

Love in the Present Tense

The new CD from Tom Flannery



All songs written by Tom Flannery
recorded at the Home Office
copyright 2007 (BMI)

tf - guitar, vocals, squeaky chair, occasional dog noises

Love in the Present Tense was conceived, written, and recorded in a span of 7 days (and exceedingly long nights). From Friday, September 7th to the waning hours of Friday, September 14th, I wrote at every opportunity, under every conceivable circumstance, and in the process consumed approximately 84 cans of soda. Some songs poured out. Others had to be dragged kicking and screaming. But now that the project is finished I can finally sit back and ask myself....."what the fuck were you thinking"? Actually, although I write for a myriad of reasons (and on a myriad of subjects, as you'll see if you download these songs), at the top of the list is the fact that I simply love songwriting (it keeps me out of trouble). Each song is a new challenge.....a new chance to make something that's wrong right again. I can take on the world, and I don't have to leave my basement. How cool is that? Plus, when you drink 84 cans of soda in a week, you're bound to have lots of extra time on your hands.

This record is my hyper-caffeinated state of the union address. I've always been a patriot at heart.

It's only available via download because while people still listen to CDs, nobody actually buys them anymore.

Slàinte.....

- Tom Flannery
1:41am, September 15th, 2007

I Hate Getting Up in the Morning

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

The songs are sequenced in the same order as I wrote them. They were recorded in that order as well. What better place to start than having to get out of bed?

Granted, I didn't exactly map out a good day....but for those who know me that's not surprising.

Again sleep has said farewell
the alarm clock can go straight to hell
bringing along what terrifies
the others hanging out to dry
to the warm covers that I'm safe behind
I've got myself in quite a bind
if you give me this I'll owe you one
let me stay what's done is done

But the struggle is worthy is what they say
but of course they're not around today
just truckers, whores, and paper boys
spreading pride and spreading joy
grant us all your daily toil
and just a dab of mid-eastern oil
tell me what's a grown man to do
I think I might have the flu

oh I hate getting up in the morning
'cause my mind's in overdrive
from lack of sleep and watching sheep
begging to stay alive
begging to stay alive

I see the same men on my rounds
they'll work for food or coffee grounds
beat up wheelchairs pant leg free
from a southeastern asian spree
but at least their name ain't on a wall
or at Walter Reed just down the hall
give thanks and praise now go away
got no time for you today

I once had it all....the American dream
fenced in yard...a 42 inch screen
2 car garage and a hardwood floor
locks on the windows and bolts on the doors
but the mill closed down without much fuss
remembered their investors they forgot about us
those relief checks only go so far
cruising in your mother's car

oh I hate getting up in the morning
and putting on a shirt and tie

like a whore in church I feel besmirched
so lonesome I could cry
so many distractions
to wrap my arms around
drugs and booze and walking shoes
to kick you when you're down
to kick you when you're down

But no statistic or wanted fool
talking smack from some bar stool
is gonna find a way to break my stride
I'm gonna make it to the other side
where mexicans will tend my lawn
and nanny my kids when I'm gone
gotta love the land of the brave
where poor men fight and Jesus saves

oh I hate getting up in the morning
'cause my mind's in overdrive
from lack of sleep and watching sheep
begging to stay alive
there's just so many distractions
to wrap my arms around
drugs and booze and walking shoes
to kick you when you're down
to kick you when you're down

When I Was a Kid

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BM)

*The original version of this song didn't contain the line about the "willy" cover-up.
Can you believe I actually considered releasing it without that? And it's given rise
to a new saying. "Man is led by his straight line."*

I remember back when I was a kid
watching what all the other boys did
before I'd leap I'd look real hard
quite grown up in that regard

I remember back when I was a kid
and all the things my mom forbid
were exactly what I needed most
not the father son and the holy ghost

the nuns would smack my head around
if I so much as made a sound
when the priest came in he ruled the place
but we covered our willies just in case

I remember back when I was a kid
her extra button and the time we hid
behind the parked school bus at the skateaway
what we'd done we would not say

She reached for mine and I reached for hers
she found a straight line and I found curves
life will never be that good again
can I get a witness or an amen

I remember back when I was a kid
always trying to get rid
of the feeling that I didn't quite fit
and the sins that I would not admit

I remember back when I was a kid
ready and willing to place a bid
on somebody else's life and times
but it seems that I got stuck with mine

