

A MEMORY FINDS ITS NAME





I dedicate this album
to everyone I've ever loved

Foreword

Thanks for checking out *A Memory Finds Its Name*! It means a lot.

I have a fraught relationship with my voice. It's partly vocal dysphoria, partly low self-esteem from criticism as a teen. In 2014, my self-doubt resulted in me removing every single track containing my voice from Bandcamp, and replacing it with an instrumental version.

It has taken me almost ten years to finally feel at home with my voice, despite the mismatch with what I wish it sounded like. Getting a new mic this January also helped—I can now produce almost studio-standard work from my bedroom!

Here's a collection of both brand new songs and songs from as far back as 2011, whose lyrics are finally seeing the light of day. A lot of them explore the twilight between joy and parting, between love and loss. The title is about me breathing new life into old songs, but it is also about rediscovering and putting names to things once lost.

Many thanks to Emmara for collabing with me on Summer Heat, and to everyone whose enthusiasm has spurred me to finish this in record time!

Tracks

1. **Summer Heat** (feat. CHICHII) 3:41
2. **Life's a Mind Game** 4:35
3. **When All Is Gone** 4:15
4. **From a Windchime** 2:18
5. **Oceanic Flight** 4:56
6. **You Are You** 4:04
7. **The Banner I Unfurl** 1:22
8. **Fuchsia Moonrise** 3:59
9. **The Queen In Between** 4:00
10. **Memorialisation** 3:36

Summer Heat

Featuring additional vocals by CHICHILL

I am always chasing the summery bubblegum pop sound, and this track, I feel, is the closest I've ever come to hitting the mark.

Despite the cheerful outward appearance, I wanted to capture an undercurrent of hopeless longing and ephemerality—when you know the excitement is bound to end too soon, but you enjoy it anyway, almost in defiance of that knowledge.

The bird you hear midway through is an Asian koel, which I associate strongly with the dusk (when its cries are heard), nostalgia, and now with my home in Singapore.

I'm really happy that I got to get my friend Emmara to sing on this song! She's an amazing vocalist and musician; you can check out her YouTube channel [here](#).

Summer Heat

Two, three, four
Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday
But for now it feels so right

Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday
But for now it feels so right

Oh, her burning eyes
Cut me like a knife
She could kill me, I
Would thank her for it
She will never see
While she's near to me
I will always be
Trapped in her orbit
She could break me in two
She'll remake me anew
If she said, "Me and you
Could you take it?"
Ooh, I would bow in defeat
Lay myself at her feet

From the day that we meet
My life is forfeit

Oh, just one dance
(Oh, her burning eyes cut me like a knife)
And I know
(She could kill me, I would thank her for it)
In a glance
(She will never see while she's near to me)
I love her so
(I will always be trapped in her orbit)
If I dared
(She could break me in two, she'll remake me anew)
I'd let it show
(If she said, "Me and you, could you take it?")
But I'm scared
(Ooh, I would bow in defeat, lay myself at her feet)
From the day that we meet)
To let her go

Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday
But for now it feels so right
Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday

But for now it feels so right

Summer sky
Tell me where to find her
'Cause in my eye
I would hold her forever
Summer rain
Show me to my future
The day we met
It's like I always knew her
Two, three, four

Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday
But for now it feels so right

Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Has me wanting your body
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday
But let's dance in the moonlight

Summer heat
(Oh, her burning eyes cut me like a knife)

Draw your blade on me
(She could kill me, I would thank her for)
You know that beat
(She will never see, while she's near to me)
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
(I will always be, trapped in her orbit)
Summer rain
(She could break me in two, she'll remake me anew)
In the air tonight
(If she said me and you, could you take it)
I'll regret it someday
(Ooh, I would bow in defeat, lay myself at her feet)
But for now it feels so right

Summer heat
Draw your blade on me
You know that beat
Won't you say that you'll hold me?
Summer rain
In the air tonight
I'll regret it someday
But for now it feels so right

Summer heat (Oh, just one dance)
Draw your blade on me (And I know)
You know that beat (In a glance)
Has me wanting your body (I love her so)
Summer rain (If I dared)
In the air tonight (I'd let it show)
I'll regret it someday (But I'm scared)
But let's dance in the moonlight

Life's a Mind Game

This song came to me as I was waiting for the bus, the day after someone I barely knew hit on me, even though I had not remotely expressed interest—and then tried it again after I told him no.

