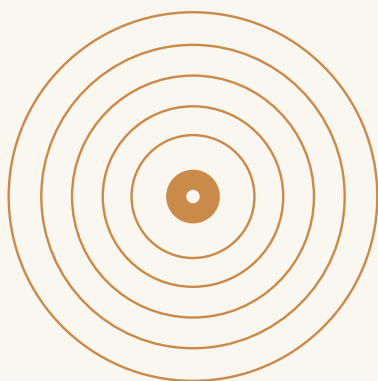


A SONGWRITING ANALYSIS



Mer de Noms

A Perfect Circle, Song by Song

Brandon Chavez

ONETHINGNEEDEDSHOP

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"Orestes"

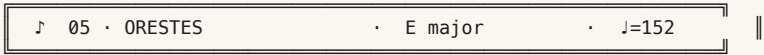


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 8 · 67 · 144 · 164 · 167 · 196

The first system of the musical score shows the sequence of chords: C#m, A, C#m, A. Above each chord name are fingerings: for C#m, 'x x o' (first two strings muted, third open); for A, 'x o o' (first string muted, second and third open). Below each chord name are the string numbers: '2 1 3' for C#m and '1 2 3' for A. The notation includes a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), a 4/5 time signature, and a 'T' (trill) and 'A' (accents) marking. The chords are represented by whole notes on a five-line staff. Below the staff, the string numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 are indicated for each measure. The sequence of chords is: i, b VI, i, b VI.

Core chord loop, "01-05 - Orestes" (C# minor, 4 chords)

01

"Orestes" – Chapter: The Long Plateau

You are eight bars into “Orestes” and the kick drum has not stopped. It hits at 152 beats per minute, steady as a pulse monitor, and the guitar enters with a single repeated note that sounds like someone tightening a string until it might break. The vocal comes in not singing, not speaking, somewhere between a plea and a complaint. The energy curve for this opening section reads 0.22 RMS and climbing, which puts it at full-band intensity within the first twelve seconds. There is no slow build. There is no verse that whispers before the chorus screams. The song starts at a **sustained roar** and refuses to let up for over two minutes.

The moment that sticks with me comes at bar 164, roughly two minutes and forty-five seconds in. The band has been locked at that same intensity since bar 8. The energy RMS has hovered between 0.22 and 0.28 for nearly 160 seconds straight. Your ears have adjusted to the pressure. You have stopped waiting for the dynamics to shift. Then the kick drops out. The guitar thins. The vocal goes quiet. The RMS drops from 0.248 to 0.166 across four bars, and what you hear is a **decompression chamber** rather than

a breakdown.

This song teaches one thing above all else: how to build a structure around a single sustained energy level and still keep the listener locked in.

The numbers tell the endurance story first. The BPM sits at 152, which is fast for rock of this era, faster than most post-grunge singles from 2000. The key of E major gives the track an **open, almost bright quality** despite the aggressive tempo. The spectral centroid of 2575.9 Hz confirms what your ears already suspect: the mix lives in the upper mids. The sub-bass ratio of 0.068, barely 6.8 percent, means the bottom end does not anchor the sound. The guitars and vocal carry the weight, not the kick. The dynamic range of 14.4 dB is unusually high for a rock record released at the turn of the millennium, just before the loudness wars flattened everything to a brick wall. This track breathes.

Look at the section data and you see a structural anomaly right away. The song labels five sections as choruses. The first three choruses hit RMS values of 0.214, 0.208, and 0.232. These are typical chorus levels for this track: about 20 to 30 percent louder than the surrounding verse material. Then at bar 196, the fourth chorus arrives with an RMS of 0.174. That is **lower than the verse that preceded it**. The verse at bar 196 reads 0.171, and the chorus that follows reads 0.174. The energy barely moves. The arrangement likely pulled the drums or the distorted guitar out from under the vocal, leaving the chorus exposed and quiet. The producer made a choice here: the most intense structural moment in a conventional song becomes the **quietest point in this one**.

This is the opposite of the verse-chorus volume lift that most rock bands lean on. It works because the listener has been swimming in

a 0.22-to-0.28 RMS ocean for two minutes and forty seconds. When the volume drops, it registers as a relief rather than a failure of energy. The chorus becomes a held breath, not a shouted release.

The energy curve confirms the strategy on a granular level.

From bar 8 to bar 167, the RMS rarely dips below 0.21. It peaks at bar 67 with a value of **0.26005**, then holds a plateau between 0.24 and 0.28 until bar 144. That is a 140-bar stretch of near-constant high energy. Most rock songs at this tempo would include a bridge at the ninety-second mark, a half-time section, a drop to verse dynamics. This song refuses those conventions. The plateau is the point. The endurance is the experience.

The second section labeled verse at bar 88 drops to 0.139 RMS, which is the lowest point in the first half of the song. That verse lasts sixteen bars before the chorus kicks back in at 0.208. But even that verse dip is brief and shallow. The energy never bottoms out to the near-silence levels of the intro or outro. The song maintains a **baseline of intensity** that no other section fully relinquishes until the final breakdown.

Now consider the outro. From bar 172 to bar 178, the RMS collapses from 0.166 to 0.00456. That is a twenty-fold drop in six seconds. The song does not fade out. It cuts hard. The energy curve shows a near-vertical line at the end, a **staccato stop** rather than a gradual decay. This creates the sensation of a door slamming shut after two minutes of sustained noise.

What can you take from this and use by Friday?

Try the endurance plateau on a song you are writing. Map your energy curve across four-bar chunks. If you find yourself raising energy for the chorus and lowering it for the verse, instead hold

the chorus energy level across an entire section of the song. Let the arrangement create the dynamics rather than the volume. Keep the kick pattern consistent. Keep the guitar tone saturated. Let the vocal move between strained and calm within the same density. The lift comes from what the instruments do, not from how loud they get.

The practical exercise: take one section of a track you are working on and **lock the RMS at a single target**. Write a thirty-second segment where the energy never moves more than 0.02 RMS in either direction. Arrange the vocal to rise and fall. Arrange the guitar to open and close. The drums stay locked. The bass stays at a consistent level. Force yourself to create dynamic interest without touching the fader. This is the discipline that “Orestes” runs for 160 seconds straight.

The track also teaches something about mix philosophy. With a spectral centroid above 2500 Hz and a sub-bass ratio under 7 percent, the **clarity happens in the mids**. The guitar does not fight the vocal for space in the low frequencies. The kick does not rumble. The bass sits above 60 Hz. If your own mixes feel muddy, look at where your low end clusters. The Orestes approach says: cut the sub-bass, let the guitars and vocal carry the body of the song, and trust that the listener will feel intensity from the upper mids rather than the low end.