Not exactly who I want to be
but there's still time to cop a plea
throw myself on the mercy of the court
one day late and a dollar short

I remember back when I was a kid
watching what all the other boys did
before I'd leap I'd look real hard
quite grown up in that regard
I remember back when I was a kid
I remember back when I was a kid
I remember back when I was a kid

Airport Security

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

*Some people are born to be hassled. Since 9/11 I have
been unable to get through airport security without being
treated like the little brother of Cat Stevens.*

I had to jump on a plane and fly
but my rights had disappeared
when I bowed my head to board
with my new ZZ Top beard
Airport security bringing me down
laying me face down on the ground
smelling my shoes and checking my drawers
no more mouthwash in the stores

I found a job that wanted me there
at the mere drop of a pin
but I'm on the no fly list
'cause I got the same name as him
Airport security bringing me down
a new sheriff is in town
a man making a burger king wage
says I belong in a cuban cage

bring out your christians bring out your dumb
and watch what you become
allah akbar gloom and doom
Al Jazeera and Brit Hume

Said they'd ship me off to Guantanamo
on a spit and a song
and say it's for their own good
in case I did something wrong
Airport security bringing me down
enough ideology to drown
unattended bags and color schemes
terror doesn't talk it screams

I've watched with fascination
as those around me clicked their heels
and goose stepped in formation
like a pack of baby seals
Airport security bringing me down
wild dingos in shirts of brown
the line backed up to the curb
very sorry to disturb

the price of liberty is to say bye
to liberties and asking why
an illiterate awol cokehead stands
allowed to issue such demands

I'd say I'm embarrassed and mortified
but I most certainly have no wish
to end up like John Murtha
or them commie Dixie Chicks
Airport security bringing me down
wake me up if I'm still around
when the bin laden bubble bursts
with the ghost of Randolph Hearst

Airport security bringing me down
Smokey sang of the tears of a clown
learned to smile through the pain
watch it rain boys watch it rain

I had to jump on a plane and fly
but my rights had disappeared
when I bowed my head to board
with my new ZZ Top beard
Airport security bringing me down
laying me face down on the ground
smelling my shoes and checking my drawers
no more mouthwash in the stores

Love in the Present Tense

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

*Falling in love is the easy part. I wouldn't say that staying in love is the hard part,
just that familiarity breeds something worse than contempt. Apathy. Love is work.
Generally, I'm pretty lazy. But I'll never stop toiling for it.*

Am I strong enough to say sorry
secure enough to ask why
you come like a thief emboldened
and you can still make me cry
all the charlatans and the cynics
at one time they all made sense
it's so damn hard to keep it
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense

A sense of wonder and entitlement
as if the stars belong to me
a surreal type of arrogance

that sometimes I still can't see
it's a war between two lovers
that brings the worst kind of suspense
it's so damn hard to keep it
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense

Always looking forward
and dredging up the past
always crunching all the data
to see if things might last

If I say I loved you yesterday
that might make you cry
or if I might love you tomorrow
you might blink an eye
but today's a different story
as we give and take offense
it's so damn hard to keep it
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense

love notes and tarot cards
a glimpse inside the head
of one who seeks forgiveness
and the other the road ahead

The tinkers and the gypsies
the minstrels and circus clowns
keep eyes peeled for the lonesome
and others who might tie them down
their hearts grow a little bit harder
and the party's still commence
it's so damn hard to keep it
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense

Always looking forward
and dredging up the past
always crunching all the data
to see if things might last

The tinkers and the gypsies
the minstrels and circus clowns
keep eyes peeled for the lonesome
and others who might bring them down
their hearts grow a little bit harder
and the party's still commence
it's so damn hard to keep it
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense
love in the present tense

Distraction

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

*Only someone who had a unquenchable thirst for Yuengling Lager for 10 years
could write such a bleak little song. But one day I walked away and I've never
looked back. The prize was my family. But still.....there are moments when a
distraction
is what you're looking for. Maybe that's why I do things like write 10 songs in 7 days.*

Neon glowing sage's knowing
truth is showing bullshit's flowing
no sound TV run a tab maybe
oh too drunk to see 1 and 1 is three
hell raising new guy hazing
it's time to concede
oh oh a distraction's what I need
oh oh a distraction's what I need