The song quickly evolved into a great big vent about the year and a half starting in late 2019, a period that was chock full of romantic encounters that were almost hilariously terrible in hindsight.

There are times when life just feels like playing a game without knowing the rules, and nowhere more than in the realm of romance and dating. I'm just too socially-inept to know how to handle all this confusing nonsense.

I hope the song is enjoyable; it would be the one good thing to come of all of it.

Life's a Mind Game

That's just how, how it moves
Life's a mind game, with no rules
You will win till you lose
Same old story, same old news
That's just how, how it moves
Life's a mind game, with no rules
You will win till you lose
Same old story, same old news

She says she's not looking for a partner
Next month she's dating someone hotter
I'm cute to everyone but not her
That's how it goes
He says, "You wanna bang for one night?"
I say, "Not my idea of fun," like
Next day he goes, "Makeouts are fine, right?"
That's how it goes

Everywhere I go, everyone I know,
Just another comedy about to start
Won't someone tell me how to
Play my stupid part
Look like I belong
Try to learn the words by heart
Then I say them wrong
I used to think there was a trick
That there was a key
Something everybody knew but me
But I've come to see
Life's a circus and we're doomed to be

Clowning until we
Kick the bucket then we're free

That's just how, how it moves
Life's a mind game, with no rules
You will win till you lose
Same old story, same old news
That's just how, how it moves
Life's a mind game, with no rules
You will win till you lose
Same old story, same old news

Breakup was back in 2019
Since then I've fallen in a routine
See someone new, no words, break down
The saddest thing you've ever seen
It's like a shitty B-rate movie
So bad you feel a little sorry
For everyone who's in the show
And I would know

I guess I'll get lost in a story
Roleplay's the way, I won't be sorry
Then bam, DM gives us a hottie
And I'm too scared to flirt (Goddammit)
I guess I'm doomed to make no progress
Let's face the truth, I'm just a hot mess
I'll probably always be anxious
And life will always hurt

That's just how, how it moves
Life's a mind game, with no rules
You will win till you lose

Same old story, same old news
That's just how, how it moves
Life's a mind game, with no rules
You will win till you lose
Same old story, same old news

That's just how
(One, she says she's not looking for a partner)
How it moves
(Two, next month she's dating someone hotter)
Life's a mind game
(Three, I'm cute to everyone but not her)
With no rules
(Four, that's how it goes, that's how it goes)
You will win
(One, he says, "You wanna bang for one night?")
Till you lose
(Two, I say, "Not my idea of fun," like)
Same old story
(Three, next day he goes, "Makeouts are fine, right?")

Same old news
(Four, that's how it goes)
That's how it goes

That's just how
(She says she's not looking for a partner)
How it moves
(Next month she's dating someone hotter)
Life's a mind game
(I'm cute to everyone but not her)
With no rules
(That's how it goes, that's how it goes)
You will win
(He says you wanna bang for one night)
Till you lose
(I say not my idea of fun, like)
Same old story
(Next day he goes, makeouts are fine, right)
Same old news
(That's how it goes)
That's how it goes

When All Is Gone

Not to be a total nerd, but this song is about my *Dungeons & Dragons* character.

Specifically, it is about Ajai, the paladin I play in my main D&D campaign (yes, the one I referenced in *Life's a Mind Game*). I couldn't find any music accurately reflecting her aesthetic for her playlist, so I took matters into my own hands and wrote the song I wished I could find.

