come back to this place for comfort, this place that once held me down, held me bound. Where these shops sit, all optimistic sparkle and glitter, was once an old building, cold stone against the winter sky, stifling screams of patients long since buried in the grounds. I loved to snatch glimpses of it, sidelong as we passed in the car. And now, nothing... I'll leave this island again tonight and feel stronger for spending the day soaked in a past I'd longed to forget. Maybe...

Getting closer, oh yeah, to the life you're imagining

21 – Idlewild - The Quiet Crown

So the band that started me on this journey have finally taken a different path. I always said I wouldn't stay on this road without them. But where do I go now?

Everything is broken now

22 – Pink Floyd - Wish You Were Here

I'm back in this town, in the streets we used to walk, now in the grey of November all sodden and spent. There was a real sense of liberation and possibility when I first came here: I made myself a niche which kept me anchored enough to find the calm in this storm of a life. We'd lay in your draughty room warming ourselves with cheap gin and roll-ups, Pink Floyd on repeat - just a stone's throw away from this polished cafe with its chocolate dusted cappuchinos. Today I did as I always did here; I bought books. They lie crouched under my chair in a bag, symptoms of another obsession I could not leave behind. I know you're happier now, so far away with your wooden cabins and perpetual snow. But sometimes... sometimes I wish you were here.

So you think you can tell heaven from hell, blue skies from pain

23 – Leonard Bernstein - Chichester Psalms

I turned my back on everything I knew back then, packed a few treasured reminders into an old brown satchel, and closed the door. On evenings like this when I'm caught unawares I can poke through those years and smile. I still know every word.

24 – Robbie Williams - Advertising Space

I've been looking for one just like that. But how did you know? It was that animal of yours and his nefarious means, I'm sure. Sit and tell me how, take me anywhere you want, I see you differently now...

A storm was blowing through you

25 – Elbow - Powder Blue

It wasn't meant to be this way. I wasn't meant to stand here alone and soaked and cramping up inside. But focusing forward and remembering why I came, it begins to warm me through. His smile spreads surrender right through me, the songs wrap around and hold me safe until the night air claims me once again.

In despair or incoherent. Nothing in between.

26 – Keane - Bedshaped

Feeling unwell provides an excuse for indulging in the enormous luxury of staying in bed all day with a book. Today's undercover readathon has been shared with Youngest Cat, a hot water bottle and Bret Easton Ellis.

But what do I know?

27 – Snow Patrol - Chocolate

A day of finding comfort in the least helpful of places: chocolate, red wine, sitting in the rain. A schizophrenic blend of wanting to numb and wanting to feel all at once. And still getting nowhere.

What have I become?

28 – Dilated Peoples - This Way

When the last bastion of love and endurance turns to leave... when the possibility of nothing is all that remains... when you stop wondering how could she, why would she and begin to see the appeal... That pride is the only part of you still strong enough to react is what saved you today. Tomorrow you move forward...

I can't live my life this way

29 – David Gray - One I Love

A roadside landslide on a dark-skied day. I drive past, cascading towards scenes of derelict futures. The rain keeps coming, drowning the verges, flooding the pathways leading nowhere. I lock the doors and shudder at the memory. There is more to life, more to me, more to be had, more to be found.

There's things I might have said

30 – EMF - Unbelievable

So, they (the ever-wise guardians of our national development and well-being) have decided to revert to the age-old method of phonics in teaching kids how to read. Now, to you and I, assuming you're over twenty years of age and received the first three years of primary education, that's learning the sounds of letters and letter groups, and putting these together to make words. What a revolutionary concept! I-DI-O-TI-C MO-RO-N-S Why they changed this tried and tested principle for one which involved teaching children to recognise entire words is beyond me. And 'they' wonder why the standards of literacy in this country have been heading steadily towards rock bottom! Nothing to do with it being run by idiotic morons, of course...

What the fuck?!

DECEMBER:

1 – Tori Amos - Mother

A whisper of scent buried deep in the weave and I'm instantly back in her arms. Always the child, always in need, always ready to play the role again until the next time I push you away.

I escape into your escape

2 – Phil Collins - Something Happened on the Way to Heaven

I should try starting the day with a fab singalong pop song every day - laughs, lazy lunching and passing on shared wisdoms. And all it takes is the strength of friendship and a good horn section!

