

## From *Women to the Front* (2019)

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YOU DON'T ALWAYS FEEL IT, BUT IT'S THERE. A constant synchrony of parts and processes unfolding according to the narrative of the moment. The symphonic binding of proteins, sensing light, absorbing oxygen, reading and replicating DNA. The precisely timed sequence of movements involved in placing a record on a turntable and gently lowering the needle to its outer edge. The coordinated ritual of shaking hands, making eye contact, and saying “nice to meet you” as you meet a new person. You don't always feel it, the rhythm of existence, but it's there.

Perhaps that's why music is all over the world. Why it persists over time. Humans can be cautious creatures—stubborn, proud, resistant creatures—but we intuitively yield to the beat of external pulses because of the feeling we get upon surrender: the amplification of life.

It does, however, have a mixed reputation. Music as saviour and saboteur. Diplomat and destroyer. Inclusive and inequitable. Representation of best self and rationalization for worst self. All living beings are musical, but being a musician is different. It can draw us into a world that alternately expresses and endangers who we are.

Especially these days, as a solo artist, I feel a coexistence of vulnerability and confidence as I work on bringing a new document into the world. Shifts of mode and mindset as privacy mixes with sharing, as authenticity mixes with performance, as personal mixes with professional.

I feel it as a dance between what I give to the practice and what I get from it. The venue is a personal economy where forms of currency include meaning, connection, effort, boldness—along with time and money. I feel it as a tension between urgency and doubt, that produces both useful action and useful waiting. I feel it as an ongoing lesson in how the reward of empowerment is reliably worth the risk of assertiveness.

I feel it as a riddle, too. In which a ‘business of art’ character tries to confound an ‘artmaker’ character by simultaneously demanding the formulaic and the mysterious. Those are cynical moments, but consistently overtaken by the memory of listening to my finished songs in private and thinking, “That's really you.”