

She Said, I Said

TRACK 01 / ME

I was leaning on the bar
when she walked in
Smile like summer
eyes like sin
She asked if I'd dance; I tipped my hat
That's the start of where we're at

She said, "Don't let go"
I said, "I'll hold on tight"
She said, "Let's dance real slow"
I said, "I think I might"
Two hearts talkin' in the midnight glow
She said, I said—now the whole world knows

Now we're driving down a backroad, moon up high
Radio's playin' and the stars don't lie
She whispered soft with her hand in mine
That was the moment I knew she'd be mine

She said, "Don't let go"
I said, "I'll hold on tight"
She said, "Let's dance real slow"
I said, "I think I might"
Two hearts talkin' in the midnight glow
She said, I said—now the whole world knows

Every love story's got a line or two
Ours is simple, but it's tried and true
Doesn't take much, just a word and a vow
She said, I said—we're forever now

She said, "Don't let go"
I said, "I'll hold on tight"
She said, "Let's dance real slow"
I said, "I think I might"
Two hearts talkin' in the midnight glow
She said, I said—now the whole world knows

She Said, I Said

TRACK 01 / ME

This was the first song I wrote for the album, although at the time I didn't know there was going to be an album built around it. I knew I wanted to make a second Me & May album, and I knew it would be country, but that was about as far as I'd gotten.

Like most of my songs, this one started with the title. *She Said, I Said* popped into my head, and I followed it. I liked the story that came out of it—the idea that two people could experience the same relationship and come away with different versions of what happened. More importantly, I liked the two people in the song. I wanted to know more about them.

That's when one song started becoming something larger.

Years earlier, I'd seen my son play the male lead, in a Los Angeles production of Jason Robert Brown's musical *The Last Five Years*. The musical stayed with me, particularly the way Brown tells the story of a relationship through two people experiencing it from very different places. I didn't want to retell that story, but it opened a door. What if Me and May weren't simply right or wrong? What if they wanted different things at different times and didn't always recognize what was happening while they were living through it?

That became the starting point for the album.

I didn't sit down and map out their relationship or decide exactly what twelve songs I needed to write. That's not really how I work. I had *She Said, I Said*, I liked the story it had started, and I let it wander from there.

Two Hearts, One Love

TRACK 02 / MAY

I'm fallin' into you
Like sun follows moon
Every little sign
Points back to you
I don't want this to end
Can't get you out of my mind

Two lonely people
Wishin' on a star
Playin' with their hearts
Like an old guitar
Waitin' for a song
In the still of the night

Two hearts, one love, for life
Never let go, we won't lose the fight
One wish, we can make the most of the night
One more touch, like it might be the last time
We'll be together, forever

Little by little
I'm chasin' you down
Grabbin' at the wind
In some old ghost town
Till we both give in
And let the fire run wild

Two hearts one love, for life
Never let go, we won't lose the fight
One wish, we can make the most of the night
One more touch, like it might be the last time
We'll be together, forever

Tell me what a girl has got to do
To spend forever holding you
I don't want this to stop
My head's spinnin' 'round

Two hearts, one love for life
Never let go, we won't lose the fight
One wish, we can make the most of the night
One more touch, like it might be the last time
We'll be together, forever

Hold on, hold on, don't let it go tonight
Two hearts, one love, forever
Two hearts, in one love for life
Never let go, we won't lose the fight
One wish, we can make the most of the night
One more touch, like it might be the last time
We'll be together, forever

Two Hearts, One Love

TRACK 02 / MAY

I've wanted to write a song called *Two Hearts, One Love* for a very long time.

When I was in choir at Cal State Long Beach, I had a friend who also wrote songs. While we were on choir tour in Salt Lake City, he told me he'd sold a song called *Two Hearts, One Love*. I never heard his song and never read the lyrics, but the title stayed with me. I remember thinking that someday I'd like to write a song with that title myself.

Years later, here it is.