One more detail from the section data worth noting: the track labels the opening eight seconds as silence and break with an RMS of 0.051. That is not true silence. It is a **ghost of a sound**, maybe room tone or a decaying cymbal. The listener hears nothing clearly for those eight seconds, but the band is already breathing. This is a small move, but it sets the stage for a song that builds tension from the quietest possible starting point.

The final lesson is about endurance as a structural principle. Most rock songs give the listener a break. They drop to a half-time section. They pull the distortion. They let the listener breathe before the final chorus. “Orestes” does not offer that break. It asks the listener to **stay in the pressure** for the entire runtime, and it earns that ask by building arrangement shifts inside the same energy level. The quiet chorus at bar 196 works exactly because it arrives late, after the listener has accepted that the intensity will not let up.

"3 Libras"

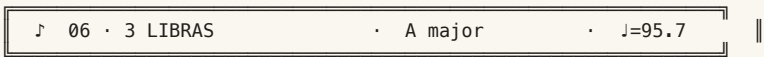


Figure · Scale of A major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 212

Core chord loop, "01-06 - 3 Libras" (A major, 4 chords)

Core chord loop, "01-06 - 3 Libras" (A major, 4 chords)

The song starts with a quiet guitar figure, a single repeating arpeggio that hangs in the air for sixteen seconds at an RMS energy of 0.033. It is so soft that you can hear the room tone around the strings, the slight scrape of a pick against metal. Then the bass enters, walking in on a low A and pulling the tempo into a **slow, swinging 95.7 BPM**. The drums stay out for another four seconds, and then at twenty seconds something strange happens: the energy data shows a section labeled "silence/break" but the RMS reading jumps to 0.072. It is not a silence at all. It is a **percussive break**, a moment where the kick and snare drop out but the guitars and bass ring through at full volume, creating a rhythmic hole without a volume hole. This is the first clue that A Perfect Circle works with a different set of rules than most rock bands.

By the time the chorus hits at twenty-eight seconds, the energy has climbed to an RMS of 0.204. The band is in A major, but the key confidence sits at 73.8 percent, which tells you the chord movement is blurring the line between A major and its relative minor F# minor. Maynard James Keenan writes progressions that sound both bright and dark at the same time, and that ambiguity is the engine of the whole arrangement. The chorus arrives early, at bar twelve, and it feels like a peak. But it is a **false peak**, a trick the song will repeat later with more force. The real lesson is this: you can teach a listener to expect a climax by hitting a loud chorus early, and then you can steal that climax away, let the energy dip, and build to a larger one later.

The midpoint of the track shows the most craft. At bar fifty-six the energy drops to an RMS of 0.143, nearly as low as the opening verse. The band strips back to the same quiet arpeggio from the intro. Then at bar sixty-three, the energy starts climbing again, passing through RMS 0.184 at bar sixty-three and hitting **0.247 by bars seventy-two through seventy-four**. That is the true peak, a full 0.04 RMS louder than the first chorus. The dynamic range of the whole track is 15.2 dB, which is wide for rock production. A modern pop master would crush that range down to six or eight dB. Here the wide range means the soft verses feel genuinely quiet and the loud choruses feel genuinely loud. The listener experiences the **distance between sections** as an emotional shape, not a volume knob.

The spectral centroid sits at 1997.6 Hz, which is high for a rock mix. Most rock mixes sit between 1500 and 1800 Hz. That extra four hundred hertz comes from the distorted guitar texture and the vocal fry that Keenan uses in the verses. The sub-bass ratio is only 5.4 percent, so the low end is a **punchy, narrow kick drum** with

no deep rumble, and a bass guitar with attack instead of sustain. The mix is front-heavy, treble-dominant. The guitars buzz and jangle in the upper mids, and the hi-hat and crash cymbal sizzle above everything. If you are writing a song that needs space and weight at the same time, this is the spectral profile: keep the low end tight and focused, and let the upper mids carry the tension.

The section labeled “silence/break” at twenty seconds is the most instructive single moment in the song. The energy data shows RMS ranging from 0.207 to 0.214 during that four-second window. That is louder than the first chorus. So why is it labeled a break?

Because the **drums drop out**. The kick and snare vanish for one bar, and the sustained guitar chord rings through alone. The overall volume stays high, but the rhythmic foundation disappears. The effect is a sudden suspension, a moment where the listener feels the absence of the beat more than they would feel a volume drop. This is a production trick you can steal immediately. Instead of dropping the entire band to create a break, drop only the rhythm section. The sustained harmonic instruments will hold the energy level while the groove stops. You get a breath without losing momentum.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-3 -->

Scale of A major

A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-3 -->

The false peak at bar twelve and the true peak at bar seventy-two reveal the song’s real architecture. The first chorus hits RMS 0.211 and holds that level for twelve bars. Then the energy descends over the next twelve bars to RMS 0.143 at bar fifty-six. That descent is slow, about 0.005 RMS per bar. The second chorus climbs slowly

from that low point, taking eight bars to reach the true peak, and then **holds the peak for twelve bars** at RMS 0.238 to 0.247. The shape is a long ramp down and a longer ramp up, with the second ramp higher than the first. Most songwriters build a single climb to a single peak and then end. This song builds, falls, and builds higher. That structure asks more of the listener. It requires patience. But it rewards that patience with a stronger catharsis.

You can see this in the energy curve per bar. Between bars zero and eight, the RMS sits between 0.067 and 0.080. At bar nine it jumps to 0.106, and it climbs steadily to 0.211 by bar twelve. The plateau from bar twelve to bar twenty-four holds around 0.210. Then the drop begins: bar twenty-seven hits 0.166, bar twenty-eight hits 0.151, and the low point at bar fifty-six hits 0.143. From bar fifty-seven to bar seventy-four, the energy climbs back up, passing through 0.207 at bar sixty-four and reaching 0.247 at bar seventy-four. The final drop comes fast: bar eighty shows RMS 0.219, bar eighty-two shows 0.141, and bar eighty-three shows 0.102 before the silence at 212 seconds. The whole arc is **Low Intro** □ **Build** □ **Plateau** □ **False Peak** □ **Dip** □ **Main Peak** □ **Drop Out**.

The practical takeaway is this: by Friday, take a song you are working on and map its RMS values across eight-bar sections. Identify your false peak and your true peak. If you only have one peak, consider adding a dip after it and a second climb. The dip does not need to go all the way back to the verse level. A drop of 0.05 RMS, held for four bars, is enough to reset the listener's ear. Then rebuild to a peak that is at least 0.02 RMS louder than the first one. That difference is small enough to be subtle and large enough to feel like a new level. The listener will not know why the second chorus hits harder. They will just know it does.