But I'm not leavin' until it's all over

3 – My Morning Jacket - The Way That He Sings

Stay still, don't dare to breathe, just hold it all in, for five minutes and six seconds don't move. Shivers snake up and down silent shaking skin. The fragile break in his raw velvet voice, the nearness of him as he reaches, pleads... And the sun breaks through and I smile like always before. When I leave here, this will be with me, this will carry me through: silently, deliberately mine.

Why does my mind blow to bits every time they play that song?

4 – Sugababes - Stronger

Sat in traffic, just about at the edge of my tether after yet another day of all round bullshit, when I'm saved by flicking over to Radio 1 (I don't that often nowadays). This is a great singalong pop song which always makes me feel a little more capable. I have quite a soft spot for the Sugababes - they're really quite good

I'm gonna do this for me...

5 – The Darkness - Knockers

A two hour stint at the hairdressers and I am now shorter of lock and bleached to fuck! Strangely this has resulted in my skin looking brighter too. Things are looking up...

I love what you've done with your hair

6 – Curtis Mayfield - Move On Up

The horns on this record are so bad they're really, really good! Just one of the hilarious hemp-induced observations during a lovely evening spent laughing and passive smoking at their new studio, reliving old times where we'd pick up the nearest instruments and just play, where we'd laugh so hard we had to run for the bathroom. There was no playing tonight, just loud soul played through the desk, and lots more laughing. I love these friends, I really do. Remember your dreams are your only schemes, so keep on pushing.

7 – Tori Amos - Silent All These Years

I cleaned out my office this evening; Murray has been showering sawdust and hay everywhere, and there was far too much junk stuffed into various corners. I diligently divided the resulting jumble of things once loved into bags designated 'charity shop', 'bin', 'to sell on eBay and pay off the Christmas credit card bill'. And in the process I came across my dictaphone. Let me explain: when I first started my job I used to have a dictaphone in the car to record people's orders and requests (nowadays I've perfected the skill of writing whilst driving, and just use a pen and paper). Out of curiosity I played back the tape. I was amazed to hear how positive, enthusiastic and motivated I sounded. It's given me something to try to recapture in the new year, in all aspects of my life.

Sometimes I hear my voice and it's been here, silent all these years.

8 – The Beatles - Let It Be

Twenty five years. I was too small to know or to care, but now I understand. The world holds its breath, together for the first time. A New York winter shattered by the stain of a light gone out.

And when the broken hearted people living in the world agree, there will be an answer, let it be.

9 – Skee-lo - I Wish

I'd like to think we experience something new everyday. Today I definitely did. I wore a new pair of shoes into town; they have a 5" heel and consequently add five inches onto my relatively small stature. For the first time ever someone asked *me* to lift down a product from the top shelf in Marks and Spencer's! I like being taller, you can see over the racks, see unpleasant people coming your way and take evasive action, see things tucked at the back of the uppermost shelves. I will be wearing my heels more often, as soon as I've learned to walk in them!

I wish I was a little bit taller...

10 – Nizlopi - The JCB Song

Yes, it's a party, and there's lots of red wine, but I'd much rather still be walking dogs through the woods. I don't fit this picture of small talk and dancing, but these people don't know that, so I play the game. Tonight I will be something other than me.

Havin' a top laugh...

11 – Beatles - I'm Only Sleeping

Three hours sleep, four hours drive home, no amount of Red Bull could make this one work. I pulled over for a snooze at Clackett Lane services, waking a couple of hours later to find the windows steamed up and a couple of kids peering in. Obviously expecting a peep-show, they seemed disappointed to be confronted with a dull-eyed, wild-haired stop-out mumbling at them to 'please fuck off, I'm sleeping'.

Please don't wake me, no don't shake me, leave me where I am...

12 – Annie Lennox - Cold

My central heating has broken. This is the second time in a week. Last Wednesday I spent the evening on the phone to my brother describing various component parts of my boiler cupboard in the vain hope he could diagnose the problem a hundred miles away. After emailing him photos of my old boiler (!) and him working out my plumbing jargon (the 'green dalek' is apparently an 'immersion cylinder!') he concluded it was a battery fault with the programmer, so after a dash to a 24 hour Tesco warmth was restored. None of this accounts for the lack of action with the boiler this evening. No amount of prodding, poking, praying or swearing at it has made any difference. I did manage to bring the boilerman forward to next week, but in the meantime it looks like I'll be sewing sleeves into my duvet and burning things to stay warm. At least I have hot water... (don't, just don't...).

