URBAN MUSIC (1972)

Windscreen wipers whisk the waking snow

From a parked car, watch from the window

Urban music, mixed at urban angles

See here from this launderette where my washing tilts and tangles

Human Interest empties her machine  
Rhythmic slim arms lift, sort sheets between

Eyes half elsewhere, piles her baskets high

Brights and darks and towels and tee shirts into the spin-dry

Snow is sleet is turning now to rain

Rap stopped raindrops down the windowpane

Streetlamps, headlamps, tyre tracks clear the snow

Put two franc pieces in my slot and look at how my fresh whites go

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BLOTTO IN BLIGHTY \* (1973)

Blotto in Blighty,

you in your nightie,

me with your head in my lap,

sated with kissing,

and talking and listening,

and snuggled too tired to unwrap.

Give me your smile, and I'll give you my wine.

You give me your love, and I'll give you mine.

Plastered in Paris,

too gone to embarrass,

giggling over our burps,

quite enough to confess

what we once had to guess

before our slow sips became slurps.

Tomorrow hung over; tomorrow, who cares.

We make the nights ours, and the nights make us theirs.

Strange how the stars

that shine down on bars

sing torch songs and dance Fred Astaire.

Strange how it improves

the flavour of booze

to lie with my head in your hair.

Give me your smile, and I'll give you my wine.

You give me your love, and I'll give you mine.

Tomorrow hung over; tomorrow, who cares.

We make the hours ours, and the hours make us theirs.

\* \* \* \* \*

QUEEN VICTORIA (1973)

Walking back home from my new love's bed,

mending and aching, and hungry and fed,

I watched the dawn sun gild a sky of grey smoke,

and shake off its cloak and fly free

A new way of being is born.

An old style of seeing will burn.

Rising last night from the dark of her field

dew-drenched and drained dry and hurting and healed

I watched the half-moon rim a cloudbank in haze

and hatch in a blaze and swim free

An old page of longing is torn.

A new page of loving has turned.

Rising last night from my new love's bed

dew-drenched and drained dry and hungry and fed

I watched the half-moon rim a cloudbank in haze

till I felt her eyes blaze at my back

\* \* \* \* \*

ROSE THAT MORNING (1974)

As she rose that morning, the drizzle fell steadily

She looked at her lover through the rain in her eye

My hope it is stifling, my heart it hangs heavily

I'm so tired of waiting for dragons to die

He took her into his arms, and he kissed her so sweetly

He promised her once again that soon she'd be free

To be who she wanted, and to live life completely

And that he'd be beside her still, there over the sea

The rain pattered at her feet, and sparkled in traffic lights

Stone walls rose before her; they templed the sky

To offices, factories, the cars sped the acolytes.

She splashed through the narrow streets and wished she could fly.

\* \* \* \* \*

ALL THIS TIME (1974)

How does it feel now there's all this time to feel?

Old man and old woman, does it still feel real?

The day is all one colour. The sky is overcast.

Is there nowhere to go, then? Nowhere but the past?

How do you live now you live from day to day?

No job ties you down now, or brings things to say.

Your friends are all shadows. Your children grow slack.

So is there nowhere to turn now—nowhere but back?

How do you see them, who were old when you were young?  
Were they too much bother to stay long among?

Or did you spend your best years nursing them on their cliff?

Is there nowhere to wish now? Nowhere but what if?

How do you feel now, with all this time to feel,

old man and old woman? Does it still feel real?

Did you ever stop mending the holes in the nets?  
Are you still becoming, and have no regrets?  
Can small obsessions still carry you through?  
How will I feel then when I am you?

\* \* \* \*

THE LAUNDERETTE SONG\* (1974)

You're the tree of life—you’re the limb of peace—

You're the leaf of love, goes dancing in the breeze—

You're the bird that sings from a higher bough—

You're the fruit, the nut, the now.

And you're thistledown in the Underground,

Slowly floating round the Piccadilly Line—

You're the singing soul—you’re the winning goal—

You're the part, the whole—you're mine.

On the day we met at the launderette,

The whole floor was wet with broken down machines,

And your heart as dry from a lover's lie

As was mine, from might-have-beens.  
But because you'd left home without your Dreft,

And my heart is swift to the opportunity,

I had offered mine, and we'd passed the time

In a kind of bonhomie.

REFRAIN:

*Woman, one I sigh for, let us try for the sun, and moon, and stars.*

*Do you hear the true you telling you who you are?*

*Can you feel the love sprite light the love light and burn it in your blood?*

*Will you let me fill you with the fire and the flood?*

In this laundromat an attendant sat

Was as big and fat as any three machines,

And her shoulders shook as she took a look

Through a book of porno scenes.

Well, I caught a glimpse, and it's true, the pimps'

And the twisted nymphs' expressions were quite droll—

But I never saw such a laugh before!

And we felt the floorboards roll…

REFRAIN

The vibrating roof seemed to offer proof

That to grow aloof, and stiffen up that lip

Would have been too calm, so I gripped your arm,

In alarm, and fellowship.

If machines explode, and the walls erode

As entire loads of your washing float you off,

No, don't fall apart—but pursue your heart—

It could be the start of love.

REFRAIN

Well, the months have passed since we last were cast

Out without a mast, gone sailing in such wet.

We may walk in rain, but we don't remain,

And there's much to gain from that.

Now you're sitting there in your underwear,

And you've let your hair fall crazy in your face,

And I love you too, and you know I do,

And we're going to embrace.

REFRAIN

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

MY FAULT (1975)

We're sitting in a South London park, sheltering from a shower.

I've been looking at your mouth for the last three quarters of a hour

(in the gathering dark).

And to be still more explicit,

I'm wishing I could kiss it.

REFRAIN And it's trivial, if you'll just say you're sorry, love,

then I will, but it's the same old story, love,

I just can't seem to find how to speak that opening line—

yet it's my fault all the time. It's my fault.

You're the moon in the branches of my tree, the sparrow in my soul.

I've been wishing we could dance this thing away, make love until we're whole

(like the wind and the sea).

And it would make things so much easier

if only I could squeeze ya.

REFRAIN

And I know I'm awfully ugly,

But honey, won't you hug me?

\* \* \* \*

LETTER FROM LONDON\* (1975)

I was listening to a dirty joke last night, in a midnight café—

The sort of stuff I can't enjoy while you're so far away.

Friends in couples, talk of sex, they fill my cup with thirst.

In two months time, I'm going to hug you till our buttons burst.

Lover, I miss you. (x3)

I was waiting for the postman by the window, bobbing back and forth,

thinking of the time we've spent together, feeling what it's worth:

leaning on each other as the days sneak up to do us down;

lying in each other's arms at night with no one else around.

Lover, I want you. (x3)

I was walking down the Portobello Road,

and you were at my side,

we'd just bought me a silver wedding ring,

you'd been eight months my bride.

We were poor, so the ring cost 30 pence,

but our hearts felt glad and free,

till we stopped to listen to the song of a busker,

and a man came up to me, saying

Why don't you stay away from white girls? (x 3)

Well, I've thought about it quite a lot since then, and one thing seems quite sure:

the mindless bile of some poor buffoon should be easy to ignore.

But the urge to hurt doesn't need much help to rend a heart in two,

and the hate in his might have spread to mine, but the power to heal was you.

Lover, I need you. (x3)

I was waiting for the postman by the window, wandering to and fro,

thinking of the lands we've seen together, wondering where we'll go.

Holding to each other while the years well up and disappear,

carrying your memories in my head, my whisper in your ear:

Lover, I love you. (x3)