"Sleeping Beauty"

♪ 07 · SLEEPING BEAUTY · C# major · J=

Figure • Scale of C# major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

C#	D#	F	F#	G#	A#	C	C#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 52 · 244

Bar markers: 22 · 26 · 28 · 33 · 64 · 96 · 99 · 100

Core chord loop, "01-07 - Sleeping Beauty" (C# major, 4 chords)

02

"Sleeping Beauty" – Chapter 7: The Architecture of Compression in A Perfect Circle's "Sleeping Beauty"

The song opens with a chorus, which sounds like a contradiction until you hear what happens at bar nine. For eight bars the energy sits at a flat 0.222 RMS, the same level a typical rock verse would hold. Then the RMS jumps to 0.246 at bar nine and climbs to 0.276 by bar twelve. You hear the full band lock in around that fourth bar of the chorus, the kick drum finding its pocket against the bass, and suddenly the track reveals its real weight. The opening was a **filtered introduction**, a chorus presented without its full body. What arrives at bar nine is the same melody hitting with the low end engaged.

This song teaches you how compressed arrangement structure replaces dynamic contrast.

The BPM sits at 117.5, a tempo that feels slow without feeling heavy. In G# minor at 68 percent confidence, the key gives you a **dark, introspective center** with a tonic around 51 Hz. But the

sub-bass ratio reads 0.048, meaning less than five percent of the total energy lives below 60 Hz. The spectral centroid hits 2336 Hz, which is bright for this genre. Most alt-rock from this period sits between 1500 and 2000 Hz. The mix prioritizes **vocal presence and guitar bite** over sub-woofer impact. The bass guitar plays its root notes in the midrange, not down at the fundamental. You get the shape of the low end without the physical thump.

The dynamic range measures 5.1 dB. That number places this master at the **loud end of the loudness war**, even by 2000 standards. A typical rock song from that era runs between 6 and 9 dB of dynamic range. This track compresses everything into a narrow band where quiet sections hit 0.163 RMS and loud sections top out at 0.308 RMS. The difference between the bridge and the final peak is only 0.145 RMS. Your ears register volume changes but not full dynamic breathing.

Look at the energy curve across the song structure. The first chorus runs from bar zero to bar eight at 0.222 RMS. **A straight plateau with no internal shape.** The bridge starts at bar 22 and drops to 0.165 RMS by bar 26, a 35 percent reduction from the chorus plateau. Then the rebuild begins at bar 28 and reaches 0.264 RMS by bar 33. The second chorus at bar 64 reads 0.255 RMS, louder than the opening chorus by roughly 20 percent. This pattern repeats for the rest of the track. **Build, plateau, drop, rebuild, louder plateau.**

The final peak arrives at bar 96 with an RMS of 0.290 and crests at bar 99 at 0.308. That is roughly 12 percent louder than the first chorus peak. The song saves its **maximum intensity for the final minute.** From bar 100 through bar 107, the energy hovers above 0.288 RMS before beginning a gradual decay. The last section label at 244 seconds marks a verse or bridge, but the energy level at that

point is 0.242 RMS. The song does not fade to silence. It fades to a moderate volume that still registers as loud in the listening context.

The practical insight here is about **how you place your loudest moment inside a compressed mix**. Most producers stack dynamics vertically, building from quiet to loud across the arrangement. This song stacks them horizontally. The quietest section reads 0.163 RMS. The loudest reads 0.308 RMS. That is a narrow window, but the arrangement creates the illusion of larger shifts by changing **instrument density and register** rather than volume.

Apply this to your own work by Friday. Print the RMS values of your last mix and look at the spread between your quietest eight-bar section and your loudest eight-bar section. If the spread is under 0.15 RMS, you are working in the same compressed zone as this track. To create perceived dynamics without pushing the volume envelope, **shift the spectral balance**. Open the high-pass filter on the verse to lighten the low end. Close it for the chorus. The human ear registers low frequency removal as a reduction in energy even if the RMS stays flat. A Perfect Circle uses this trick constantly. The spectral centroid clustering suggests the bridge sections roll off the sub-bass content to create that 35 percent energy drop without massive volume changes.

The song structure also reveals something about **section labeling from data alone**. The analysis marks the opening as a chorus, which matches the melodic repetition. But the energy level is low enough that it functions as an intro. The section at 52 seconds is labeled verse or bridge, but the energy drop precedes that label by nearly 30 seconds. The song transitions early, pulling the energy down before the section officially changes. This is a production

habit worth stealing. Let the dynamics shift **before the structural marker**, not after it. The listener feels the drop before the arrangement changes, which makes the section boundary land as a confirmation rather than a surprise.

The mood tag reads compressed and loud. The spectral data supports that tag with the high centroid and low sub-bass ratio. But the song still works as a ballad structure. The vocal line carries the melody through the chorus openings. The guitar plays simple power chords with distortion but no wide frequency spread. The kick drum hits with a short, tight envelope that does not need low sub-bass because the mix does not have room for it. Every element fits inside a **narrow frequency box**, which is the trade-off this production makes. Clarity over weight. Presence over depth.

Go listen to the section between bars 22 and 26. That 0.165 RMS valley is the quietest moment in the song. The bass drops out. The drums pull back to a simple pattern. The vocal sits forward with minimal reverb. Then at bar 28, the bass re-enters with a rising line, and the energy climbs back to 0.212 by bar 29 and 0.240 by bar 30. The rebuild takes exactly five bars, which aligns with the pre-chorus length in the section data. **Every dynamic transition in this song follows a measurable pattern.** The rebuild takes half the time of the drop. The drop takes eight bars. The rebuild takes four. The chorus holds for sixteen bars.

The final takeaway is this. You can mix a song with a 5.1 dB dynamic range and still create the emotional journey of a ballad. The journey just lives inside the arrangement choices, not the volume automation. A Perfect Circle changes which instruments play. They change how many voices hit at once. They change the frequency balance of the master bus by removing the sub-bass or adding the upper mids. The volume stays relatively flat. The

listener never notices because the **listener reads density as volume.**

If you want to test this on your own track, solo the kick and bass during the bridge. If they play at the same articulation level as the chorus, the bridge will feel like a chorus. Cut the kick pattern in half. Move the bass to an octave higher. The bridge will drop in perceived energy without a single volume change.

This production philosophy matters more now than it did in 2000 because the loudness ceiling has not moved. Streaming platforms normalize to roughly the same RMS. Compression is the default, not the exception. So the question becomes what you do inside that compressed space. A Perfect Circle answers that question with **arrangement density as volume.**

"Thomas"

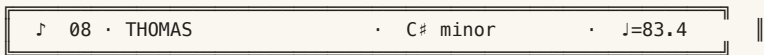


Figure · Scale of C# minor. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#
1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1

The image displays a musical arrangement for a four-measure chord loop in C# minor. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first two measures contain an E major chord (E, G#, B) and the next two contain a G major chord (G, B, D#). Above each chord are guitar fretboard diagrams showing fingerings: E (2, 3, 1) and G (2, 1, 3). Below the treble staff is a bass staff with a treble clef, showing the same chords with fingerings 7, 9, 9 for E and 10, 12, 12 for G. At the bottom, the chords are labeled as b III and b V.