Sentimental and protective, Ajai clings to the memory of every person she's loved long after they have left. Despite the bleakness of the horizons she pursues, she continues to be full of compassion.

The richer vocal style playing off the sharp plucked strings is precisely the sound I associate with Ajai.

When All Is Gone

I am a child of rain and fire
Born from the blight, bound by a birthright
Buried in the centuries of dust and daylight
I am the daughter of a woman
Who shone brighter than the sun
She gave me her chain, told me to run

Not one day passes where
I don't say her a prayer

In every stream, I see my home
In every dream I dream, I roam
Beneath the sky, everything I've known
Is doomed die, while I wander on
When all is gone

In shadow since the world was shattered
The lands are in decay
In the ruins you know better
Than hope anything will stay, but
I dared to love, to love another
Held tight to all that I held dear
I always knew she'd disappear

Everywhere, every mile
In every shadow, her smile
I still bear every trial
In this barren exile

In every stream, I see my home
In every dream I dream, I roam

Beneath the sky, everything I've known
Is doomed die, while I wander on
When all is gone
I go on, I go on, there's more road ahead
Nothing left, nothing left, nothing left for dead
Not until, not until all is done and said
I defy, I defy, till I bleed out red
I go on, I go on, there's more road ahead
Nothing left, nothing left, nothing left for dead
Not until, not until all is done and said
I defy, I defy, till I bleed out red

In every stream, I see my home
In every dream I dream, I roam
Beneath the sky, everything I've known
Is doomed die, while I wander on
When all is gone (Till I bleed out red)

In every stream
(I go on, I go on, there's more road ahead)
I see my home
(Nothing left, nothing left, nothing left for dead)
In every dream
(Not until, not until all is done and said)
I dream, I roam
(I defy, I defy, till I bleed out red)
Beneath the sky
(I go on, I go on, there's more road ahead)
Everything I've known
(Nothing left, nothing left, nothing left for dead)
Is doomed die, while I wander on
(Not until, not until all is done and said)
When all is gone

From a Windchime

I wrote this song way back in 2011, under the far longer title *From a Windchime to its Long-Lost Owner*.

It has remained a huge favourite for the decade it has existed, so much that I've made five versions of it, one of which you can hear on my 2013 album *Compass*.

This is the fifth, and likely final, version: I finally feel like I've realised the vision I had all those years ago. The lyrics of this song alone made it worth remaking this many times. At long last, you can hear them!

The lyrics are based on an old short story I wrote at around the same time, about a windchime left behind in a house that has long been abandoned. Even back then, I adored that tone of hopeful melancholy that you see in a lot of my work.

From a Windchime

Where the robins flew, late last summer
Eggshell blue, ripped asunder
Call me too, softly call me
Back to where you lay
Asleep in dew
Dreaming of the answer to
Why the truth is never true
Why the winter's colder every day

I hope you're free
How far westward lies the sea?
Tell me, do you dream of me
Nameless tune, forever left behind?
Why do I sing
When my world is shattering
When I've broken everything?
Are these tears or am I only blind?

Where's that winding war

By the tide, beyond the shore
I have tried to try before
But I was so blinded by the sun
You tell me forever now, for nevermore
Will I bear what, once, I bore
Have you thought the glass might hide the gun?

I know you're free
Have you gone beyond the sea?
I still hear you call to me
Even though I'll never find you now
But still I sing
For our summer, for our spring
For my world, for everything
Till I fade, till I've forgotten how

(I hope you're free, how far westward lies the sea
Tell me, do you dream of me
Nameless tune forever left behind
Why do I sing, when my world is shattering
When I've broken everything
Are these tears or am I only blind)

Oceanic Flight

Am I infringing on copyright by saying that this song was inspired by *Steven Universe*?

To be very vague, it's a story-song about someone who spent most of her centuries-long life trapped against her will, and then in a damning duty she took upon herself to protect her newfound friends.

There's a sense of...optimism? and desperation? mingled here that culminates in the cries of "free me" and "hear me".