Need to go missing and reminiscing
wholesale dissing backseat kissing
Pint glass shooters and polluters
packs of looters and drunken suitors
glass of lager thinking of her
I think it's been agreed
oh oh a distraction's what I need
oh oh a distraction's what I need

eyes on fire liver charred
can't remember where I parked the car
happy hour...cattle pen
porcelain here we go again

Intensive care...dry out there
icy stare and the time out chair
recovery slow but that's how it goes
when you lie full well that your body knows
run like hell then I rebel
when I'm cut I bleed
oh oh a distraction's what I need
oh oh a distraction's what I need

higher powers 12 step plans
recriminations and trembling hands
coffee and Bill W
and all the baggage that can accrue

Kids in bed my friends are dead
poorly led no tears are shed
hardened hearts stops and starts
liberal arts and used car parts
if I could I surely would
god damn that planted seed
oh oh a distraction's what I need
oh oh a distraction's what I need

War Stories

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

*How have we gotten so blasé about war? And why oh why do we fail to learn
from our mistakes?*

Seems 9/11 put the zap on his head
but he ended up in Iraq instead
where an IED it tore off his leg
and left a mind hanging by a thread
now he sits in his room and talks to the wall
the particulars he cannot recall
he does his best thinking in the bathroom stall
a hero to one and all

lets sit around the fire
with tumblers of rum
and sing o-diddle-e-o o-diddle-e-um
adventure and camaraderie
so what if there's nothing below the knee
oh diddle-e-o o-diddle-o-i

it's another war story
it's another war story

Mary's husband came home on a plane
draped with a flag ain't that a shame
oh remember the towers...remember the Maine
now she gobbles pills to dull the pain
one weekend a month 2 weeks a year
needed the money to fund a career
things are rarely what they appear
pull up a chair...come over here

we'll sit 'round the fire
with tumblers of rum
and sing o-diddle-e-o o-diddle-e-um
honor and exclusivity
dying gets you in for free
oh diddle-e-o o-diddle-o-i
it's another war story
it's another war story

lets push on and shake hands with the dawn
I may not have fought but I can go on
got some school deferments and a new bride pray tell
but if I was there I'd have given them hell

President bows and hits his knees
and says pretty pretty pretty pretty pretty please
that flight suit it was such a tease
just once more can I feel the breeze
and the power of a warrior
you don't know what it does to her
just this one last time my good sir
how about some frankincense and myrrh

we'll sit 'round the fire
with tumblers of rum
and sing o-diddle-e-o o-diddle-e-um
of course all glory goes to thee
oh diddle-e-o o-diddle-o-i
it's another war story
it's another war story
it's another war story
it's another war story
it's another war story

This Used to Be a Nice Neighborhood

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

There's really no such thing as the "good old days". I've searched far and wide for them and believe me.....they ain't there. But even in my lifetime I remember unlocked doors and knowing your neighbor's name and being able to be out after dark without fear that some sex crazed republican operative might kidnap you.

This used to be a nice neighborhood
now it's drugs and bars
cinder blocked cars
cops ride by
with windows high
this used to be a nice neighborhood
now it's thugs and whores
and evened scores
graffitied walls
and strip malls
this used to be a nice neighborhood

I walked these streets when I was a kid
with a baseball tan
and the fuller brush man
with my new oiled glove
a labor of love
I can't believe the things I did
chasing fire flies
and summer skies
that would fade to black
promise to come back
oh when I was a kid

change is never good sir
change is never good
we'd stay the same if we could sir
stay the same if we could

We used to leave our doors unlocked
now it's double bolts
and .45 Colt's
outlined chalk
no one will talk
We used to all come out to play
now it's faces hard
brown front yard
welfare checks

who's gonna be next
We used to all come out to play

change is never good sir
change is never good
we'd stay the same if we could sir
stay the same if we could

How do you learn to love 'round here
where the boys are dead
and the girls are led
by a TV screen
and a hip hop dream

How do you learn to love 'round here
when dreams are lost
like car exhaust
and clogs the air
with despair

How do you learn to love 'round here

You watched this from afar sir
you watched this from afar
with your big fat cigar sir
your big fat cigar

This used to be a nice neighborhood
then the jobs went south
and word of mouth
reached the upper floors
and the liquor stores

Daddy woke up with nothing to do
so he lashed out
with no doubt
that the ones so close
were to blame the most
and now he's pinned it all on you

You watched this from afar sir
you watched this from afar
with your big fat cigar sir
your big fat cigar