I always liked what the title says in the simplest, most romantic sense: two separate hearts coming together and becoming one, poetically speaking. I already knew that Me and May would eventually go their separate ways, and I wanted this song to belong to May.

Interestingly, I originally imagined the music differently. Knowing where the relationship was headed, I had something more bittersweet in mind—perhaps a minor key with some dissonance underneath it. But as I wrote, the words had other ideas.

And they won out. They should.

That's increasingly how I work. I follow whatever my instinct tells me should be the next word, note or harmony rather than stopping along the way to judge where it's going. One of my composition teachers used to say that a composer really has only two jobs: **What is the next note or word, and how do I avoid cadence?** In other words, keep going. Once you've finally arrived, the song is over.

There's also a musical moment near the end of *Two Hearts, One Love* that I particularly love, when the background singers really open up. My wife and I are both choral musicians, and when she first heard the album straight through, those background vocals were one of the things that immediately caught her attention.

Sometimes the words know where the song needs to go before the songwriter does. *Two Hearts, One Love* was one of those times.

Back to Our First Kiss

TRACK 03 / ME

I was just a boy with a restless heart,
You were summer sunshine in the dark.
We were chasing fireflies, laughing till the night,

We found our way through the endless days,
Dreams on the table and bills to pay.
Through every change, the love stayed strong,
You were my shelter through the storm.

Take me back to that first kiss,
Nothing ever felt as good as this.
Every moment still feels brand new,
I fall in love again
every time with you.

Morning coffee with your hand in mine
We laugh at jokes we've told a thousand times
Every quiet moment feels so right
I wouldn't trade a single day.

Now the years have flown but you're still here,
The sound of your laughter is all I hear.
Our life together is my favorite song,
Your eyes still light the room for me.

Take me back to that first kiss,
Nothing ever felt as good as this.
Every moment still feels brand new,
I fall in love again
every time with you.

Time may take our yesterdays,
But it can't take our truth.
Every road I travel down
Still leads me back to you.

Take me back to that first kiss,
Nothing ever felt as good as this.
Every moment still feels brand new,
I fall in love again
every time with you.

Back to Our First Kiss

TRACK 03 / ME

Like every song on this album, this one began with the title. *Back to Our First Kiss* came first, and I initially imagined it as a nostalgic look at the beginning of a relationship—that period when everything is new and there's a kind of magic in almost every moment. The idea was really about finding a way to keep some of that feeling present as the relationship moves on.

I wrote the chorus first. Then, as often happens when I'm writing, the song began having ideas of its own.

The verses didn't really become nostalgic at all. Instead, they became more about the ordinary course a relationship takes—almost a “this is how it goes” acceptance of what happens after that first magic inevitably changes. Me isn't pretending that everything can stay exactly as it was. He simply isn't willing to turn off the light on that first feeling. For him, that first kiss remains something worth carrying along.

Musically, I think this song may be more important to the album than it is to the story of Me and May. It's energetic, it's fun, and it has some great musical moments, including a guitar solo I particularly love.

One of the things I wanted from this album was something I don't always hear as much as I'd like anymore: great singers really singing, great production, and instrumental playing that gets its own chance to shine. Most of all, I didn't want filler. Every song needed to stand on its own.

Back to Our First Kiss does an important job for me in that regard. It moves. It gives the album some energy. And it's simply a song I enjoy listening to—which, in the end, was one of my main goals for the entire record.

Baby

TRACK 04 / MAY

Baby, you're drivin' me crazy
And I've been a fool
For chasin' all my dreams,
my dreams with you

It's true that lately
That lately, I'm keepin' watch
At rainbows turnin'
a bluer shade of blue
A blue I never knew

And baby, my mind's gettin' hazy
And we're losing touch
Just wastin' all these years,
And years are few.

You knew that maybe,
That maybe it's not enough
To live with the same old words
Out of the blue
The blue I had with you.

And lately,
And lately I hear it now
In every silence turnin'
A darker shade of blue.
The blue between us two.