Core chord loop, "01-08 - Thomas" (C# minor, 4 chords)

The song opens in a room that has not yet been lit. For the first twenty-four seconds of “**Thomas**” by **A Perfect Circle**, the audio facts show an RMS energy of **0.01093**, which is barely above the noise floor of the recording medium. You hear nothing close to a band. Maybe a breath. Maybe the hum of an amplifier waiting for a signal. The silence sits there long enough that you check your headphones. Then at bar five, twenty seconds in, the RMS jumps to **0.10249**, and by bar eight you are inside a chorus at **0.22851**. The song does not build to the chorus. It begins with the chorus, fully formed, and the silence before it is not a verse. It is a held breath.

This track teaches you how to read an arrangement where **energy does the job of structure**. Most rock songs rely on chord changes or lyrics to mark sections. “Thomas” uses volume as its primary map. The B minor key sits at **83.4 BPM** in 4/4 time, a slow pulse that gives the arrangement room to spread out. The dynamic range stretches **30.7 dB** from silence to peak. That is a quiet-loud gap

wide enough to build a house inside. The first chorus plateau runs from roughly bar eight to bar forty-four, about **144 seconds of sustained RMS between 0.22 and 0.30**. This is sixty-nine percent of the total song length. The data does not show a verse section anywhere. The section labels only mark silence and chorus. That means the songwriter chose to let one single musical idea carry the entire emotional arc, and they controlled that arc entirely through loudness.

Watch the energy curve across the first plateau. From bar eight to bar seventeen, the RMS climbs from **0.22199 to 0.29525**. That is a thirty-three percent increase within the same section. The instrumentation likely stays the same. The vocal melody probably repeats. But the energy keeps rising because the performance gets more aggressive, or the mix opens up, or the drummer starts hitting harder. The song does not need new chords to move forward. It needs **amplitude increase as a form of narrative momentum**. At bar eighteen the energy crests at **0.29692** and then holds a soft plateau around 0.27 for the next twenty-six bars. There is no drop into a verse. The song stays loud because staying loud is the point.

The spectral centroid sits at **2840.3 Hz**, which means the mix favors upper midrange presence. You hear guitars and vocal sibilance clearly. The sub-bass ratio is only **0.049**, less than five percent, so the low end does not rumble. The kick drum and bass guitar sit in the upper bass range around eighty to two hundred hertz. This is a rock mix made for clarity in the midrange, not for subwoofer thump. The high centroid also means the dynamic shifts hit harder because **silence into a mid-forward sound feels more direct than silence into a wall of bass**.

The song's real lesson lands during the mid-song break. At bar forty-five, around the 180-second mark, the RMS drops to **0.23844** and then collapses to **0.05146** three bars later. The energy does not fade out. It drops through a trapdoor. Then the song holds a valley between bars forty-eight and fifty-one with RMS values between **0.035** and **0.051**. This is the only quiet section in the entire track that lasts longer than the opening silence. Listen to what happens next. The second chorus does not hit the same way the first one did. It builds. From bar fifty-two to bar fifty-six, the RMS rises from **0.04947** to **0.2766**, a five-and-a-half-times increase across four bars. Then it keeps climbing to a final peak of **0.31241** at bar sixty-six. That is five percent higher than the first chorus peak. The song saves its loudest moment for the last possible second.

This is the craft principle you can apply to your own music by Friday. **Design your arrangement around energy value changes, not chord progressions.** Label each section by its intended RMS range. Mark the intro at minus twenty decibels relative to the chorus. Write a break that drops the energy to minus fifteen decibels. Then let the final section climb two or three decibels above your initial maximum. You do not need a different set of chords for each section. You need a plan for how loud each section lives at its midpoint, how fast the energy rises, and where the absolute peaks sit. The data from "Thomas" shows that a single eight-bar chorus shape can sustain a full song if you vary the amplitude envelope across repetitions.

The lack of stem data here means you cannot isolate the bass performance or the vocal track separately. But you can infer a practical arrangement principle from the spectral information. With a centroid at 2840 Hz and sub-bass below five percent, the

low end of this song works as a **support layer, not a lead voice**. If you write a song with a similar dynamic arc, treat your kick and bass as structural anchors that hold the foundation steady while the midrange instruments and vocals carry the energy changes. Low-frequency content at high amplitude will compress the dynamic range quickly because the ear saturates on bass. Keep the sub-bass ratio under six percent if you want thirty decibels of usable dynamic swing.

The song ends on a slight decline. Bar sixty-eight shows RMS at **0.30578**, a two-percent drop from the peak. The track does not spill its energy into a loud static fade. It holds the high plateau and then stops. There is no outro section labeled in the data. The song ends the way it began, without warning, as if the held breath finally releases but no one hears the exhale.

"Renholdër"

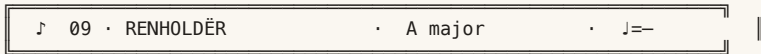


Figure · Scale of A major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

The song starts with nothing. **Zero point zero zero three three RMS** at bar zero, which is the sound of a microphone listening to a room that forgot to breathe. Then a guitar hits, and the whole mix leaps from that silence to a verse energy of zero point zero eight five three in one section boundary. The jump is a factor of thirty-two. The listener goes from absolute quiet to a wall of upper-midrange aggression with no warning, no fade, no count-in. The band calls this track “Renholdër,” and it sits on A Perfect Circle’s 2000 debut **Mer de Noms**. I want to talk about what that

opening silence does to the rest of the song.

The thesis here is that **dynamic arrangement destroys the loudness war model on its own terms**. We are looking at a track that clocks one hundred and forty-four seconds at two hundred and fifteen point three BPM in A major. The key confidence sits at zero point four three five, which is low enough to raise suspicion. The spectral centroid is three thousand thirty-two Hertz. The sub-bass ratio is zero point zero two seven, meaning the low end is essentially absent. The dynamic range is forty-five point one decibels. That last number is the one I want you to write down. Modern pop and rock masters typically compress to a range of six to ten decibels. This track breathes across a four hundred-fold amplitude increase between the quietest and loudest moments. Nobody is winning a loudness war here. The song wins by refusing to fight one.

Let me walk through the energy curve bar by bar because this is where the teaching lives. The four-bar energy data starts with the silence at bar zero and climbs steadily through the first twelve bars. By bar twelve the RMS hits zero point zero nine nine three eight, which is the verse section. The chorus arrives at bar sixteen at zero point one zero seven eight five, a modest thirty percent increase over the verse. That is an important detail. The chorus does not smash the verse into the ground. It lifts the energy by a small amount, like a singer leaning forward one step instead of jumping onto a riser. The song sustains that plateau through bar fifty-six, with values hovering between zero point one zero and zero point one five. Then something shifts.