This was, hands down, one of the hardest songs I've ever produced, taking almost a year of fiddling, and then more ahead of this release. Little wonder: it's the biggest track on this album too, in terms of instruments and length.

Oceanic Flight

For years and years
I yearned for the sea
I felt the world
Was turning around me
Through cracks and tears
I peered at its glory
And dreamed, and cried,
"free me, free me, free me"
For years and years
I yearned to be free
I knew the world
Was changing beyond me
And I was disappearing, if only
Someone would just
Hear me, hear me, hear me

[Distorted vocal]

For years and years
I drowned in the sea
I felt the waters
Turning upon me
She thrashed, I steered
We tangled and slowly
Our colours ran
Mixing permanently
In tears, in fears
I drowned her and she
Became my world
My life and my story
And I was disappearing, if only
Someone would just

Hear me, hear me, hear me

For years and years
I yearned for the sea
I felt the world
Was turning around me
Through cracks and tears
I peered at its glory
And dreamed, and cried,
"free me, free me, free me"
For years and years
I yearned to be free
I knew the world
Was changing beyond me
And I was disappearing, if only
Someone would just
Hear me, hear me, hear me

For years and years
I drowned in the sea
Till you reached out
And dragged me to safety
Beyond the stars
Their light burning softly
When will someone
Hear me, hear me, hear me
For years and years
I yearned to be free
I will not let
Her hate take it from me
I live, and I refuse to be sorry
And no one can
Take me, make me, break me

You Are You

I remember, when I first wrote this song in 2012, that it was meant to be a song about “things I wish someone would say to me.”

I struggled a great deal with my mental health back then, with some family tragedies happening around that time, as well as a looming final exam that seemed like life or death.

I used to hate this song in particular, because I was deeply dissatisfied with how the vocals came out. Despite the warm compliments I received on the lyrics and composition, the vocals were a sticking point. Soon after posting it, I removed the vocal version (along with many others) from the internet.

In some strange way, my position is reversed now. I feel more like the person speaking the words of the song than the person it is addressed to, and I adjusted the lyrics to match (and also to match my new lyrical style).

You Are You

You're a blessing, you are you
You are someone's light
You're a wish that someone had
Each time they cried
You're an angel, you're the sky
You're the joy that you deny
And there's nothing, nothing that
Can change that now

You're a blessing, you are you
You are someone's light
You're a wish that someone had
Each time they cried
You're an angel, you're the sky
You're the joy that you deny
And there's nothing, nothing that
Can change that now

I watch you walk without a light
Hopeless, lost, tangled in the night
Can it be someone rained on your show
Hate can be sharp as a knife I know
But tell me why do you turn away
And tell me who left these scars
You say your sky is dark and dead
But in your eyes I see the stars

You're a blessing, you are you
You are someone's light
You're a wish that someone had
Each time they cried
You're an angel, you're the sky
You're the joy that you deny
And there's nothing truer, don't you know?

You're not nothing, you are you
Let them tell their lies

This world you are the world
In someone's eyes
Don't you say it's not deserved
You're the axis of their love
And there's nothing nothing that
Can change that now

There may be questions that no one can answer
And there may be pain you don't understand
But you'll survive if you trust in the joy
That you haven't known
Don't say you are nothing
I would give the world for you
You may be flawed but you're no mistake
Take a deep breath till there's no sorrow left
And look up above, it's the sky you love
Can't you see your starlight?

My dear, please be my light
Oh, my dear, it's still the night
Don't think you are any less than wonderful

You're a blessing, you are you (My dear)
You are someone's light (Please be my light)
You're a wish that someone had (Oh, my dear)
Each time they cried (It's still the night)
You're an angel, you're the sky (Don't think you)
You're the joy that you deny (Are any less)
And there's nothing nothing that (Than wonderful)
Can change that

Angel, you're my sky
let them tell their lies
In this world you are the world
In someone's eyes
Don't you say it's not deserved
You're the axis of my love
And there's nothing, nothing that
Can change my mind

The Banner I Unfurl

I wrote this song for [an animation](#) I made for an undergrad stop motion class in 2015, but ultimately (as always) swapped it for a fully instrumental version.