And baby, my mind's gettin' hazy
And we're losing touch
Just wastin' all these years,
And years are few.

I still see your shadows
Fallin' across the room.
Still hear your voice,
Like an old familiar tune.

But every night grows colder.
Every light burns through.
And every road keeps leadin'
Away from you.
A blue I never knew.

And baby, my mind's gettin' hazy
And we're losing touch
Just wastin' all these years,
And years are few.
A blue I never knew.

Baby

TRACK 04 / MAY

This lyric was already half written when I started putting the album together. It had been sitting in what I think of as my shoebox of treasures—a collection of things I've written or come across over the years and thought were worth keeping. I can't date it precisely, but I'm fairly certain part of *Baby* was written at least thirty years ago.

I've always saved things. One of my composition teachers used to say that if you write something you think is really good and you're in a hurry to get it out into the world, that's exactly when you should put it in a drawer for a year. Then pull it out. If you still think it's good, maybe you've got something.

Well, this one spent considerably longer than a year in the drawer.

When I began working on this album, I went back through a lot of that old material. I also had certain kinds of songs I knew I wanted on the record, and one was an old-time country song—something I could imagine being sung by Patsy Cline or one of the other great singers of that era. *Baby* seemed like the right opportunity.

This one was probably more consciously constructed than most of the songs on the album. I used word banks and some of the other tools of the songwriting trade, and at times the rhymes themselves helped suggest where the story should go. I also knew that May could really wail on a song like this, and I wanted to give her the opportunity.

Later, I realized that *Baby* and *Just Leave Me Lonely* were my own little *Grease* pairing: May gets the Sandy song, and Me gets the Danny song. Only here, May sings the one-word title, *Baby*, and Me sings the multisyllabic *Just Leave Me Lonely*.

Coincidence or conspiracy? Find out on the next album, *Me & May, Juxtaposition or Eh?*

She Called Me

TRACK 05 / ME

She called me on a winter night
The sky was dark, no moon in sight
We spoke of things we barely knew
Held the quiet in between

She called me on a winter day
The sky was gray, no sun today
We traced our lives across the line
Of words that meant more than they seemed

And in her voice, the distance fades
A steady flame, a light that stays
No matter where the cold winds go
Her words are all I need to know

Through drifting snow and fleeting hours
The smallest truths, they feel like home
A pause, a breath, a moment shared
Turns ordinary into gold

And in her voice, the distance fades
A steady flame, a light that stays
No matter where the cold winds go
Her words are all I need to know

In the quiet, I can hear
A simple truth that draws me near
No matter how the winds may blow
Her voice becomes the space I know

And in her voice, the distance fades
A steady flame, a light that stays
No matter where the cold winds go
Her words are all I need to know

She Called Me

TRACK 05 / ME

This one came partly from my shoebox, but the story is very personal.

When my wife and I were dating, she went to college back East while I was here in California. We were about 3,000 miles apart. We wrote to each other every day, and I always looked forward to getting her letters, but we only talked on the phone about once a week.

The letters were wonderful, but the phone calls were different. It was hearing her voice. For that little bit of time, the distance seemed to disappear and it felt as though she were right there with me. That memory became the central idea of *She Called Me*.

I wrote the song specifically for this album because that experience also seemed to fit naturally into the relationship I was creating for Me and May. The circumstances in the song belong to them, but the feeling underneath it belongs very much to me.

There's also a moment in the chorus that says something about the way I write now. The singer stretches out the words “**and in her voice...**” almost like a yell. At first I wasn't sure it belonged in such a romantic song. The safer choice probably would have been something gentler.

But I left it alone.

I've reached a point where I try to trust the instinct that produces something before I start judging it. And afterward I realized why that moment felt right to me. A yell can be primal, and there's plenty that's primal about romantic expression. Sometimes the emotion isn't supposed to be polite.