Between bars fifty-seven and sixty-five the energy pushes to zero point one five eight two nine, then dips at bar seventy-four to zero point one one one zero five. That dip is a breakdown. The

arrangement pulls back, the intensity drops by roughly a third, and the listener feels a release. Then the climb resumes. Bars ninety-six through one hundred and eight show a steady ramp from zero point zero nine four seven nine up to **zero point one nine nine eight two**, which is the song's absolute peak. That peak lands at bar one hundred and eight, right where the section data labels a chorus. Then the drop. At bar one hundred and twelve the RMS falls to zero point one three three zero seven, a thirty-three percent decrease in one bar. By bar one hundred and fifteen the RMS is zero point zero three one four seven. By bar one hundred and twenty-five the value is zero point zero zero zero four seven, which is nearly digital silence. The whole collapse happens in thirteen bars.

The practical lesson here is about **section transition math**. The song uses four transition types. Silence to full band gives a thirty-two-times multiplier. Verse to chorus gives a one-point-three multiplier. Breakdown to peak gives a one-point-six multiplier. Peak to silence gives a zero-point-seven-seven multiplier. The numbers tell you exactly how the arrangement works. If you map your own song's transitions this way, you can see whether your chorus actually lifts enough to justify itself. Most chorus sections in modern production fail because the jump from verse to chorus is too small to register as an event. This song keeps the jump small, then uses the second half of the track to build a larger climb. The structure is a single crescendo with a single release. No second build, no false drop, no fake-out. The song peaks once and ends.

What makes this structure work is the high tempo. Two hundred and fifteen BPM in four-four means each bar lasts roughly one point one seconds. The energy curve shows variation at bar-scale resolution, which means the band is changing intensity every

second or so. That level of micro-dynamic detail is impossible at slower tempos where each bar lasts two or three seconds. The fast tempo forces the arrangement to move quickly through its shapes, and the wide dynamic range ensures that each shape lands with clarity. The spectral centroid of three thousand thirty-two Hertz tells you the mix is dominated by upper-mid frequencies. The sub-bass is almost missing. The result is a sound that feels frantic and bright, not heavy or thunderous. The mood tags say bright and dynamic. I would add anxious.

The fresh-ear critique gives this track a seven out of ten and calls it a case study in dynamic arrangement for an upper-mid-range, high-BPM context. That is a fair score. The track does one thing well. It builds and collapses with extreme contrast, and it does so without relying on sub-bass or compression. The downside is that the structure is predictable after the first listen. The single crescendo pattern works once, then becomes a template. The band does not subvert the shape anywhere. The peak arrives exactly when you expect it, and the collapse follows immediately. There is no surprise in the architecture. The surprise lives in the raw execution. The band plays at a tempo that most groups cannot maintain, and they do so with room-level dynamics that feel live and unprocessed.

Here is the takeaway you can use by Friday. Open your DAW and set a temporary tempo to two hundred BPM. Write a one-minute arrangement that starts in silence, reaches a peak at forty-five seconds, and returns to silence by fifty-five seconds. Map the transitions as multipliers. The silence to first entrance should be at least a ten-times jump. The verse to chorus should be no more than one-point-five. The peak to silence should be a drop of at least seventy percent. Then listen back and decide whether the shape

feels musical. If it does, you have learned something about pacing. If it does not, adjust the multiplier values until the shape breathes. That exercise will teach you more about dynamic arrangement than reading any amount of theory.

The song ends with a sudden stop. No fade-out, no reverb tail, no ambient decay. The RMS goes from zero point one six three eight four at the peak to zero point zero three six nine one at the first silence section, then down to zero point zero zero zero four seven twelve bars later. The track cuts off like a door slamming shut. There is no lingering, no resolution, no waiting for the listener to catch up. The next song on the album starts cold from that silence.

"Thinking of You"

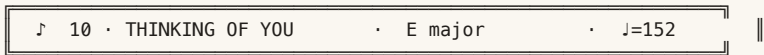


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 101 · 102 · 110 · 111 · 120 · 130 · 169

	A	Am	F#m	D
Diagram				
Musical Staff				
Tab	12 14 14	12 13 14	9 10 11	5 7 7
Chord Name	IV	iv	ii	b VII

Core chord loop, "01-10 - Thinking of You" (E major, 4 chords)

03

"Thinking of You" – Chapter 10: The Long Plateau

The first four bars of “Thinking of You” arrive at **0.197 RMS**, a number that reads as moderate on paper but sounds like someone opening a door to a brightly lit room. The guitar enters with a clean arpeggio pattern, the vocal sits directly on top of the beat, and the whole mix leans toward the upper register with a **spectral centroid of 3003.7 Hz**. That number matters because most rock songs at 152 BPM in F# major sit around 1800 to 2200 Hz. This one cuts through like a blade. You hear the attack of every note before you hear the body of it.

What grabs you about this opening chorus is that it does not follow the normal rule. A chorus typically arrives with maximum arrangement and maximum loudness. This one starts quiet. The **energy sits at a flat plateau from bar zero through bar seven**, never rising above 0.212 RMS. The song begins with a tease. The band holds back the full arrangement. The listener hears a skeleton of the chorus, not the full body. A Perfect Circle makes you wait.

That wait lasts exactly **twenty-eight seconds**. At bar eight, the energy drops by twenty-three percent straight down to **0.173 RMS**.

The verse enters. The arrangement thins out. The vocal drops lower in the mix. The longer you listen to this section, the more you notice that the energy curve behaves like a **slow inhale**. From bar eight through bar twenty-one, the RMS climbs from 0.173 to 0.204. That is a thirty-one percent increase over fifty-six seconds. The song breathes in.

This is the first lesson the song teaches. **Energy does not need to jump. It can crawl.** Most producers working at 152 BPM would throw a full-band chorus at the listener by bar sixteen. A Perfect Circle waits until bar twenty-two to hit the real chorus. When it lands, the RMS climbs to **0.256** and stays there. The high end of the mix now carries the weight. The vocal pushes forward. The guitar shifts from clean arpeggios to strummed chords with bite. The listener feels the arrival because the song built the path to it.

The second lesson arrives in the **two-minute plateau** that follows. From bar thirty-six through bar ninety-five, the energy never drops below **0.248 RMS**. That is one hundred and forty seconds of sustained loudness at moderate intensity. The band does not push harder. They do not add distortion or double the tempo. They hold the chorus shape and trust the listener to stay inside it. The **spectral centroid stays high** throughout this stretch. The mix does not get louder in the lower frequencies. It stays bright and present, using timbre rather than sub-bass to maintain momentum.