Now we are shivering, blue ice is glittering

13 – Tori Amos - Pretty Good Year

She will write in her book, notes on my progress, notes to herself to note the noteworthy in this life. I shall follow the words like markers, helping me through, lighting the way home. Will it seem safer on a page, less chaotic for being inked into eternity? I trust she will knot my darkness into words I can use to pull myself up: throw me a line, my friend, as you always do.

Hold onto nothing as fast as you can

14 – Robbie Williams - Radio

Amphetamine paranoia: sat shivering, listening to Soviet broadcasts on longwave radio. I picture him in a cold room, dark save for the grey glow of a streetlamp across the road. Somewhere in the building music buzzes - a tired song seeping through the brickwork and under his thin skin. He sits like this for hours, waiting for morning, for his mind to snap into daylight. But every traitor meets his death at dawn, and he will be no exception.

Jumping, thumping, shout out something.

15 – Goo Goo Dolls - Dizzy

I woke up, walked into the wall, questioned my alcohol intake for the previous night, remembered I'd been sober since the weekend and panicked that this was the onset of some hideous and debilitating mental illness. After a day spent going nowhere and still having to stop to be sick, I stopped at the doctor's surgery to be told I have a viral inner ear infection which could feasibly make me sick and dizzy for the next two weeks. Fun Christmas ahead then...

You're cynical and beautiful, you always make a scene. You're monochrome delirious, you're nothing that you seem.

16 – Shanice - I Love Your Smile

I sit mesmerised by her: so wide-eyed and innocent; so in awe of everything around her. She focuses, looks me in the eye, and smiles a beam so bright and wide it swallows the room around us. They tell me it's just wind, but she's got me now!

After that my whole world is beautiful.

17 – Semisonic - Closing Time

After three years, and far too many sacrifices, the doors close for the final time. I wonder how he feels as he posts the keys through the door, as he takes down the sign. Does he know this is for the best, and the start of something new? Or does he wish he could do it all over again, maybe differently this time? There are too many parallels here today, I wonder if he recognises them, and what lessons he's learning.

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.

18 - Queens of the Stone Age - Feel Good Hit of the Summer

Today I missed another good gig - the Foo Fighters at Earls Court. And all because of this stupid dizziness. I should just have got drunk and gone anyway - it amounts to the same thing, just without the talking bollocks. But no, all I've had today is Betahistine, which doesn't sound quite as good in a song, doesn't appear to be working, and doesn't get me high. Rubbish Sunday.

Nicotine, valium, vicodin, marijuana, ecstasy and alcohol, c-c-c-c-cocaine

19 – Velvet Revolver - Loving the Alien

It takes a year, a full turn of the calendar, for the sense of loss to start to diminish. Once I saw myself in your words, felt the same longing. But now I see you blaze a trail of nonchalance, seeking escape not deliverance. You are a handsome melee of all I seek, but always just a little too out of reach. This fire will smoulder here for many years to come, for all of you.

Sometimes is all the time and never means maybe.

20 – Nightmare of You - My Name is Trouble

Ooo, a sampler CD of next year's top tips hits my doormat and everyone's a winner. This is my favourite for today; a Smiths, Monochrome Set influenced slice of tongue in cheek indie-pop, with a diamond sharp guitar. I love it.

I scoured your town, completely aroused.

21 – Sex Pistols - Pretty Vacant

With the usual blend of wine and smiles, and a new air of indifference, we picked our way through another Christmas party. How many of us will be here next year? How many of us care? The wheel is turning, and something fuses... something I will lean on later. But for now there are friends here, dear to me, this year and always.

We're so pretty, oh so pretty ...

22 – Idlewild - Satan Polaroid

Backlit in orange like tomorrow's perfect sunset, you stand tall in your small frame; beautiful and troubled, weaving new realities with each line of each song. Another freeze-frame moment, another strand of empowerment, another bittersweet dream melts into the future.

This is happiness, and I fall.

Despite a stubborn hangover and severe sleep deprivation I dragged myself northward to Glasgow to see Idlewild for the tenth time this year. It was more than worth the effort. Other ridiculous things I've done in pursuit of a good gig:

- Flying to LA to see Idlewild and being the only one leaping about in a room of apathetic Americans.
- Tottering around a freezing Colchester dressed like a glam slut to catch half a Placebo gig before having to catch the last train home.
- Driving to Cardiff to see the Manics, only for the gig to be cancelled, and eating pizza on Barry Island with a horny Welshman instead - not a fair alternative.
- Travelling to Marseille on impulse one day to see R.E.M. (see my forthcoming Best Gigs of 2005 list).