She Called Me is my favorite song on the album—musically, textually, and especially because underneath Me and May's story is a piece of my own history with my wife.

In a Girl's Room

TRACK 06 / MAY

Slept last night to the light of a candle
In a dim light saw your shadow on the wall
Well you've been sayin' things that I can't handle
And I keep hopin' we can have it all

'Cuz in my dream I saw you down by the river
Hand in hand we walked a country mile
Then I woke up in a cold sweat and a shiver
Hopin' for a sweet tender lie

I'm prayin' for a sign

There's always a heartbreak in a girl's room
I see my lonely heart on a pale moon
Keeps me up all night, singing a boy's tune
Heartbreak happens too soon in a girl's room

I never knew that we were breakin' all apart
Guess I never knew what you were thinkin' from
the start
Should've kept away from you, I should have kept
away

I'm hopin' that the pain won't need tomorrow
'Cuz every little thing about you I don't need
Love always comes with a little sorrow
Forever you, forever me.

I'm prayin' for a sign

There's always a heartbreak in a girl's room
I see my lonely heart on a pale moon
Keeps me up all night, singing a boy's tune
Heartbreak happens too soon in a girl's room

In a Girl's Room

TRACK 06 / MAY

You're probably not going to believe where this one started.

When I was teaching high school, I started a music technology/songwriting class. I had a choir student whom I thought might someday grow into a country singer, and it occurred to me that the songwriting class might be a good place to explore that. The beginning of *In a Girl's Room* came directly out of that class, essentially as an exercise.

We never finished the song, but I liked what we had, so into the box of treasures it went.

Years later, while digging through old material for this album, I came across it again and immediately thought it belonged here. The central image still worked for me: a girl alone in her room, trying to make sense of what's happening in her relationship. It could just as easily have been a boy in his room. That's what makes the idea universal. At some point, most of us have been alone in a room trying to figure out another person—or ourselves.

So I finished the lyrics and gave the song to May.

The musical decision was a little less predictable. I wanted to see what would happen if I combined **country and reggae**. On paper that may sound like an odd marriage, but I think it came out remarkably well. The reggae influence gives the song room to breathe and lets May tell the story without hurrying it along.

And after all, **who can be sad when the song is reggae flavored?**

What began as an exercise in a high-school songwriting class waited all those years for May to walk into the room and finish the story.

Your Side of the Record

TRACK 07 / ME

I can see your side of things
Yeah, I can sing it all the way through
Doesn't matter
if I'm right
I just sing it like I do
I was probably hard to love
like you tell all your friends
But that story might depend
on where it starts and where it ends

I can see how it went down
Couple lines,
one sad song
One word turns to another
Next thing,
you're up and gone
And I know I could change a line
Or two... or wait, that's at the bar
But it don't really matter
when I play this guitar

Yeah I'll play your side
of the record
I might play it all night long
I might stretch it
I might fake it
I might just get it wrong
You can tell me what I'm missin'
but I'll still play what I want
'cuz it's your side of the record
but it's not my song

I'm real glad he came along
Took your trouble
off my hands
He can deal with all
your moves
I'll just watch it like a man
Hope he loves your

little quirks,
Like you say he will
But if he don't,
I got a shovel
And a little free time to kill

Yeah I'll play your side
of the record
I might play it all night long
I might stretch it
I might fake it
I might just get it wrong
You can tell me what I'm missin'
but I'll still play what I want
'cuz it's your side of the record
but it's not my song

I'm the bigger man,
I swear
You can even keep the dog
I'll just take
what's left of me
And this half-written song
Yeah I get it,
people change
That's what they say so far
Funny, how it all makes sense
when I play it on guitar

Yeah I'll play your side
of the record
I might play it all night long
I might stretch it
I might fake it
I might sing along
And you can tell me what I'm missin'
but I'll still play what I want
'cuz it's your side of the record
but it's not my song

Your Side of the Record

TRACK 07 / ME

The title just popped into my head, which is always a good place for me to start. I liked *Your Side of the Record* immediately. It sounded like a country song before I'd written a word of it.