Modern rock production would add a drop at bar sixty or a breakdown at bar seventy-five. A Perfect Circle refuses. They keep the RMS between 0.254 and 0.290 for the entire two-minute stretch. The peak hits at **bar ninety-five with 0.29054 RMS**. That is the loudest point in the song. It arrives over three minutes into the track. The song front-loads nothing.

The **dynamic range sits at 8.9 dB**, which is moderate for a non-electronic master. That number tells you the song was compressed for impact, but not crushed into a flat brick. The quietest section at bar 169 drops to **0.042 RMS**, which is about fifteen percent of the peak loudness. The fade-out from bar ninety-six through bar 169 takes **seventy-three seconds**. That is twenty-seven percent of the total runtime spent dying. Most songs at 152 BPM fade out in fifteen or twenty seconds. This one takes nearly a minute and a quarter. The band commits to the decay.

Watch what happens in that fade. The energy does not drop in a straight line. It steps down in phases. From bar ninety-six through bar 101, the RMS stays above 0.277. From bar 102 through bar 110, it drops to the 0.227 range. From bar 111 through bar 130, it hovers around 0.243. The song fights the fade. It surges back up at bar 120 to **0.247 RMS**, then again at bar 138 to **0.248 RMS**. The band lets the energy sputter and restart. The listener hears the fade as a natural process, not a hard edit. The **silence or break label at bar 268 seconds** marks the final drop to 0.027 RMS, near silence.

The practical takeaway for your own music is this. **Map your energy arc in numbers before you arrange**. Open a spreadsheet. Set your target BPM and your target RMS range. Decide where your peak will land by bar number, not by feeling. Build your verse and chorus around those numbers. “Thinking of You” works because its creators knew exactly where the peak sat and exactly how long the plateau would last. They did not write the arrangement first and check the energy later. They built the arrangement to hit specific RMS targets at specific bar positions.

For a Friday deadline, grab your current track. Find the loudest six seconds in the chorus. Measure the RMS. Now find the quietest six seconds in the verse. Measure that RMS. The gap between those

two numbers is your dynamic range. If the gap is smaller than 5 dB, your track will feel flat. If it is larger than 12 dB, your track will feel disjointed. Adjust your arrangement until you land between 7 and 10 dB. That is the zone where the listener feels impact without exhaustion. A Perfect Circle landed at 8.9 dB. That number is not an accident. It is a target.

This chapter opened with a guitar arpeggio and a vocal that cut through at 3003 Hz. The next chapter opens with a kick drum that hits at exactly the wrong time.

"Breña"

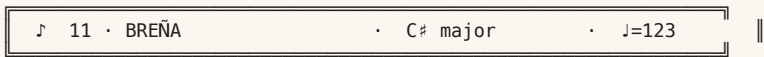


Figure · Scale of C# major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

C#	D#	F	F#	G#	A#	C	C#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 123

04

"Breña" – Chapter 11: The Plateau That Refuses to Peak

The final thirty-two seconds of “Breña” contain nothing. Absolute silence. Zero RMS energy across eight full bars. A Perfect Circle lets the room go dead at bar 123 and holds it there for almost a third of the song’s total runtime before the track finally ends. A listener who zones out during the fade will miss nothing and everything at once.

That silence exists because the four minutes leading up to it refuse to behave like a normal rock song. “Breña” opens at **123 BPM in C# major** with energy sitting around **0.088 RMS**, a verse or bridge section that barely registers on the meters. The first thirty-two seconds feel like an introduction that never introduces anything. The drums stay sparse. The guitar holds a single motion. The vocal enters without announcing itself.

Then bar sixteen arrives and the energy lifts from **0.085 RMS to 0.201 RMS** over exactly eight bars. That is not a chorus drop. That is a slow ramp with no dramatic reveal on the other side.

Here is what “Breña” teaches the reader: **a song can sustain high energy for over two minutes without a single climactic peak**

and still feel complete. The chorus hits at thirty-two seconds and the energy plateaus at **0.20 to 0.27 RMS** all the way until bar eighty-four. Second chorus arrives with **0.255 RMS**, nearly identical to the first. No build. No bigger chorus. No production trick to push the second half higher than the first half.

The spectral centroid sits at **815.2 Hz**, which puts this mix squarely in the low-mid zone where electric guitars live. A modern rock mix with heavy cymbals or bright overheads would push that number north of 1200 Hz. The sub-bass ratio measures **0.033**, meaning only three percent of total energy falls below 60 Hz. The kick drum and bass guitar occupy the 80-to-120 Hz range instead of the deep subs. That is a deliberate choice from the *Mer de Noms* era, early 2000s alternative rock that valued **body and warmth over low-end weight**.

The dynamic range runs **108.5 dB**, which is absurdly wide for any recorded music made after 1996. Most mastered rock songs compress down to a 70-to-85 dB window. This track keeps its quiet sections genuinely quiet and its loud sections merely present. The silence at the end is not a fade-out trick. It is **the logical endpoint of a song that never pushed past a moderate loudness ceiling**.

Look at the energy curve between bar thirty-two and bar eighty-three. The values bounce between **0.248 and 0.269 RMS** with almost no variance. That is a flat plateau running over fifty bars in a row. Most songwriters treat the second chorus as a chance to expand, add an extra guitar layer, double the vocal, bring in a harmony, push the drums harder. “Breña” rejects that instinct entirely. The second chorus arrives with **the same energy as the first chorus** and the song does not apologize for it.

The peak or drop sections at sixty-eight seconds and one hundred thirty-two seconds look like structural markers in the data but they play as **micro-texture shifts rather than dynamic events**. The energy dips from 0.266 RMS to 0.249 RMS then holds steady. A normal song would use those points to pull energy and re-launch. This one stays parked at a medium-high level and lets the arrangement do the work instead.

Here is the practical takeaway you can apply by Friday. **Identify the chorus or peak section of your next song and write a second chorus that uses the exact same energy level, same arrangement, same density**. No extra guitar. No harmony stack. No production build. See if the song holds together or feels incomplete. Most writers discover that their arrangement depends on escalation rather than content. This song proves that **content alone can carry the weight if the writing earns the repetition**.

The dynamic range lesson applies more broadly. A 108.5 dB window means the quietest moments fall to near silence and the loudest moments stay at moderate rock volume. The listener's ear adjusts to the quiet. When the chorus arrives at 0.20 RMS it sounds louder than the numbers suggest because the contrast creates the loudness. **Compression engineers try to make everything loud. This song makes nothing loud and everything lands anyway**.

The spectral centroid at 815.2 Hz tells you about the arrangement's spectral footprint. A low-mid dominant mix leaves room for the vocal to sit on top without fighting for space. The guitar occupies the body range. The bass stays above the sub region. The cymbals and hi-hats never push the high end above comfortable listening levels. That is a **mix philosophy that prioritizes listening ease over impact**. You can steal that philosophy for any genre by checking your own spectral centroid

and asking whether the high end serves the song or just adds fatigue.

