

Blue Pill
Annie Lanzillotto Band

album born 10/31/2010

Lyrics & Music © 2010 Annie Lanzillotto & Adeel Salman

Vocals by Annie Lanzillotto,
Guitars, Bass, Backup Vocals, Arrangements, Music Direction by Adeel Salman
Drums by Erik Van Batavia
Sax by Rose Imperato
Cello by Lori Goldston
Recorded at The Loft 2010
Engineered by Roy Matthews
Engineer in Seattle, Julian Martlew
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Recorded, Mixed, Engineered by Roy Matthews
Cello tracks engineered in Seattle by Julian Martlew

Tracks:

1. WOP: Without Papers
2. Bustopen
3. Red Sky
4. Shelter
5. Down The Line
6. Blue Pill
7. Git On Me
8. Latte
9. Anything But Love

1. "WOP: Without Papers"

Lyrics and Music by Annie Lanzillotto and Adeel Salman © 2010
Vocals, Annie Lanzillotto
Guitars, Bass, Arrangement, Music Direction, Backup Vocals, by Adeel Salman
Drums, by Erik Van Batavia

song birth story:

dedicated to Simba Yangala

This song is about citizenship and immigrant rights. WOP was one of the many denigrating terms for Italian immigrants in the USA. WOP stands for With Out Papers. I wrote these verses and the bridge for my friend & ndugu Simba who taught me about the predatory practices of lawyers who prowl the INS lobby, enticing refugees to sign blank papers on which they later fabricate stories for the courts. Adeel wrote the lyrics to the chorus.

"WOP: Without Papers"

Show me your papers. I see your skin.
What are you doing? Who are your kin?
I'm without papers. I bust my ass.
I got a hammer. I arch my back.

Why do you hate me?
Don't despise me.
Don't criticize me.
Without papers.

I need papers. To prove I'm born.
To work. To die. To love the one.
C'mere, I'll show you, all of my scars.
But don't ask me. For no more papers!

Why do you hate me?
Don't recognize me?
Don't genocide me.
Without papers.

Manumission. Cittadinanza. Declaration. Intention.
Renunciation. Patria mia.
Sign at the bottom of each blank page.
I'll fill the details in later.

I breathe free.
'Til you stop me.
Askin' for my papers. x2

Why do you hate me?
Don't recognize me?
Don't genocide me!
Without papers!

Why do you hate me?
Don't despise me.
Don't criticize me.

Without Papers x5

2. "Bust Open"

Lyrics by Annie Lanzillotto © 2010

Music by Annie Lanzillotto and Adeel Salman © 2010

Vocals by Annie Lanzillotto

Guitars, Bass, Arrangement, Music Direction, by Adeel Salman

Drums by Erik Van Batavia

song birth story:

I wrote this song, lyrics and melody, for Lexie Honiotes, after we sat together on the banks of Boulder Creek in 2004, Colorado. In afternoon light, bouncing off the water.

"Bust Open" contains the one line that best expresses my lyrical oeuvre: "All will be forgotten 'xcept this gold light we made together." This lyric found its place as an extended bridge due to the vocal and feminist diligence of Rosa Goldensohn in rehearsal, who stood up for slowing the line down so it could get express all it had to say.

"Bust Open"

s'Gonna bust open on a rock by a creek
Lovewater all around
s'Gonna bust open on a rock by a creek
Eyes kissing upside down x2

Waters gonna catch us, when we fall.
Trampoline hearts, give it all.
Rest of my night, singing of you
Say blame it all on the altitude!

Bust Open. x4

s'Gonna bust open on a rock by a creek
Lovewater all around
s'Gonna bust open on a rock by a creek
Eyes kissing upside down x2

Strut toward the car. Plug into my soul.
Electric Socket. Yo, waterfall!
Red rock canyon, listen to this,
Her nose bone rubbing my clitoris.