I also thought the title gave me a natural way to tell both sides of the relationship in the same song. There was *your* side of the record, which suggested there ought to be *my* side as well. That was the plan, anyway.

Then Me took over.

Instead of giving us some thoughtful examination of two people's versions of a breakup, he essentially decided, "It's all right. We can break up. I play guitar. I'm good."

So much for my plan.

That's one of the things I love about the song. Me isn't exactly devastated, but I'm not sure he's particularly enlightened either. He's perfectly capable of acknowledging her version of what happened—as long as he doesn't have to make it his own. That's really the whole song in one line: **"It's your side of the record, but it's not my song."**

And by the end, he's even managed to convince himself that he's glad someone else came along.

Musically, the arrangement followed the personality of the lyric. It's quirky, energetic and has a little swagger to it. I wanted it to be fun, and I wanted the humor to come from the character rather than from turning the song into a joke.

One of my favorite things about *Your Side of the Record* is that, in the end, **it doesn't make either character look particularly good.**

Maybe that's the closest the song ever got to telling both sides after all.

Another Kind of Heartache

TRACK 08 / MAY

Night rolled in without a warning
Coffee cold beside the bed
Half your things are still here with me
Half the words still in my head

So I drove around past midnight neon
Sang along with the radio
Drove until the towns got nameless
Destination anywhere

There's another kind of heartbreak
Another kind of a heartache
Another kind of a love mistake
For me to get through
Another kind of a lover's cross
Another well that you shut off
Another kind of habit to break
Another night singin' with the moon

Came this far to learn the hard way
Some things miles can't erase
Every town looks a little different
But every night ends the same

I keep sayin' I'm gettin' better
Like your memory don't still stay
But the silence and the dashboard lights
Always give me away

There's another kind of heartbreak
Another kind of a heartache
Another kind of a love mistake
For me to get through
Another kind of a lover's cross
Another well that you shut off
Another kind of habit to break
Another night singin' with the moon

Maybe every broken promise
Leaves a shadow when it goes
Maybe love don't really leave you
Maybe it just changes roads

Pulled into a nowhere station
Just to watch the morning come
Girl behind the counter asked me
If I needed anything

I almost said your name out loud there
Like you were still mine to lose
Funny how a heart keeps holdin' on
Long after love lets loose

There's another kind of heartbreak
Another kind of a heartache
Another kind of a love mistake
For me to get through
Another kind of a lover's cross
Another well that you shut off
Another kind of habit to break
Another night singin' with the moon

Another night singin' with the moon

Another Kind of Heartache

TRACK 08 / MAY

I wrote the chorus of this one first.

The girl in the song has a problem: she can't seem to find the right guy. She keeps choosing the wrong kind of man, he leaves, and off she goes chasing after him into the night. By now she knows the routine. Her attitude is almost, “**Here we go again.**”

Every new relationship seems destined to become another kind of heartache, another kind of love mistake. Presumably, somewhere along the way she eventually finds Me—but at this point in her story, she hasn't found the person who breaks the pattern.

What's interesting to me now is what **writing the chorus first** taught me about the way I write.

When I write a chorus before the verses, I already know where I'm going. The verses then have the job of getting me there. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that—plenty of great songs are written that way—but I've come to think it's a weaker method **for me**.

I'm more interested in beginning with a story, an image or a moment and discovering the emotion that comes out of it. If I decide what the emotion is first, I can find myself constructing a story designed to produce it. I'd rather let the characters do something and discover the emotion afterward.

Another Kind of Heartache was written the other way around. I had the emotional destination first and wrote toward it.

Maybe that's appropriate for this particular girl. She already knows where she's going, too.

Here we go again.