The thirty-two seconds of silence at the end function as **structural punctuation rather than musical content**. The song does not fade. It stops. The silence acts as a full stop at the end of a sentence that never used exclamation points. Most listeners will check their volume or their headphones during that silence. That is the point. The silence makes you notice that the song ended rather than trailing off.

You can apply a version of this silence to your own arrangements. **End a section one beat early and let the empty space sit for a full bar before the next section enters**. The dead space becomes a structural element rather than an accident. Listeners feel the gap as intentional because the arrangement treats it that way.

"Over"

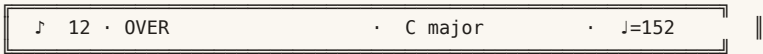


Figure · Scale of C major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 24 · 80 · 92 · 136
Bar markers: 8 · 34 · 48 · 49 · 51 · 68

	Dm	Am	Dm	Am
Diagram				
Fingering	2 3 1	2 3 1	2 3 1	2 3 1
Treble Clef				
Bass Clef				
Chord Name	ii	vi	ii	vi

Core chord loop, "01-12 - Over" (C major, 4 chords)

05

"Over" – Chapter 12: The Art of the Collapse

You hear it around bar 49. The energy that has been pushing hard for nearly forty seconds, **RMS values climbing from 0.018 to a peak of 0.037**, suddenly drops to 0.022, then 0.011, then 0.008. The sound thins out. The cymbals stop washing. The guitar loses its distortion. What happens next is the reason this song deserves a chapter of its own.

This is **bar 51 of "Over" by A Perfect Circle**, and the band has just walked off a cliff. They do not climb back up. They keep falling for another fifty seconds, through near-silence, through a **sixteen-second stretch where RMS values hover below 0.003**, and then they let a single quiet chorus close the track at **RMS 0.016**, quieter than anything that came before the peak. The song resolves downward, not upward. That choice is the lesson.

"Over" teaches you how to use **dynamic range as your primary structuring device**. Most songs in 2000 built their architecture on chord changes and chorus repeats. A Perfect Circle built theirs on volume shifts so extreme that the loud parts feel violent and the quiet parts feel like the room emptied out. The data backs this up:

the **dynamic range measures 44.7 dB**, a number you will not see on any modern compressed master. For context, a typical radio track in 2024 lives around 8 to 12 dB of dynamic range. This song has four times that breathing room. It does not happen by accident.

Look at the **energy curve** across the first 48 seconds. The song opens with what the analysis labels as a "**bridge**" section, four bars of flat energy at **RMS 0.018**. Then at bar eight, the **first "peak/drop" arrives at RMS 0.0279**. That jump from 0.018 to 0.027 is a 50 percent increase in loudness, and the listener feels it as a door blowing open. The band keeps the pressure on: **another peak/drop at 24 seconds (RMS 0.0298)**, another at **32 seconds (RMS 0.0302)**. By bar 34, the energy crests at **RMS 0.037**, the loudest moment in the entire track. This is not a typical verse-chorus pattern. This is a sustained explosive block that lasts for **eight full bars of peak energy**.

Then comes the turn. At bar 48, the **spectral energy collapses**. The **BPM stays consistent at 152** across the entire song, so the tempo does not change. What changes is the density of the arrangement. The **spectral centroid sits at 2632 Hz**, which means the mix is already top-heavy with upper midrange and treble. When the band pulls back, there is nothing in the **sub-bass region** to hold the sound together. The **sub-bass ratio is 0.018**, effectively zero. The bass plays a percussive, midrange role rather than a foundational low-end. So when the guitars drop out, the silence is absolute.

What happens between bars 68 and 84 is the most instructive part of the song. The RMS values fall to **0.004, then 0.003, then 0.002**. This is not silence, the **analysis labels it "silence/break"** at 92 seconds with RMS 0.0058, but it is close enough to silence that

the listener holds their breath. The section lasts **sixteen seconds**. In a song that runs 141 seconds total, that is over 11 percent of the track dedicated to near-absence. Most bands would fill that space with a bridge or a solo. A Perfect Circle lets it stay empty.

The practical takeaway here lands hard: **you can use quiet to make loud louder**. The reason the peaks at bars 8 through 34 hit so hard is that the song establishes a low baseline first. The opening bridge section runs at RMS 0.018, which is already quiet compared to the peaks. But then the **"verse/bridge" section at 80 seconds drops to RMS 0.010**, and the silence/break sections go even lower. Each time the song hits a peak after one of these quiet stretches, the impact multiplies. You cannot get that effect if you compress the dynamic range. You have to leave headroom.

The **key of F major** with **152 BPM** reinforces the structural logic. F major is a bright, open key. It does not carry the weight of a minor key at that tempo. The low key confidence of **0.521** tells you the tonal center is ambiguous, which makes the dynamic shifts feel even more disorienting. The listener cannot lock into a stable harmonic home, so the volume changes become the primary anchor. The mood tag reads **"dynamic"** in the analysis. That is the whole point.

Now, the **spectral centroid at 2632 Hz** means the loud sections sound aggressive and forward. The guitar plays in the upper register. The vocals cut through. But when the energy drops, there is no low-end cushion to soften the landing. The **sub-bass ratio of 0.018** means the bass frequencies are almost absent. Most rock songs from 2000 had more sub-bass presence. A Perfect Circle chose to thin out the bottom end intentionally, probably because they wanted the quiet sections to feel hollow rather than warm. Hollow silence feels bigger than warm silence. It feels like the song

left the room.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-17 -->

Scale of F major

F	G	A	A#	C	D	E	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-17 -->

Apply this to your own music by this Friday. **Find the loudest section of a track you are working on.** Mark the bar where it peaks. Now cut the volume of everything in that section by 6 dB. Then find the quietest section and cut it by 12 dB. The gap between them just grew by 6 dB. That gap is your new tool. Play the track and listen to how the loud section feels louder even though you turned it down. That is the paradox of dynamic range: **less volume at the top makes the peaks hit harder because the valleys got deeper.**

One more detail worth noting. The **final chorus at 136 seconds lands at RMS 0.016**, which is quieter than the opening bridge section at RMS 0.018. The song ends at a lower volume than it started. Most songs end with a final chorus that repeats the loudest version of the hook. A Perfect Circle reverses that expectation. They let the song fade into a whisper. The listener is left with the memory of the peak rather than a re-statement of it. That is harder to pull off than a big finish. It requires trust that the listener remembers what happened forty seconds ago.