Bust Open. x4

All will be forgotten 'cept this gold light we made together. x4

Bust Open. x9

3. "Red Sky"

Lyrics by Annie Lanzillotto © 2006

Music by Annie Lanzillotto and Adeel Salman © 2010

Vocals by Annie Lanzillotto

Guitars, Bass, Arrangement, Music Direction by Adeel Salman

Drums by Erik Van Batavia

song birth story:

2006, Angel's Rest, Retreat Center, Massachusetts, I was at a retreat run by Claudia Horwitz, founder of Stone Circles, a spiritual activism center out of Durham, North Carolina. Horwitz instructed the workshop participants to take time to draw and collage from magazine pictures. I pasted a magazine cut-out eye in the middle of the paper, and drew with pastels long rays coming out of the eye, with hands on the end of each ray, an ancient Egyptian motif that stayed with me since my college days in Egypt. I drew tears from the eye, and the line "A cathedral of tears." In a thin vertical strip of clear paper, I wrote a vertical column of three letter words. Without realizing it, all the words I wrote were 3 letter words.

"did you see her eye red sky did you sky red eye sad run did you see sun her sun."

This started me on a practice of writing three letter word compositions. It's a fun challenge.

Four years later I found this paper in my mother's apartment in Yonkers. It's a miracle how some pieces of paper don't get thrown away. I did a phrasewalk with it—her signature process: walking in a repetitive pattern while reciting a line over and over until a melody comes to me. I walked around my mother's court. The melody came and I recorded it on my iPhone and emailed it to Audrey Kindred, Adeel Salman, Lori Goldston, Rose Imperato, and Rosa Goldensohn. Then Adeel came over and brought a 4/4 rock beat to the composition and created the chord progression. The way I sang it, was out of time, or in my own time, almost like a 3/3 waltz. On this album, we went with Adeel's rock beat.

When it came time to sing the song to an audience, I found meaning beyond the abstract lyrics. I tuned into the feelings and images the lyrics evoked in me. As an eight year old, my father gave me the Japanese flag he captured in Okinawa from a soldier he killed named. The flag has the red sun, the rising sun, and the family history written in Japanese. Blood stains, knife and bullet holes fill the flag. My vocalization of the chorus "sad run" evokes my feeling about my father running with the captured Sun Mark flag away from the body of the soldier he killed. When I sing, "did you see her eye, red sky" I think of the pain in the sky, and in the eye and heart. The red sun is the heart. I also sees the image of the photo of the girl running naked from Hiroshima after the atom bomb.

"Red Sky"

Red sky. Red sky.
Red sky. Red sky.

Did you see her eye, red sky?

Did you see sky, red eye? x2

Sad Run
Sad Run

Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.

Did you see sun? Her sun.
Did you see the red sun cry? Red sky. x2

Sad Run
Sad Run

Did you see her eye, red sky.
Did you sky? Red eye.
Did you see her eye, red sky.
Did you sky? Red eye.

Sad Run
Sad Run

Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.

Did you see sun? Her sun.
Did you see the red sun?
Did you see sun? Her sun.
Did you see the red sun?

Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.
Cry red sky.

Cry. Sky.
Cry. Sky.
Cry. Sky.

4. "Shelter"

Lyrics and Music © Annie Lanzillotto, 2010
Guitars, Bass, Arrangement, Music Direction, by Adeel Salman
Cello by Lori Goldston
Drums by Erik Van Batavia

The lyrics and melody of the chorus came to me one night when I was sitting with Simba Yangala, drinking Pinot Grigio at 92Y Tribeca, waiting for Sylvie Diegez' *Moon Saloon* to start. Before going up to the microphone to improvise with the live band, I began to sing, "It's only good if I got somewhere to sleep tonight." That night was the first time this chorus was sung, and Simba Yangala joined me in the improv.