She Has Her Loneliness

TRACK 09 / ME

Ten years and a mommy standin' at the door
Broken hearts there on the floor
He's steppin' out just like the night before
Chasin' fires he can't ignore

Her heart's tellin' her he's through
There's nothin' anyone could ever do

He has his freedom
She has her loneliness

There were many other nights like this
No desire in his kiss
She often wondered how it came to this
No more memories to reminisce

Her heart's feelin' nothin' new
There's nothin' left for her to do

He has his freedom
She has her loneliness

No use in tryin'
She'll make sense of it in time
All that matters now
Is how to keep from cryin'

And her heart's feelin' nothin' new
And there's nothin' left but feelin' blue

He has his freedom
She has her loneliness

She Has Her Loneliness

TRACK 09 / ME

Many years ago, I heard a song with a chorus that was only two lines long. I remember liking the song, but what really stayed with me was that two-line chorus. I thought it was an interesting challenge: **could you really make a chorus work with only two lines?**

Years later, *She Has Her Loneliness* gave me the chance to try.

I'm fairly certain those two lines came to me first:

He has his freedom

She has her loneliness

Those two lines are the heart of the chorus. There isn't anywhere for the idea to hide. One person gets what he thinks he wants, and the other is left with what remains.

The rest of the song is really another story about someone leaving someone. I needed a song like that for this album, and it fit naturally into the relationship I was building around Me and May. Once I had the central idea, I remember the story coming fairly easily. I had the situation and simply worked it into song form.

There may be something from my own childhood underneath how naturally that story came to me. Divorce and relationships ending weren't foreign ideas in my family growing up. I can't point to a particular event and say, "That's where this song came from," and I don't think of it as autobiographical. But our experiences inevitably become part of the reservoir we draw from when we tell stories.

What I remember most about writing this one is the simplicity of the challenge. After all the verses and all the details, everything has to arrive at just two lines:

He has his freedom.

She has her loneliness.

Honey, I'm Home

TRACK 10 / MAY

Had some mud on my shoes
Pulled a stick from my eye
Stopped drinking bad news
Took the pie from the sky
Drank some coffee made last night
Watched the mornin' find the light
And the world wasn't crazy anymore

Honey, I'm home
Where I know the air beneath me
And the dog is there to greet me
Honey, I'm home
Where I can feel the open window
See the dishes in the sink.
And the mirror says,
you're beautiful.
And the dress I wore
Matches my perfume

Maybe I'm home,
Honey, I'm home.

Brushed the rose off my cheek
Licked the time right off the clock
Stuck a sunrise in the dark
Put a song up on my hips
Kissed the words on my lips
And the day wasn't busy anymore

Honey, I'm home
Where I know the air beneath me
And the dog is there to greet me
Honey, I'm home
I can feel the open window
See the dishes in the sink.
Where the mirror says,
I'm beautiful.
And the dress I wore
Matches my perfume

Maybe I'm home,
Honey, I'm home.

Put the wrong on the right
Made my heart my one and only
Stuck the valleys way up high
Where my voice wasn't lonely
Then the doorbell rang
And I heard someone familiar
And the night wasn't cold anymore

I see your face
I live your dream
I'm in the room
Where I know

Honey, I'm home
Where I know the air beneath me
And the dog is there to greet me
Honey, I'm home
I can feel the open window
See the dishes in the sink.
Where the mirror says,
I'm beautiful.
And the dress I wore
Matches my perfume

Maybe I'm home,
Honey, I'm home.

Honey, I'm Home

Honey, I'm Home

TRACK 10 / MAY

This song exists because of my wife.

We were taking a road trip for our anniversary, and it was the first time she'd heard the album straight through. As we drove, I gave her a little play-by-play about the songs and the idea behind Me and May. She particularly noticed the singers. We're both choral musicians, and she loved the moments when I let the background singers really open up and become part of the excitement of the arrangement.

Then we got through the album and she had a question:

Why does the girl always have to be the victim?

Fair question.