23 – The Proclaimers - I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)

And the return leg, all seven arse-numbing hours of it. The scenery through the Lake District was beautiful, and I managed to listen to the whole of the Radio 2 daytime schedule. [I'm sure I was a Radio 2 listener this time last year, but I don't remember there being quite so much avid playing of Christmas music as this.] A day spent making up tunes to the endless rumble of tyre on tarmac, and resisting the lure of the white rose as I head south through the Pennines.

I would walk 500 miles, and I would walk 500 more...

24 – The Pogues - Fairytale of New York

Choked up for another year over the wrong line; the focus is shifting slowly.

I could have been someone, well so could anyone.

25 – Robbie Williams - Me and My Monkey

A day spent laughing, cooking, eating and tearing paper from presents with my closest friends. It was everything we were hoping for.

My name is Sunshine. These are my girls.

26 – Chris Rea - Driving Home for Christmas

A strangely strained day, despite everyone's best efforts. We had fun, we ate well, we exchanged gifts, we laughed. But something wasn't quite right. Driving home later than planned it started to snow. I could have turned back and stayed a while longer. But I kept going, face pressed to the windscreen, struggling to see the edges of the road through the blizzard, fighting the mesmerising steadiness of the snow flying towards me like warp speed through the heavens, singing along to loud familiar tunes on the radio to keep my concentration. It took me hours, but I made it home; one of the worst journey's I've ever made.

I sing this song to pass the time away

27 – Bing Crosby - Walking in a Winter Wonderland

I surprised myself. It did look beautiful, so clean and fresh, muffling the silence of the streets. So I ignored my sore and blistered fingers and the bitter chill biting my ears, and I made creatures in the snow until the sun went down.

In the lane snow is glistening: a beautiful sight.

28 – Dave Matthews Band - Dancing Nancies

I could have been any one of a thousand people; alternate realities of the same me. Different choices I made at different stages would have led to different experiences and different priorities. I chose this path. I chose this version of me. On occasion an alternative me peaks through and I glimpse what could have been. For a while I am intrigued, tempted even... But the strength of mind in having made the choice in the first place means I can turn no other way. This is my path. This is me.

Could I have been anyone other than me

29 – Texas - Say What You Want

An idea to more clearly define the parameters of 'want': a small suede notebook waits. A weapon against contradiction, against inconsistency, against greed. All in the onward quest for clarity.

What I am is what you want of me

30 – Feeder - Just A Day

A 'comedy' car horn sounds outside; the only intrusion into a peaceful and productive day. It sounds like the intro to this song.

...get my feet back on the ground before it pulls me in.

31 – Deacon Blue - Queen of the New Year

Strange that I've shared the intricacies and intimacies of my year. Strange that I can look back and see that I've come absolutely nowhere in 365 days. I'm not quite sure what I expected from this year, but for someone as keen as I to keep moving and evolving, I've done neither. All this reminds me that she once warned it's not about the destination, it's about the journey. Next year I shall take more time to savour the ride...

Now I'm telling you this in a difficult year...

a song a day, 2005

SUMMARY OF TRACKS:

50 Cent	In Da Club	March
Abba	Waterloo	October
Ace of Base	The Sign	October
Aerosmith	Dude (Looks Like a Lady)	October
Alaskan Pipeline	The Sum of You and Me	July
All About Eve	Martha's Harbour	February
America	Horse With No Name	February
Amos Lee	Colours	May
Annie Lennox	Cold	December
"	Why	July
Arcade Fire	Wake Up	August
Art of Fighting	Along the Run	May
"	Easy Part	April
"	Heart Translation	August
Athlete	Chances	January
"	Half Light	April
"	24 Hours	November
"	Wires	February
Bananarama	Robert DeNiro's Waiting	February
Bay City Rollers	Bye Bye Baby	June
Beatles, The	Hey Jude	January
"	I'm Only Sleeping	December
"	Let It Be	December
"	The Long and Winding Road	June
"	Two of Us	January
Bee Gees	How Deep is Your Love	February
Ben Christophers	Healer	February
Ben Folds	Rockin' the Suburbs	April
"	Not The Same	November
"	Brick	June
"	Landed	May
Billy Bragg	You Woke Up My Neighbourhood	September
Bing Crosby	Walking in a Winter Wonderland	December
Bob Dylan	One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)	March
"	Moonlight	March
"	You're A Big Girl Now	January
Bob Marley	Stir It Up	August
Bobby Womack	Across 110 th Street	February
Boney M	Brown Girl in the Ring	May
Booker T and the MGs	Soul Limbo	September
Boston	More Than A Feeling	September
Brian Wilson	Little Saint Nick	July
Bruce Hornsby and the Range	The Way It Is	June
Bruce Springsteen	I'm On Fire	August
"	Dancing in the Dark	August
Bush	Straight No Chaser	September
Cardigans	Sick and Tired	August
Catatonia	Road Rage	October
Chas and Dave	Rabbit	September
Chemical Brothers	Close Your Eyes	January
Chris Rea	Driving Home for Christmas	December
Clor	Love and Pain	July
Coldplay	Yellow	April
"	'Til Kingdom Come	May
"	The Scientist	April
"	Warning Sign	June

a song a day, 2005

“	Fix You	May
“	A Message	May
“	White Shadow	March
Connells, The	74/75	March
Counting Crows	Angels of the Silences	April
“	Anna Begins	July
“	Daylight Fading	September
“	Mercury	January
“	Mrs Potter's Lullaby	July
“	Blues Run the Game	June
Craig David	Don't Love You Know More (I'm Sorry)	November
Cranberries	Linger	August
Crosby, Stills & Nash	Marrakesh Express	May
Crowded House	Weather With You	April
Curtis Mayfield	Move On Up	December
Damien Rice	The Blower's Daughter	April / June
“	Cannonball	January
Danny Wilson	Mary's Prayer	March
Darkness	Friday Night	April
“	Knockers	December
Dashboard Confessional	Hands Down	June
Dave Matthews	Trouble	April
“	Grey Street	October
Dave Matthews Band	Crash Into Me	July
“	Dancing Nancies	December
“	Cry Freedom	October
David Bowie	The Pretty Things Are Going To Hell	August
David Ford	State of the Union	January
“	If You Only Knew	September
“	Song for the Road	July
David Gray	The One I Love	November
David Usher	Love Will Save the Day	May
“	F Train	July
“	See You Fall	May
Deacon Blue	Queen of the New Year	December
Del Amitri	Nothing Ever Happens	September
Delays, The	Long Time Coming	May
Delerium	Silence	November
Delgados	All you Need is Hate	November
Depeche Mode	John the Revelator	September
“	Shake the Disease	November
Diana Ross	Do You Know Where You're Going To?	October
Dido	Hunter	August
Dilated Peoples	This Way	November
Donna Summer	This Time I Know it's For Real	August
Doves	The Cedar Room	July
Duke Special	Freewheel	July
Duran Duran	Hungry Like the Wolf	October
Dusty Springfield	Son of a Preacher Man	January
Eastern Lane	No. 5	March
Easyworld	How Did it Ever Come to This	January
Echo and the Bunnymen	Seven Seas	July
Eddi Reader	The Patience of Angels	June
Elbow	Ribcage	April
“	Fugitive Motel	October
“	Powder Blue	November
“	Leaders of the Free World	September
“	Snowball	September

