

ANY MEANS

“I believe in love”

It's about dealing with your own inertness. It's about kinetic energy – how physical actions can create a set of outcomes, and you don't get that by sitting in a chair. In 2004, I was living in Montreal in Canada with three girls. One of the girls had to move to Toronto and she was very upset. All I could offer was, “It's a great day for moving.” It's cool to get up and move on, to pursue your dream.

FIRE ME AWAY

“All we need is each other”

Before Idol, I read some Jung, so I was familiar with the idea of collective experience and waves of energy. It was an unusual experience – I woke up one day and suddenly all these people knew my name. It was quite overwhelming, a real head-trip. After Idol, I decided to go on a camping trip with my partner, Jade, to get away from it all. We visited the waterfall near Armidale in NSW. Water always does it for me, so I pulled out my guitar and wrote this song. It's about identifying what I wanted and needed as people were grabbing little bits of me.

UNDER THE MILKY WAY

“And it's something quite peculiar, something that's shimmering and bright”

In 2001, I dropped out of uni, wanting to write songs full time. I ended up moving to the Northern Territory. In a literal, cheesy sense, this song reminds me of that time. It's a great Australian song. I've always been a big fan of The Church. I met Steve Kilbey at a book launch in Glebe. He told me that when he got a call from his publishing people saying that someone on Idol was going to do his song, he wasn't sure. But he was happy with the outcome.

HUMAN

“Whisper truth into my ear”

I wrote this in my hotel room at the start of Idol. It was a really heady experience, meeting lots of people in the industry. This song is about trying to engage with all of that.

OUT OF THE BLUE

“All these things I never needed took my baby away”

Life can be full of distractions. I believe it's worth putting energy into exploring ideas and concepts – even though it might not always be beneficial. The female vocals on this track are by Anita Meirunta, a singer I met in Sydney. She's really great.

TAKE ME BY THE HAND

“I'm just a simple man”

A love song, unashamedly. It's about sharing your memories with each other: “Can we wander up and down, and I will show you where these memories were made.”

THE BOY HAD TROUBLE

“The boy had trouble knowing where to start”

I wrote this in Ireland after a relationship break-up. I was living in Galway and it was probably the first time I really fell in love. But after a couple of months, she decided to leave. She was very clear about detachment, saying, “I've got to go, now is my time to leave.” I went for a hike with my best friend, walking around Ireland. I took my guitar with me and wrote The Boy Had Trouble.

OWN WORDS

“Are you the one? Are you the one?”

We wrote this song on the road, as a band. Zach started the guitar part. Lyrically, I was inspired by seeing a book at Zach's house – Bob Dylan: In His Own Words. I didn't read it, but I love the fact that Dylan doesn't feel he has to conform to the “rules” and “structure” of communication. He doesn't feel he has to always make sense.

PAYLOAD

“This guilt will follow like a henchman”

This is quite an old song. I wrote it about four years ago, before I moved overseas. I was on a train and I saw a sign that said “Payload”. It became a song about accepting things in life that you don't always understand. And it's a song about the ripples that our choices make.

KINDLY

“Use your talents wisely”

This is a message to myself. I got back from overseas and I felt I was falling in love again. But I couldn't tell the person how I felt. “And at night on the front porch, when the lights go out, not from blackout, but from failure on my own behalf.”

COME GET AWAY

“You encourage me to throw my caution to the breeze/ But how can I when everything I've learned until now influences decisions somehow”

This is one song I really don't know a lot about. It just popped out in, like, three minutes. I've got no idea what it's about.

