

Chloe Stroll

Bloom in the Break

Track By Track



photo credit: Kayt Jones

1. “Hurricane”

I wrote “Hurricane” in 2022. It was a crazy time for me, because Scotty was going to compete in the Winter Olympics, and COVID was still around, and I was a wreck. I wanted him to know that whatever happened, I would be there for him—but I didn’t know how to express it. I love water as a symbol, and I loved the drama of the lyric, “I’ll find you in a hurricane.” It means that I’m there. I’m your painkiller. I’m here, no matter what happens.

2. “Thin Air”

Kevin Bard and I had gone to Los Angeles to work, and I was so sick. I remember being in the studio wearing three sweaters, and if I didn’t take cold medicine every four hours, I’d be sweating bullets. Kevin always kept a big bank of song titles. We were having a chat and bouncing around ideas, although my brain may not have been in top shape, and he mentioned a title for a song called Thin Air. And I said, “Oh, like you pop out of thin air?” When you’re 16 and you’re doing something fun, and you’re

like, ‘Oh, my God - there’s the guy I like!’?” We spun into this funny conversation, and “Thin Air” was born. It took us five hours to nail it.

3. “Run”

Joey Kurbanov and I wrote “Run” in 10 minutes. I explained how I had experienced a home invasion with Scotty, and I remember saying, “In that moment, all you wanted to do was run.” There were two guys, and one of them fully came into our bedroom while we were sleeping at 1:30 in the morning. I remember hitting Scotty. He jumped up and looked at me and said, “Stay in the bedroom.” I was so nervous to let him go anywhere, but I was completely paralyzed in my position. The lyrics are my experience: “My body’s going numb/ It’s all a never ending rush/ I can’t believe I just can’t/ Run, Run, Run, my mind is saying/ Run, run, run.”

Everyone is like, “Oh, it’s about a relationship,” but I have to tell them, “No, no, this is legitimately how I felt.” I wrote “Run” about two weeks after the home invasion. I use music to heal certain wounds and put them to bed, and “Run” did that for me.

4. “I Stood My Ground”

“I Stood My Ground” is the most complex song I’ve written. But I’m glad it was such a challenge, because it’s been one of the most satisfying songs to listen to. When I played it for my mom for the first time she burst into tears and said, “I’m so in awe of how far you’ve come.”

Walter Afanasieff and I were talking about moments when I’ve felt unheard or when my values felt compromised. We explored the idea of what it’s like to stand your ground while everything around you feels like it’s unraveling. Staying grounded in what matters to me is really important - values have always been a big part of who I am. I’m also a big Disney fairytale person, and when we were writing the bridge, I pictured a person sitting in front of a crystal ball trying to manipulate someone who’s like, “My mind’s made of stone/ I’m not shying away/ You’ll try and move me but I’m gonna stay.” No matter what gets thrown at you, you will stick with who you are and your values. I loved that message.

5. “Water Over Sand”

I wrote “Hurricane” and “Water Over Sand” back to back. It was a crazy time. Swagg R’Celious walked into the studio and said, “I was up at 4 a.m. and I made this beat in the bathroom,” and he played me a voice note with the line, “Who’s gonna fight for us?” But I thought, “Oh, my God, the water.” I loved it. He wanted to change the lyric, and I was like, “No,” because I love when there’s just four or five lines, or one sentence, where you get it.

Everyone at one point has felt that desperation to fight for something to love - it doesn’t need to be a person. I love the symbol of water; it brings life, it brings death, it’s everything. I was tying in that desperation - “Who’s gonna fight for us/ If I can’t fight no more?” - with the idea that you can create something in the sand and all of a sudden, it’s gone. And that’s life. It’s a memory; it’s fleeting. You can reflect on things, and it’s a wound, but time heals it.



album artwork

6. “Love in the Dark”

“Relationships are hard when they feel one-sided” - my conversation with Joey that turned into this song started there. We had done a lot of piano songs at that point, and he was like, “Let’s do something with guitar.” I wrote “Love in the Dark” a very long time ago, and it started as a duet, but in the end it’s much more about a solo journey, because of that line: “Baby it’s hard/ To love in the dark.” That’s when love feels very one-sided, and there’s one side trying harder than the other. The guitar feels very sad and soothing at the same time, reflecting the acceptance of that fact—it’s hard. It’s a bittersweet song.