I had lost my apartment in Brooklyn due to gentrification. The central thing on my mind was having somewhere to sleep in NYC. I did a performance on the Bowery, where I witnessed Bowery flophouses and shelters turn into high end hotels. The Bowery, historically, was the only place in NYC it was okay to get horizontal. Tens of thousands city residents without shelter slept in traditional flophouses in the early part of the 20th century. As of 2010, The Bowery Mission is the only standing holdout, next to it's fancy neighbors. I wrote the verses about a woman I saw one morning.

Performance artist Anna Bensaud invited me to go to MOMA to see Maria Abramovich "The Artist Is Present" exhibit where Abramovich sits and stares at you. 8:30 a.m., there was a line of international museum goers sitting on the sidewalk. I hung out talking with a man from Japan, and on his advice, left. There was no chance I'd get in, he told me, unless I had ticket in hand and a reservation online. I called Bensaud and told her not to bother coming into the city. I walked into Hell's Kitchen, by the closed down Saint Vincent's Hospital branch there, where people were squatting. The Hospital is being called a "public nuisance" -- but hell, a giant brick hospital, with rooms, showers. All these empty rooms, empty beds, and people with nowhere to go. When there's nowhere to go, where do you go? Hospitals and shelters are closing in New York City, and being replaced by Hotels and High Rise Condos. Hospitals are being called "public nuisances." Outrageous!

I kept walking. Ten to nine a.m., Friday morning. I almost bump into a woman on the sidewalk. I was struck with her station. It was clear to me she carried all her belongings. I can't tell you why this was clear to me, but it was clear. I can tell you she she was a sharp contrast to the expectant museum goers I had just interacted with. Her eyes held no expectation. She lumbered down the sidewalk, barreling through, onto her next destination, lugging her belongings and her body and her daughter. Her belly shook, a giant belly without clean undergarments or any protection from the city. The size of her belly spoke to me of her giant hunger. She passed me by, holding the hand of her small daughter. Church bells rang. I knew there must be a shelter nearby and that she had to vacate for the day. I walked and saw the sign for Saint Paul's Shelter. She had to leave by nine a.m.. The story was all clear to me. Walking alone in the city, her voice and the voice of her daughter filled me. I imagined their dialogue, where they would go for a meal, how they would spend eight hours in the hot city, where would there be refuge?

This song is a prayer for all human beings without shelter. Years ago, while working at Housing Works, I learned people bought HIV infected blood in order to get housing. If you qualified, an NGO like Housing Works could get you out of the shelter and into an apartment. High risk behaviors and HIV status qualified you. And worse, some people were self-infecting.

If you read this, send some food and clothes to the Bowery Mission. The guys there are hungry and have been for decades. New York City, housing for who?

"Shelter"

New York is nine million doors,
And I don't got one single key.
Nine million doors locked to me.

It's ten to nine on a Friday morning,
Saint Paul's Shelter is closing for the day.
Church bells ringing says, "Daughter, be on your way."

It's only good if I got somewhere to sleep tonight. x2

You don't know New York 'til you live in her street.
People walk by, not caring, it's you, they never will meet.

It's only good if I got somewhere to sleep tonight. x2

We are human beans the moon spins around. x2

It's only good if I got somewhere to sleep tonight. x2

5. "Down The Line"

Lyrics by Annie Lanzillotto © 2010
Music by Adeel Salman ©2010
Vocals by Annie Lanzillotto
Drums, Erik Van Batavia