a song a day, 2005

“	Switching Off	September
“	Station Approach	August
“	Forget Myself	July
EMF	Unbelievable	November
Emiliana Torrini	Sunny Road	March
Elliot Smith	No Name #1	February
Erma Franklin	Take a Little Piece of My Heart	August
Everclear	Wonderful	January
Everlast	What It's Like	July
Faithless	Mass Destruction	June
Feeder	Just a Day	December
Finn Brothers	Won't Give In	June
Fleetwood Mac	Dreams	August
Foo Fighters	Everlong	February
Franz Ferdinand	Do You Wanna	September
Gerry & the Pacemakers	You'll Never Walk Alone	May
Gruff Rhys	Gwn Mi Wn	January
Goldfrapp	Black Cherry	May
Goo Goo Dolls	Black Balloon	March
“	Iris	March
“	Dizzy	December
Guns n Roses	Sweet Child O' Mine	August
Haven	Have No Fear	March
“	Let it Live	October
Herbert Groenemeyer	Keine Heimat	September
Honeyroot	Love Will Tear Us Apart	April
House of Love	Love You Too Much	February
Idlewild	El Capitan	January
“	American English	August
“	Disconnected	June
“	I'm Happy to Be Here Tonight	February
“	The Quiet Crown	November
“	Satan Polaroid	December
“	Everyone Say's You're So Fragile	April
Indigo Girls	Power of Two	April
Jackie Wilson	Higher and Higher	June
James Blunt	You're Beautiful	May
“	Goodbye My Lover	June
James Taylor	Fire and Rain	October
Jane Wiedlin	Rush Hour	February
Jane's Addiction	Riches	May
“	Three Days	March
Janis Joplin	Me and Bobby McGee	March
Jeff Buckley	Hallelujah	March
Jem	Just a Ride	June
Jewel	Foolish Games	October
“	Hands	October
Joseph Arthur	In the Sun	April
Jose Gonzales	Heartbeats	May
Juliet	Avalon	February
Kaiser Chiefs	Oh My God	February
Kasabian	Reason is Treason	May
Kate Bush	The Man With the Child in His Eyes	February
Keane	Can't Stop Now	May
“	Bedshaped	November
Kinks, The	Waterloo Sunset	July
KT Tunstall	Black Horse and the Cherry Tree	February
KT Tunstall	Suddenly I See	September

a song a day, 2005

Led Zeppelin	Stairway to Heaven	June
“	Kashmir	August
“	Rock & Roll	August
Lemonheads	Kitchen	September
Leonard Bernstein	Chichester Psalms	November
Lifehouse	Along the Way	March
“	Breathing	August
“	Spin	May
Lightning Seeds (Baddiel & Skinner)	Three Lions	July
Limp Bizkit	Take a Look Around	June
Linkin Park	One Step Closer	November
Lisa Stansfield	All Woman	October
Longview	Can't Explain	August
Looper	Mondo 77	March
Lord of the Rings	Theme Music	February
Lynn Anderson	Rose Garden	September
Madonna	Frozen	November
Magnet	Hold On	November
Magnolia Electric Co.	Hammer Down	June
Mamas and the Papas	California Dreamin'	October
Manic Street Preachers	No Surface All Feeling	January
“	Faster	September
“	Kevin Carter	October
“	This Is Yesterday	October
“	La Tristesse Durera	July
“	Another Invented Disease	January
“	Archives of Pain	April
Mark Joseph	Get Through	November
Maroon 5	She Will Be Loved	February
Massive Attack	A Prayer for England	January
Matthew Sweet	Millennium Blues	August
Mavericks	Dance the Night Away	August
McFly	All About You	March
Mercury Rev	Goddess on a Hiway	November
Metallica	Ronnie	October
Michael Buble	Home	March
Modest Mouse	Float On	July
Moist	Into Everything	November
Moodswings & Chrissie Hynde	Spiritual High	May
Morrissey	Everyday Is Like Sunday	June
“	The More You Ignore Me...	September
“	Paint a Vulgar Picture	June
Mother Hips	Channel Island Girl	June
Motion Picture Soundtrack	In Memory of Her	January
“	Fake	March
Move, The	Blackberry Way	July
Muse	Butterflies & Hurricanes	April
“	Sunburn	June
“	Stockholm Syndrome	May
The Music	Welcome to the North	April
“	Bleed from Within	May
My Morning Jacket	The Way That He Sings	December
Nada Surf	Always Love	August
“	The Blizzard of '77	November
Natalie Merchant	The Letter	September
Neal Casal	Raining Straight Down	March
New Order	Crystal	May
Nick Drake	Northern Sky	April