7. “Prisoner”

I got tired of writing about romantic relationships, and I wanted “Prisoner” to be dark and melancholic, because it’s not about a boy and girl - it’s about a friend, or really, my relationship with myself. “I don’t wanna be here, caught up in my own thoughts/ All the voices I hear telling me that I’m lost.” It’s me talking to myself and saying that my anxiety is my unwelcome visitor.

I wanted the song to sound airy and fairy-like, because the vision of it is you're sitting in this black room, and there's so much circling you - and it turns out you're sitting in your own head. I went back into the studio to re-record some of it, but there are parts I kept from three and a half years ago because I knew I wouldn't be able to recreate the emotion and layering. I actually did that myself in ProTools, which was fun.

8. "Passenger Seat"

We've all been that person in the car thinking, "I want to die here. Just get me out." Kevin and I could relate to the idea of something coming to a close and thinking, "Swallow me whole. I want to escape this world." The way the song is structured complements the lyrics so much—that feeling of dreaming, of not wanting something to be real.

9. "You're OK"

"You're OK" was a big healing song for me. I wrote it about my grandmother. While the song centers on her, it also speaks to the broader experience of loss. Everyone has someone they've loved and lost. It's part of life. I had experienced it with a close friend of mine who was 23 - she had cancer, and she passed away - and, unfortunately, with a few other people. The constant line that everyone would tell me was, "At least they're OK."

My grandma was spectacular. She would always sit in this big yellow chair in her bedroom and wait for us to come and visit her, so I painted the picture that I remembered, of her sitting on the chair. She had these huge windows, and you could see the sky, and the sun would beam in all the time. She was an amazing cook. There were always cakes at her house. I wanted to capture the sadness, but also the acceptance that sometimes, what is best for that person is no longer on earth. "At least one of us is OK."

We wanted this song to be *so* stripped back. The music and the production had to feel as vulnerable as possible, which meant there needed to be almost nothing. We kept going. "No, it has to sound less, and less, and less, and less. You need to hear every T, every S. You need to feel every emotion in my voice." And I think we did a great job.

10. "Home"

I hope that "Home" becomes someone's wedding song. When we started to work on the song with Walter, I was

six months pregnant. It was the first time I'd met him, and we were sitting and talking about life while I was so in awe. I love big ballads - my goal as a singer is Whitney Houston, Céline Dion. So I told him I wanted to write a ballad like that.

He said, "Tell me what's going on in your life." And I told him that the biggest thing was getting married and being on the verge of having a baby. When I got married, I felt, "you're my home" about my husband. We can live wherever; we can move wherever. But we can do that because *you're* my home. It's not four walls. It's not wherever we are, it's wherever *you* are.

We finished it in London, and I burst into tears when he first played it back. But the most incredible moment for me happens when I sing it to my son now. He smiles at me. He reacts to that song, which makes me cry to this day.

11. "Without You"

"Without You" is such a vibe. When Swagg, Jossiah, and I were writing it, we were bouncing around so many answers to the question, "How do we explain what life is like without you?" Saying "it's just sparks without flames" and "I try to pray with no faith" is so powerful just like that, and you think, "Wow, that is how I feel about life without you." It was really fun to write, and the beat makes you want to sit there and clap your hands.

12. "A Lot to Give"

Too many people don't give themselves enough credit and don't believe in themselves. I was one of them, for sure. I never thought I could do this. I never thought I was good enough. I felt that way in music; I felt that way in relationships - not just romantic ones.

"A Lot to Give" resonates with me, and with my younger self, a lot. There's a little girl inside of me who's crying out "Hey, look at me!" And I wouldn't say anything. This song is a message to a little girl -or a little boy -who's saying, "Hey, look at me, I can do it, too!" I wanted to end with this song because, by the end, you realize that you're really talking about yourself - it's not that she has a lot to give, it's that.. I have a lot to give. I found that powerful.

Making sure that you know your worth, and you stand up for your worth, and you know that you are good enough—that is amazing, and you are amazing. Never, never forget that. Because we do. We all do.

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