She wanted May to have a song where she finally realizes that maybe **he's the one with the problem and she's doing just fine**. Coincidentally, we'd recently watched the Helen Reddy biopic, with *I Am Woman* and its “hear me roar” spirit very much at the center of the story. I liked the film, but I didn't want to write a movement song or turn May into a spokesperson for anybody.

I just wanted her to be okay.

As usual, the title came first: *Honey, I'm Home*. I liked turning that familiar phrase around. May isn't announcing herself to somebody waiting inside. It's declarative. **She's home, and it feels right.**

That's why the ordinary things matter—the dog greeting her, the open window, the dishes in the sink, and the mirror telling her she's beautiful. She's rediscovering a life that feels like hers.

Musically, I decided to experiment again, this time combining a **1950s harmonic flavor with a rockabilly drive**. I think it gives May exactly the right amount of swagger without changing what the song really is.

And there's something I particularly like about the way this song entered the Me & May story:

May finally got a song where she stands up for herself because my wife stood up for May.

Just Leave Me Lonely

TRACK 11 / ME

Just leave me lonely
Let me stay here with my memory
Don't take that piece of me
The one that's here on my mind
Just walk away slowly and let me be lonely

If you should see me
Don't ask how I've been
Don't make conversation
'Cuz we can't be friends

And don't make those eyes at me
When you know my heart's
There on the floor
They keep saying lies to me
And you know I can't take it anymore, so...

Just leave me lonely
Let me stay here with my memory
Don't take that piece of me
The one that's here on my mind
Just walk away slowly and let me be lonely

When we were lovers
I held you so close
There were no others
You were my rose

I'd spend each night with you
Every moment alive in your eyes
You'd kiss me so tenderly
Just leave me with one tender lie, and...

Just leave me lonely
Let me stay here with my memory
Don't take that piece of me
The one that's here on my mind
Just walk away slowly and let me be lonely

Just Leave Me Lonely

TRACK 11 / ME

This song has been around for a long time. When I originally wrote it years ago, it was much more of a ballad. I grew up listening to people like David Pack, America and Cat Stevens, and I wanted that kind of heartfelt storytelling—a man talking to a woman **after** the relationship is over.

He's come to terms with where he is, at least somewhat. He's stored away the parts of the relationship he wants to remember, and now, for better or worse, he doesn't want her coming back and changing them. There's something a little odd about that when you think about it. He's essentially saying, **I've figured out how I'm going to remember us. Please leave my memories alone.**

Years later, when I brought the song into this album, another idea arrived.

Grease was a big part of my high-school years, and I've always had vivid memories of Danny and Sandy and the drive-in sequence. Danny's song *Sandy*—the one that begins with him stranded at the drive-in—has always stuck with me. So has that ridiculous animated hot dog jumping around in the bun on the movie screen.

Somewhere along the way I realized I had something similar happening with Me and May. I could almost imagine *Grease* as a country movie, with Me as Danny and May as Sandy. *Just Leave Me Lonely* became Me's Danny song, while *Baby* became May's Sandy song.

Then Motown wandered into the room.

I wanted a song that put the hook right up front, the way so many of those great old records did. Think of the immediacy of something like *Sugar Pie*, *Honey Bunch*: we're not waiting around to find out what the song is about. So I took this older ballad, brought the chorus forward, and let some of that 1950s flavor work its way into the background arrangement.

That's fairly typical of the way I create. I start fixing one thing and another idea occurs to me along the way. Apparently I write songs the same way I do home repairs.

What began years ago as a straightforward ballad eventually became part singer-songwriter, part country, part Motown, part *Grease*—and somehow, to me, it all belongs together.