Sax, Rose Imperato

This song is for Jen Miller. I wrote these lyrics in my notebook after hanging at a Karaoke bar with my old workmates Jen Miller, Kerry Scheidt and one of their wild friends who was known for carrying a crockpot of beans on his Vespa to a potluck in Brooklyn. This song started when I was working in the late 90's, at The Kitchen on West 19th St, in NYC as the Literature Curator. At the front desk was a young woman named Jen Miller who was cute, but I didn't know much about. She left her job. Then, the fateful then, one day on the 2 train, I was struck by the light and beauty of this woman and in the same instant, I realized it was Jen. We were both standing as the train rocked and swayed uptown. Jen was wrapped in pastels. I casually asked where she was headed, and she said, "India," hence the lyrics -- "spiritual adventure." I was "on my way to work." I was filled with this leaden feeling that we had missed knowing one another for the year or so we had worked together, but also a lightness, knowing we would have our time one day to know each other, and we did. On the train, our connection was palpable. I felt sure I would see her "down the line." I don't always have this feeling. With goodbyes, with chance encounters, I often reflect on the frescoes of saints who are saying goodbye in the desert, and the image that impresses me is that their halos join in the goodbye. Not two separate golden circles, but one heart-ish shaped one. When I say goodbye to people, I generally feel this way, that there's a union in the goodbye. After the Karaoke bar, I showed Jen my notebook and sang some version of a melody and told her it was her song.

Then one day Adeel sent me an MP3 of this great music he composed. He asked me to write lyrics for the music. As soon as I heard his music, I sang my Down The Line lyrics to it, and fit it in beautifully. I love the chords he uses in this song. I couldn't get them out of my head.

"Down The Line"

Down the line
Down the line
See ya baby
Down the line

Down the line
Down the line
Hey baby what's goin on
Down the line

So good to be, in your arms, it will be,
In your eyes, your sweet skin,
To let my heart open
And tell you bout the mess I'm in

Down the line
Down down the line
Down down down the line x2

The Red Line brought us together
Divine Randomness is such a jerk.
You on your way to spiritual adventure,
Me on my way to work.

Down the line
Down the line
What can I say baby
Down the line

Down the line
Down the line
Hey baby what's goin on
Down the line

There you are. Here I am.
We could take a thousand years or today, --
Stop time. Right here,
Or keep moving fast down these tracks and say:

Down the line
Down the line
I'll keep my eye out for you,
down the line.

Down the line
Down the line
My eyes open for you baby
Down the line

6. "Blue Pill"

Lyrics and Music © Annie Lanzillotto 2010
Guitars, Bass, Arrangement, Music Direction by Adeel Salman
Drums by Erik Van Batavia
Vocals by Annie Lanzillotto

song birth story:

To cope with my war veteran father living in a mental home and not taking his medicine, I sang a revelry about his act of pocketing his anti-psychotic drugs.

Years later, I sang this to Adeel Salman under a tree at Sarah Lawrence College. The rest is rock history.

"Blue Pill"

Attendant came round with a shot a tap water and a blue pill.
Watched me swallow, turned and walked away, I can see her still.
I spun around, spit onto the ground, walked two flights down.
To the basement mental home boiler room.

Blue Pill
Blue Pill
Blue Pill
Red, white, and blue.

Fifty years the wars been over.
Goodbye and Good Luck, eye to eye I told her.
We fought for peace. I got no peace. Gimme another!
In the basement mental home boiler room.

Blue Pill
Blue Pill
Blue Pill. Red, white, and blue.

Did they ever tell ya, you were so ill,
You had to take the Blue Pill?
Did they ever tell ya, you were so ill,
You had to take the Blue Pill?

Blue Pill
Blue Pill
Blue Pill
Red white and Blue

Blue Pill
Blue Pill Blue Pill
Blue Pill

7. Git On Me

Lyrics by Annie Lanzillotto © 2010

Music by Annie Lanzillotto and Adeel Salman © 2010

Vocals by Annie Lanzillotto

Guitars, Bass, Arrangement, Music Direction by Adeel Salman

Sax by Rose Imperato

Drums by Erik Van Batavia

This is a song of pure passion. I wrote the lyrics and melody of the chorus in 1999. Then, working with Adeel in 2010, we composed on a rainy day in the Sarah Lawrence College music building. We recorded the rain. Adeel slowed the song way down into a haunting tone and tempo. Rose's tenor sax brought sensuous riffs. Adeel directed me to bring a howl of longing into the vocal performance. The second and third verse and the bridge I wrote after one night in a bar, lusting after a married gay woman with ripped dungarees. Yes it was 2010. The dykes were married. All bets were off.

