

U2

“Yahweh”

Dear Bono, Edge, Larry and Adam,

I first heard this song when I was about 11, driving home from the grocery store with my family in our suburban. My parents are not avid music-listeners, but they do love U2. *How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb* was probably the first U2 album either of them had bought since the 90s (like you, they were busy that decade, but with raising a family as opposed to rock 'n' roll tours). It was the first U2 album I heard. I know *Bomb* was met with criticism from some of your fans, but I credit it as the album that made me fall in love with U2.

“Take this soul, stranded in some skin and bones

Take this soul, and make it sing”

My mother is very spiritual, and I loved hearing her interpretations of your theology, Bono, that you scattered throughout *Bomb*. I can still remember her holding mini-Ted Talks in the front seat of the car, asking her kids, “Do you know how you dismantle an atomic bomb?” “With love?” I ventured. “By never building one in the first place,” she smiled. But she, like you, Bono, had the most to say about “Yahweh.”

“Take this mouth, so quick to criticize

Take this mouth, give it a kiss”

Yahweh, the Hebrew name for God. So sacred it should not be spoken by humans. These concepts fascinated me, along with my mother’s readings of the lyrics. More than any other song you have written, “Yahweh” is a prayer, asking God to take an imperfect person—shoeless, stained, stranded, angry, critical—and help them become more kind and loving. This transformation can be painful or seem hopeless. To become this better version of yourself, the old person and heart of what you were might even need to be destroyed.

“Take this heart, take this heart

Take this heart, and make it break”

The beautiful simplicity of these final lines, this plaintive request, never fails to move me. Yet “Yahweh” is not a sad or painful song. It is hopeful, earnest, honest. The soaring guitar of the first few seconds always lifts me up. It brings to mind memories of riding in the suburban with my family, belting out the words, staying in the car minutes after we’d arrived home so we could finish the song.

Thank you for this. “Yahweh” is not only a prayer that gives me hope for the future. It’s also a reminder of precious moments spent with my family. It makes my soul sing.

Your fan,

Allie McClaskey