

**Troubadour** is a three part modern poetic story told in, well, my style of poetry. Troubadour songs were ancient Occitan songs that were about courtly love. In the same but also very different way, this story is about the love of a prostitute in London whose true love is away fighting in the Middle East, but he isn't aware of what she is doing back home. It's really meant to be spoken, perhaps with a guitar backing.

The first song, Morning in London, is an Alba, a style of poetry which is described as "the song of a lover as dawn approaches, often with a watchman warning of the approach of a lady's jealous husband".

The second song, Frozen, is a Salut d'amor, which is described as "a love letter addressed to another, not always one's lover"

The last song, View From the Air, is an Escondig, which is described as "a lover's apology"

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## Morning in London (Alba)

Green and grey gravel streets  
are no more than awakening  
shadows as the light of the lamps  
stretch out onto the early rising dusk.  
And headlights from old  
Mercedes blink warily  
in the frozen dawn;  
Here amongst the London sea.

But the rays can't,  
won't penetrate through  
her bamboo shutters and  
she's peeling herself  
up off the floor, rubbing  
her salted eyes and glancing  
at the time:  
Half Five.

There's a smell of cold,  
stale beer sticking to her  
bleach blond shoulder  
length hair and the streets  
haven't woken yet but  
in the Kenyan mountains  
the boiling coffee  
in her two year old  
cracked valentine mug is  
already being harvested  
and the flipperty flop  
of silver fluffy slippers  
slide up the stairs  
and onto her balcony.

As if she was the Queen,  
to her north the spread  
of high rise concrete  
tower blocks and patches  
of colour in Hammersmith green;  
she gazes at the morning scene,  
Here amongst the London sea.

She's watching out of here.  
Gazing out into the headaches  
and pains of a thousand  
commuters, urban dwellings  
and late trains, packed  
undergrounds and fruit  
market vendors.

She's breathing in the smell of  
fumes and trying to  
remember all the details  
and jigsaw pieces of what  
happened in the blue light of  
last night, trying to figure out  
the weaving tapestries of life and  
stains of adultery.  
Lover. Mistress. Friend.

Lover. Object. Lady.  
A tear drops down from her  
eyes in the morning light,  
She's at the end of it.  
She's at the start of it.  
What if she died?  
She died a prostitute.

And inside the room a subtle  
stirring from a pig faced man.  
Like a watchman hollering from  
a tower, warning her of a  
jealous husband; perhaps she  
is, perhaps she's married to the job.

But to the south, below and beneath  
urban scrubs and sweltering mountains  
is her true love, fighting the wars that  
diplomats couldn't stop and peace couldn't  
hold back.

She's kissing the only thing  
that reminds her of him;  
Her two year old valentine mug.

Here amongst the London sea,  
Here amongst the London smog.

## Frozen (Salut d'amor)

Suddenly the phone rings,  
Sends chills singing sideways down her spine.  
There's this soft hustle and bump  
as the cover-up sweater sinks to the floor;  
Perhaps he's given in.  
Perhaps he's given up.

Perhaps it's what he always said;  
'Perhaps today, love, I am dead.'

And blood froze, made hands,  
feet, toes go rigid with  
pathos and wide eyed panic.

It sent shivers down her spine  
And fears through her mind;  
Perhaps he's given in  
Perhaps he's giving up.

Her hands grasp the mug.  
Bent back and eyes screwed  
for the two year old vinegar but  
there's nothing left to lose,  
She's got nothing left to lose,  
And she won't choke.  
He won't go.  
He can't go....

But he doesn't know.

Hands shaking, hitting the button  
The phone picks up as she says  
'Hello?'

Memories of tin cans and string  
are flying through, expecting to  
be heard; 'It's absurd' she thinks,  
'How come I still love him, even after  
all these years from childhood  
to adolescence and further  
into these dark, murky waters.'

Through digital flickerings,  
the binary drum beats  
speak her lovers voice:

"Honey, it's me.  
I'm not dead yet.  
They came at us  
hard in these sandy  
territories, they came  
with car bombs  
and missiles and I  
missed you Honey,  
How's it going,  
Honey?"

"Good... good."

If only he knew  
Few hours before  
She had lain lurid  
in fag stained  
luxury  
for inspection by  
the zoo.

"I'll take you."  
Said the fat cat  
Glancing at his  
pocketwatch,  
"The missus is  
out, but who  
cares about that?"

It's not that she  
loved it, anything  
about it at all.  
It's not that she  
choose, felt  
compelled to  
work as a whore...

Because even in  
the darkest pits,  
Whoever it was,  
She met with him  
in her dreams.

They waltzed like  
when they were young,  
All the wonderful smiles  
and sighs and giggles  
of her college day prom.

But today the grey brought  
her back to sordid reality,  
and the political system of  
prostitute practicality.

If only he knew.

"I've a surprise,"  
Says her love  
on the phone,  
"I'm leaving here  
tomorrow, honey,  
I'm coming home."

## View From the Air (Escondig)

And she's rushing full throttle out of there,  
out of this sickening affair and into the  
crowded London streets as all the saints  
rise protecting her stark naked body  
Because she's crying in a porcelain bath.

And she can't stop worrying about everything  
she's been and done, the sick and mud that  
she's hugged and slobbered over, what could  
redeem her? What could she say when he  
comes back through the smoke at the station?  
Will he say, 'I love you anyway'?

It's a vain, perilous hope and she's searching  
for fags in her bathrobe (that was one thing  
she gave up but old habits die hard) and like  
the jester, the joker on the card, the problem  
in the pack she thinks this is it; there is no  
way back.

And across the ocean, the still great ocean  
the blue lights whisper and hum an old tune  
above the hideous clapping of the waves;  
She's one of the kind,  
One of the mould who  
cracked the clay and  
let it lay broken for  
the smoke to roll in.  
It's shaping her vision  
into cheap tricks and  
candy sticks.

A cheap puppet to  
a sickening affair.

And the secrets safe but on the phone he's sounding worried,  
Because she can't keep the rivers in her and the tears are  
flowing out now as she crosses the London fog, the London sea.  
And though she tries to make it, to explain it away it will always  
come back. She wants to tell him, she wants to let it all out.

And Jerusalem is shining on a hill. All clothed in green and white  
The London sea has turned bright at the moment of Armageddon.

The truth blurts out.  
How it all is.  
It's  
Changed.  
She  
Says.  
I'm  
not  
the girl  
you  
fell in  
love  
with.

There is silence.

Across the ocean, the still green ocean of fields and hay,  
The lover light burns bright and doesn't go out;  
You're one of a kind, he says.  
One of the chosen,  
Lover and beloved,  
Saved at the turn of the day.

I love you, he says,  
Whatever the cost.  
Sure, it hurts me  
But Girl, let me  
show you so you  
understand.

Your life ain't over.  
Your death hasn't come,  
And I'm coming over  
tomorrow to help you.  
Together we'll make it  
through.  
Just me and you.

How about it honey?  
Just me and you.