"Git On Me"

Love, git on me
Love, can't you see
I see you walkin away
I see you behind me all day
Love, git on me
Love, can't you see
I see you walkin my way.
I see you mount me all day

Got a dose of you last night
Body's throbbing from the sight
In your eyes dark fire
Swirling trouble desire

Love, git on me
Love, can't you see
I see you walkin away
I see you behind me all day
Love, git on me
Love, can't you see
I see you walkin my way
I see you mount me all day

When I walked through the bar room door,
I saw you. I wanted more.
You called my name out loud without fright,
As if you knew me all my life.

Get reeled in by her slow half-smile
Sleepy eyes dungarees ripped with style.
There's only one damn thing to say
to love today.

Love, git on me.
Love, can't you see.
I see you walkin my way
I see you mount me all day
Love, git on me.

Love, can't you see.

8. "Anything But Love"

**Lyrics adapted by Annie Lanzillotto from a love note by Gertrude Stein to Alice B. Toklas
Music by Annie Lanzillotto, Lori Goldston, Adeel Salman © 2010**

song birth story:

Folklorist Kay Turner gave me one of Gertrude Stein's love notes, to perform in a group reading she was directing. I got bronchitis and never performed in that event, but I did write this song at home on acoustic guitar with a glass slide. Six months later, I got the band together in my mother's apartment in Yonkers, which we affectionately called "YoHo Studios." I sang the song acappella to them. Lori composed the rhythm on cello. Adeel created the rock chorus. And the song transformed with everyone's energy. I still sang it out of time and in my own time. And years later I performed it solo, on the dulcimer at Kay Turner's "Lesbopalooza," at Dixon Place, which now is a movie. So, all thanks to Kay and Gertrude & Alice!

"Anything But Love"

Baby
Precious
I did not mean to be anything,
Anything but love.

Anything Anything
Anything but love
Anything Anything
Anything But Love

And I did not mean to shove
The sweet along to bed too quickly
I just meant to be the only
To the only precious baby in the world.

Anything Anything
Anything But Love
Anything Anything
Anything But Love

Bless her sweet delight
I love her so tight
Bless the sweet, Precious bless her,
I say bless her night.

And day asleep and awake
sitting by the fire or making cake
Bless her
Bless the sweet
My Sweet
All my sweet.

Anything Anything
Anything But Love

"Latte"

**Lyrics by Annie Lanzillotto ©2010
Music by Adeel Salman © 2010**

I wrote the verses for this song during the euphoria of Barack Obama's Presidential campaign and win. I

first performed the song in front of an audience *acapella* as a rap song in Atlanta Georgia at an *Alternate Roots* conference. Years later I sang it to Adeel and he slowed it down and his guitar gave the song a whole new quality.

"Latte"

Gimme a vanilla president
so I can sip my latte and pay my rent.
With my blackberry and my Clonazepam,
I'm having trouble breathing just where I am.

Gimme a mocha latte president
So I can feel real high, for one moment.
Slide back to armchair complacency,
Laid back attitude of wait 'n see T.V..

It's too too hot.
Leave some room at the top. x4

Blow one candle out for every year that's gone!
Make a wish for the unknown.
Benzodiazepine, Taxes paid, Lorazepam,
Acupuncture, Cab to Yoga, Vote your conscience, caffeine.

It's too too hot.
Leave some room at the top. x4

Citizens swallow your medicine!
Plato's Cave is caving in.
Half-Robin Hoods; Bernie Madoffs
Sucker-punch the rich, trickle down job loss layoff.
Got no future. Got no home.
All empires go the way of Roma.

It's too too hot.
Leave some room at the top. x4

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