a song a day, 2005

“	River Man	August
Nightmare of You	My Name is Trouble	December
Nils Lofgren	Shine Silently	March
Nine Inch Nails	Warm Place	May
Nirvana	Rape Me	October
Nizlopi	The JCB Song	December
Now It's Overhead	Blackout Curtain	March
Oasis	Cast No Shadow	July
Oversol	Just Enough	April
Paddy Casey	Saints and Sinners	January
Paul McCartney	Single Pigeon	August
“	Fine Line	October
Paul Simon	Slip Sliding Away	May
“	Call Me Al	October
Paul Weller	I Walk On Gilded Splinters	June
Pearl Jam	Daughter	July
“	Alive	October
Pet Shop Boys	I Want a Dog	July
Peter Gabriel	Solsbury Hill	January
Peter Murphy	I'll Fall With Your Knife	March
Philip Glass	Uakti	April
Phil Collins	Something Happened on the Way to Heaven	December
Pink Floyd	Money	September
“	Wish You Were Here	November
Pogues	Tuesday Morning	February
“	Fairytale of New York	December
Police	Roxanne	May
Poor Old Ben	I Found Myself a Clown's Mask	January
Posies, The	Love Comes	July
“	Could He Treat You Better	July
Primitives	Crash	September
Proclaimers, The	I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)	December
Procol Harem	Whiter Shade of Pale	May
Pulp	Babies	October
Queen	Don't Stop Me Now	April
“	Show Must Go On	March
Queens of the Stone Age	Feel Good Hit of the Summer	December
Radiohead	You Never Wash Up After Yourself	April
“	Idioteque	September
“	Paranoid Android	September
“	Stop Whispering	August
“	The Bends	July
Rage Against the Machine	Bullet in the Head	February
Ramones	I Wanna Be Sedated	April
Red Hot Chilli Peppers	Venice Queen	October
R.E.M.	Be Mine	March
“	Nightswimming	June
“	How the West Was Won (...)	August
“	Exhuming McCarthy	June
“	E-Bow the Letter	February
“	Country Feedback	November
“	I've Been High.	January
“	Animal	November
“	It's the End of the World...	July
“	I Wanted to be Wrong	January
“	I Don't Sleep, I Dream	October
“	Gardening at Night	May
“	Undertow	February

a song a day, 2005

“	Leave	March
Remy Zero	Save Me	January
Richard Hawley	Born Under a Bad Sign	April
Robbie Williams	Angels	September
“	Me and My Monkey	December
“	Advertising Space	November
“	Radio	December
Rolling Stones	She's a Rainbow	April
“	Rain Fall Down	September
“	Paint It Black	July
Rufus Wainwright	Evil Angel	March
Scott McKenzie	San Francisco (Flowers in Your Hair)	July
Semisonic	Closing Time	December
Seth Lakeman	Ballad of Josie	September
Sex Pistols	Pretty Vacant	December
Shanice	I Love Your Smile	December
Shout Out Louds	The Comeback	May
Sigur Rós	Glósóli	November
Silence	So Damn Beautiful	March
Simon and Garfunkel	Bright Eyes	January
“	Homeward Bound	June
Simon Webbe	Lay Your Hands	August
“	No Worries	November
Skee-lo	I Wish	December
Smiths	You Just Haven't Earned It Yet, Baby	September
“	Panic	October
Snow Patrol	Chocolate	November
Sonny & Cher	I Got You Babe	March
Stereophonics	Dakota	February
Stevie Wonder	Happy Birthday	February
Sting	Fields of Gold	August
Stone Roses	Waterfall	April
Stranglers	Golden Brown	February
Suede	Shipbuilding	August
Sufjan Stevens	Chicago	September
Sugababes	Hole in the Head	October
“	Stronger	December
Supremes	Baby Love	September
Survivor	Eye of the Tiger	January
System of a Down	Bring Your Own Bombs	April
Tanita Tikaram	Good Tradition	January
Teitur	Rough Around the Edges	February
Texas	Say What You Want	December
Thee More Shallows	The Perfect Map	May
Tindersticks	Rented Rooms	July
Tom McRae	A Day Like Today	March
“	A & B Song	October
“	Mermaid Blues	November
“	Street Light	July
Tori Amos	Sleeps with Butterflies	March
“	A Sorta Fairytale	January
“	Caught a Lite Sneeze	November
“	Mother	December
“	Silent All These Years	December
“	Pretty Good Year	December
“	Hey Jupiter	June
“	Witness	August
“	Ribbons Undone	June

a song a day, 2005

Toto	Africa	April
Tracy Chapman	Fast Car	June
Traffic	Rollright Stones	October
Travis	Sing	November
Uncle Tupelo	Still Be Around	May
U2	Vertigo	January
"	All Because of You	July
"	Sometimes You Can't Make it on Your Own	January
"	Beautiful Day	June
"	Where the Streets Have No Name	April
Velvet Revolver	Loving the Alien	December
We Are Scientists	Lousy Reputation	October
Weezer	Island in the Sun	October
White Birch	Breathe	February
Willy Mason	Oxygen	January
Wire Daisies	Everyman	August