This used to be a nice neighborhood
now it's drugs and bars
cinder blocked cars
cops ride by
with windows high

this used to be a nice neighborhood
now it's thugs and whores
and evened scores
graffitied walls
and strip malls
this used to be a nice neighborhood

My God Drops Bigger Bombs Than Your God

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

*Religion is perfectly Ok except for the fact that it's responsible for more deaths
than any other person or thing in the history of the world. That's a bit of a PR
problem...no?*

Used to spend my days selling crack
drinking beer and kicking back
procuring the girls with the nicest rack
look yonder at what greets me now
I'm a young man with an old man's brow
can Jesus get my ass out of Iraq
can Jesus get my ass out of Iraq

Flowing robes and finery
taught from birth to disagree
who to shoot and who to love and to what degree
how many infidels required
to change a light bulb under fire
who left all them virgins to me
who left all them virgins to me

my God he drops bigger bombs than your God
that must mean he loves me more
my God he hates gays way more than your God
tell me whatcha praying to yours for?
well it's time to get off the floor
get up off the floor

No strip joints or cartoons
your deity is big on gloom and doom
so watch your step or we'll all go boom
convert convert and wipe out the slate
no question it's OUR God that's great....
except when I'm masturbating in my room
except when I'm masturbating in my room
Jesus never understood

the recruiter promised me
that come the end of World War III
I'd be raptured to the sounds of Let it Be
right now I'd like to know...where is he?

But You need a God who'll use his dukes
one not afraid to use his nukes
accept blind intelligence from the spooks
right wing with a mean streak
will suffer fools and ply the meek
knows just how to issue a rebuke
knows how to issue a rebuke
..with lots of thunder

But still...
my God he drops bigger bombs than your God
that must means he loves me more
my God he hates gays way more than your God
so whatcha praying to yours for?
time to get up off the floor

Forgetting it All

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

I never had to look far for my hero. He raised me.

I look and see her...forgetting it all
as that look floats past her face
I wish I could jump inside her head
or that we could both leave this place
together we've been
together we'll go
love starts fast
and then moves slow...away
forgetting it all

I watch her wander....forgetting it all
I see unsteadiness in her eyes
I wait for the hand to comfort me
but it's no longer wise
together we were
together we are
I just can't let her
get too far....away
forgetting it all

moving it all from her reach
as I thunder on and preach and preach
tut tutting her not wanting to see
just what it's taking away from me
just what it's taking away from me

I watch her loveless....forgetting it all
my heart grows hard then soft again
we'll leave as we've always been
the two of us as friends
together we'll stay
we'll meet once more
she'll know just what
I'm looking for that day
forgetting it all

moving it all from her reach
as I thunder on and preach and preach
tut tutting her not wanting to see
just what it's taking away from me
just what it's taking away from me

I look and see her...forgetting it all
as that look floats past her face
I wish I could jump inside her head
or that we could both leave this place
together we've been
together we'll go
love starts fast
and then moves slow...away
forgetting it all

Sunset

by Tom Flannery
copyright 2007 (BMI)

My friend Canadian songwriter Lorne Clarke, after hearing the first song in this collection, [I Hate Getting Up in the Morning](#), suggested that the last song should be called "Sunset". Since his ideas are usually way better than mine, I took his suggestion.

Hey hey...where'd everybody go
it's like the streets were hit with a body blow
that might've landed a bit too low
but we learned that lesson a long time ago

at sunset
at sunset

When you work the same soil that they lay you in
and the ghosts they fight fair and still you never win
forced to lay your body on the head of a pin
to rest so you can begin again
at sunset
at sunset

when all the sweat is wiped away
from still another 12 hour day
it's when we hit our knees to discuss
why he remembers them but forgot about us

Even the river is past her prime
and a pawn shop replaced the 5 and dime
the soothing words of a nursery rhyme
are abridged to pacify the time
at sunset
at sunset

When you ask..did these men die in vain
and you're busy popping pills for the pain
or injecting new hope into the veins
looking for a habit to sustain
at sunset
at sunset

when the last child is tucked into bed
and that phone stops ringing in your head
and you grasp your lover as if you'll drown
battered by the waves of this town

Hey hey...where'd everybody go
it's like the streets were hit with a body blow
that might've landed a bit too low
but we learned that lesson a long time ago
at sunset
at sunset
at sunset
at sunset