The animation is of a noblewoman and a knight who are in love, surprise surprise. The noble is snatched away by a flying beast and her partner gives chase on a horse, before a fun magic battle happens.

Let's be real, the “plot” of this one-and-a-half-minute animation actually doesn't make any sense, but it was always meant to be music-led—visuals echoing the feel of the music.

The lyrics themselves are actually some of my favourites that I've written—lines such as “she's the springtime of my soul” are hopefully as resonant for others as they feel to me personally.

I will be honest: it began as a *Steven Universe* fan song, but then grew into its own thing as I worked on it.

The Banner I Unfurl

I'm not that strong, but I'll fight
I belong at her side
When the darkness starts to stir
She's so much more
While I live, I am sure
I would give my very life for her

'Cause
She's the axis of my world
She's the banner I unfurl
I shall raise it for
The eyes of the world to see
You could take all that I own
I don't need it now I've known
A love like the sea

'Cause
She's the axis of my world
She's the springtime of my soul
Flowers bloom beneath
The skies through the centuries
You could take all that I own
I don't need it now I've known
Her love for me

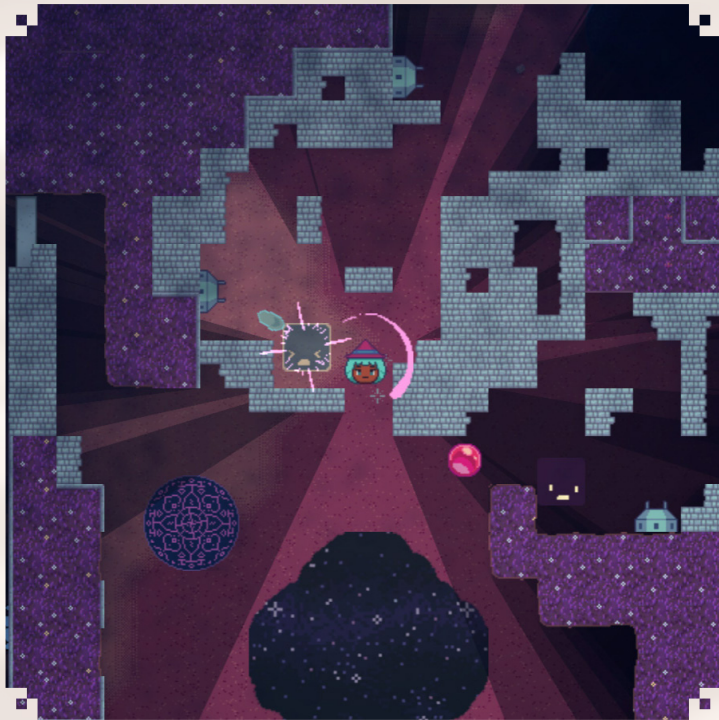
The Queen In Between

The only track on this album with no lyrics is this one: the background track of my game, *In Between*.

It takes place in an ancient, ruined desert town in the realm between Heaven and Hell—despite its great age, it is still populated, by strange creatures that seem neither alive nor dead, and a Queen who has been siphoning the souls of her subjects to prolong her own life.

In the game, I wanted to explore the concept of shifting between various combinations of instruments as you move from one location to another, with the number of instruments building gradually as you approach the end of the game.

I tried to emulate that sense of building in this version of the track, but you can [play the game](#) to get the full experience.



My game, *In Between*.

Memorialisation

Back in 2016 or so, I planned on writing a whole stage musical based on my novel, *Eagles and Swans* (which will forever be unreleased, at the rate I'm going). This was the only song that actually materialised in full.

I'm fond of writing songs about fictional characters (more so than about my own life), especially characters that I created myself. This one's about Ruthenia, the main character of *Eagles and Swans*, at a time when she's questioning everything about her past.