What We Never Said

TRACK 12 / MAY

Nighttime hesitation

Daily review

We know the morning topics

Just like we always do

We moved around each other

Like there was something new

Half asleep beside you

The half that dreams the truth

And then you turn toward me

Your breath across my shoulder

A place to put my hands

Movin' toward a whisper

An unexpected kiss

The danger in the moment

Nothing left to miss

Time quivers within me

And the rest of life arrives

A chill passes through me

There's only you

Only me

Only a moment

And what we never said

A pause before we speak

A finger that lightly shakes

A dance around the morning

Till the mornin' coffee's made

A yawn to feed the moment

There's always more to do

Sugar on the table

A spoon to stir the truth

And then I turn toward you

Your breath across my shoulder

A place to put my hands

Movin' toward a whisper

An unexpected kiss

The danger in the moment

Nothing left to miss

Time quivers with me

The rest of life arrives

A chill passes through me

There's only you

Only me

Only a moment

And what we never said

Your breath across my shoulder

A place to put my hands

Movin' toward a whisper

An unexpected kiss

The danger in the moment

Nothing left to miss

Time quivers with me

The rest of life arrives

A chill passes through me

There's only you

Only me

Only a moment

And what we never said

What We Never Said

TRACK 12 / MAY

This song actually came out of the idea for the album itself.

As I began thinking about Me and May through the lens of Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years*, I became interested in something more complicated than a relationship simply succeeding or failing. What if two people wanted different things at different times? What if the real problem was timing—and, even more importantly, they didn't recognize what was going wrong while it was happening?

I knew at that point that I needed a farewell song.

Before I had the song itself, I started thinking about all the times in life when we replay a conversation afterward and think about **what I should have said**. That isn't limited to romantic relationships. It happens in families, business meetings, friendships—everywhere. But for this album, *What We Never Said* seemed like the stronger idea. It wasn't about one person finding the perfect sentence too late. It belonged to both of them.

The chorus came together differently from most of my writing. I had phrases and little snapshots stored up from all kinds of places—other songs perhaps, things I'd heard, fragments of life—and I started throwing them onto the page to see what stuck. They don't necessarily make sense together as a paragraph. They're sensations: a breath, a hand, a whisper, a kiss, a chill, a moment.

Meanwhile, the verses live in the most ordinary parts of a relationship: morning routines, coffee, sugar on the table, the house settling around you.

I didn't consciously set out to create that contrast, but I think it's the essence of the song. **Ordinary life is happening on the outside while something much less orderly is happening inside.**

I originally gave the song to May for a very practical reason: I thought the album needed another important song for her. Me already had a couple of really powerful ones. There wasn't anything cryptic about it. In retrospect, it felt like the perfect choice.

She Needs Someone to Care For

BONUS TRACK / ME

It doesn't matter who you are
He says he loves you, but he's gone too far
You're all alone
He's never coming back again

But there's a chance that he never knew
That much about loving you
He's played his cards
And now he's on his own

She needs someone to care for
She needs someone who's there for years to come
Not just anyone

What you had is all over now
You make amends for that and smile somehow
You're on your own and walking out the door

You stop and think about the times you had
Some are good, others not so bad
And all at once, you're calling out his name

She needs someone to care for
She needs someone who's there for years to come
Not just anyone

What about the years you spent together
Doesn't that mean anything to him

You play the game that all lovers play
You fill your glass and dry your tears away
You need some time to get your feelings straight
But it's too late

She needs someone to care for
She needs someone who's there for years to come
Not just anyone

She Needs Someone to Care For

BONUS TRACK / ME

This is one of the songs where I don't really remember a particular moment that caused me to write it. It's another song that came out of my old shoebox of material—things I'd written over the years and kept because something about them seemed worth saving.

The song is about divorce, but from a particular point of view. The father has walked out, and the woman is left trying to understand what has just happened. She's not simply angry. She's almost negotiating with herself: **Was it really that bad? How did we get here?** She's trying to make sense of a situation that has already changed her life.

I can't say that the story came directly from my own family, but divorce certainly wasn't an unfamiliar subject to me growing up. My father was married five times. Whether any particular experience found its way into this song, I really don't know. But those things become part of what you know about people and relationships, and inevitably some of that finds its way into the stories you tell.

That's really where this song lives for me: not in the leaving itself, but in the person left behind trying to make sense of it.