It's definitely the hardest one to sing on this album, and honestly I feel it was made for the penultimate position. I'm happy to finally have the chance to channel my inner musical theatre lover, and would love to write more for this musical whenever I've got the time.

Memorialisation

I've forgotten her face
I don't remember her voice at all
What is she to me, anyway?
Why should I care that I don't recall?
So all my pride was misplaced
How could I have been so blind?
What use is a memorial in your mind?

Walls break, windows crack
Trees die, and don't grow back
If you wait, the leaves will all turn black

And she also forgot me
At last the whole truth has come to light
It was all just a gambit
A surrender and not a fight
For all these years, she bore my weight
For love, for hate, she tolerated me
"Just wait for me," she'd say to me,
"Just wait," until she left that night
That endless night

Walls break, windows crack
Trees die and don't grow back
If you wait, the leaves will all turn black
Don't you know?

Overgrown houses fall
All they've known, no trace at all
A bird sends up her mourning call alone

I've always known how to make things
But not how to break them
I don't know how to take it
When they can't be repaired
I've always known she's gone,
She's gone, she's gone, she's gone
She never cared

Who am I, who was I
To you, my mother?
Answer me

Walls break, windows crack
Trees die and don't grow back
Suddenly, everything goes black
Songs end, seeds decay
You can't pretend the grief away
Oh, if I could send a reply
With the things I'd like to say
I'd say I'm sorry
That I wasted my childhood away
But you're not here
And you can't watch me
Destroy this memorial today

Year In, Year Out

I'll be honest, I get a little choked up every time I sing this song. It draws deeply on an emotion I've grown very familiar with over the past couple of years: of missing someone I used to be around all the time, and of drifting away.

I haven't been home since February 2020—it's been more than a year. I can't help wondering how my home, family and friends have changed since I last saw them. If they'll even feel like the same people when we next meet.

The shadow of the memory of being close to people I care about—a complex, multivalent thing—continues to loom over most of my waking hours. It is a bittersweet feeling: the relief of being untethered, stirred in with the quiet dread of time passing, of distance growing, when you're looking away.

Year In, Year Out

Year in, year out
Learn to live without, oh
What stays? What's true?
Seasons pull me from you
'Cause
I'm moving, you knew it
Years fearing this minute
A planet, a comet
I break from your orbit
I take my heart and fold it
Move out to the cold
Out of your city
Out of your world

By the time I see you
Will I still know your face?
By the time we meet
Amid the stardust and space
I would rather be
About any other place
That is closer
One of these years
One of these days

Year in, year out
What do we even talk about, oh
The heat, the moon
The sound of birds in the afternoon
'Cause
Three autumns, three winters
Of stories in letters
Three springs and three summers
Lose track of the numbers

Where's the line
When do I
Pass the point
When should I say goodbye?

'Cause
By the time I see you
Will I still know your face?
By the time we meet
Amid the stardust and space
I would rather be
About any other place
That is closer
One of these days

'Cause
By the time I see you
Will I still know your face? (still know your face)
By the time we meet
Amid the stardust and space (stardust and space)
I would rather be
About any other place (any other place)
That is closer
One of these years
One of these days

Year in (year in)
Year out (year out)
Learn to live (learn to live)
Without (without)
What stays? (What stays?)
What's true? (What's true?)
Seasons pull (seasons pull)
Me from you (me from you)

Additional Art



The Banner I Unfurl

Lyric video illustration

Memorialisation

Track cover



Thank you for listening!

Credits

Summer Heat

CHICHII - additional vocals

kwahmah_02 - “opening a canned drink”

qubodup - “Bell Ring”

tripplexis - “Indian Ocean - Waves”

ramblinglibrarian - “koel 01-44k”

Oceanic Flight

keykrusher - “Bicycle bell 2”

qubodup - “Bell Ring”

tripplexis - “Indian Ocean - Waves”