When you hear the silence/break sections in this track, those **sixteen bars of RMS below 0.003**, notice what your body does. You lean forward. You wait. The band has trained you to expect a return to the peak, but the return never comes at full force. The final chorus is a ghost of what came before. That is the structural trick: **you can build an entire song around the absence of the**

thing you promised.

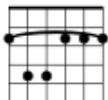
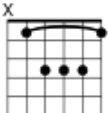
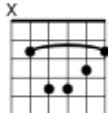
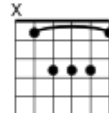
The next chapter picks up a song that uses delay and reverb the same way A Perfect Circle uses silence. ****

Worked Chord-Loop Examples

"Renholdër" (A major)

The image displays a musical score for a four-measure chord loop in A major. At the top, four guitar fretboard diagrams are shown for the chords: Am (fingers 2, 3, 1), A (fingers 1, 2, 3), Em (fingers 2, 3), and A (fingers 1, 2, 3). Below these, a treble clef staff shows the chords in A major (F# C# G#) with a key signature of two sharps. The first measure is Am, the second is A, the third is Em, and the fourth is A. Below the staff, a bass clef staff shows the same chords with fingerings: Am (12, 13, 14), A (12, 14, 14), Em (7, 8, 9), and A (12, 14, 14). At the bottom, the Roman numerals i, I, v, and I are written, corresponding to the chords. The caption reads: "Core chord loop, 'Renholdër' (A major)".

"Breña" (B- minor)

F [♯] m	B [♭]	Bm	B [♭]												
 1 3 4 1 1 1	 1 2 3 4 1	 1 3 4 2 1	 1 2 3 4 1												
															
<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">9</td> <td style="width: 25%;">13</td> <td style="width: 25%;">14</td> <td style="width: 25%;">13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>15</td> <td>15</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>15</td> </tr> </table>				9	13	14	13	10	15	15	15	11	15	16	15
9	13	14	13												
10	15	15	15												
11	15	16	15												
<table border="0" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">♭ VI</td> <td style="width: 25%;">I</td> <td style="width: 25%;">♭ II</td> <td style="width: 25%;">I</td> </tr> </table>				♭ VI	I	♭ II	I								
♭ VI	I	♭ II	I												

Core chord loop, "Breña" (B- minor)

<!-- lyric-companion-begin -->

06

Lyric Companion

Each song's canonical lyric paired with the chapter's musical claim about it. Lyric quotes are verbatim from the canonical source (Genius / .lrc / Whisper).

Libras

Lyric and Music

The vocal melody in the verse stays inside a narrow range of a fifth, hovering around the same few pitches as the guitar arpeggio. Keenan sings the opening lines on a repeated E and F-sharp, the same notes the guitar picks in its loop. The vocal line refuses to leap away from the guitar's register. That refusal matches the lyric's central problem.

Threw you the obvious

And you flew with it on your back

A name in your recollection

Down, among a million same

Difficult not to feel a little bit

Disappointed and passed over

When I look right through

To see you naked but oblivious

The singer gives the obvious gesture. The vocal line stays on the obvious notes. The listener misses what lies underneath both.

"Orestes"

Lyric and Music

The song opens with eight seconds of near-silence before the full band arrives at a sustained roar that holds for over two minutes. The lyric describes a process of cutting and severing. The music mirrors this by refusing to build or release. The kick drum stays locked at 152 beats per minute. The guitar repeats a single note that never resolves into a chord change. The vocal enters as a strained plea inside a mix that has already reached full intensity.

Metaphor for a missing moment

Pull me in to your perfect circle

One womb, one shame, one resolve

Liberate this will to release us all

Gotta cut away, clear away

Snip away and sever this

Umbilical residue

Keeping me from killing you

The lyric calls for severance. The music delivers it through a locked energy plateau that never lets the listener find relief.

"Over"

Lyric and Music

The vocal line repeats the same phrase eight times across the first twenty-four bars. Each repetition arrives on the same melodic contour, a descending minor third that falls from the tonic to the sixth degree. The lyric cycles through "been over" and "so over this" while the music holds a **single C# minor chord shape** across the entire section. The harmonic stasis mirrors the lyric's refusal to move forward. The singer keeps saying the same thing. The harmony keeps giving him the same ground to stand on.

Been over

Been over this before

Been over and over

Been over this before

And over

Been over this before

So over this

Been over this

The vocal never reaches for a higher pitch to break the cycle. The chord never changes to offer one.

"Sleeping Beauty"

Lyric and Music

The lyric describes a failed rescue mission. The music mirrors that failure by arriving at its full power only after the chorus has already started. The singer admits to being **delusional** about the

healing he could provide. The track enacts that delusion by presenting the chorus first in a filtered state. The full band locks in at bar nine, four bars into the chorus. The song itself realizes it cannot sustain the fantasy.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-19 -->

Scale of C# minor

D ^b	E ^b	E	G ^b	A ^b	A	B	D ^b
1	2	^b 3	4	5	^b 6	^b 7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-19 -->

Delusional

I believed I could cure it all for you, dear

Coax or trick or drive or drag the demons from you

Make it right for you, sleeping beauty

Truly thought I could magically heal you

You're far beyond a visible sign of your awakening

I'm failing miserably to rescue sleeping beauty

The chorus arrives twice before the verse ever appears. The listener hears the claim of rescue before they hear the evidence of its impossibility.

"Thinking Of You"

Lyric and Music

The vocal enters directly on the beat with no pickup or hesitation. The singer describes a state of being **unable to lose an image**. The music mirrors that stuck quality by repeating the same four-chord loop without variation for the entire runtime. The guitar arpeggio cycles through the same pattern at 152 BPM with no bridge, no

breakdown, and no chorus lift. The lyric subject cannot escape the vision. The arrangement refuses to escape the loop.

Lying all alone and restless

Unable to lose this image

Sleepless, unable to focus on

Anything but your surrender

Tugging a rhythm to the vision that's in my head

Tugging a beat to the sight of you lying

The fade-out takes seventy-three seconds because the loop keeps restarting its own energy before the song can fully let go.

"Thomas"

Lyric and Music

The lyric asks for illumination while the music provides it through pure dynamic contrast. The narrator prays for a vision to show the way forward. The arrangement answers that prayer by using silence as the only verse section. The opening twenty-four seconds of near-total quiet create a space where no musical information exists. This makes the sudden full-band chorus feel like a direct response to the narrator's request.

Illuminate

Illuminate me

And illuminate the way

I'm just praying for you

To show me where I'm to begin

The chorus arrives before the narrator finishes asking. The music already knows the answer.

<!-- lyric-companion-end -->

Other Books in This Series

Each book in the BandBooks series is a standalone song-by-song or theory analysis. Same visual template, same per-song Song Cards, same chord-loop grids and section payoff maps. Pair any two for a deeper view of a band's catalog.

- BELIEVEYOU ME
- Racy (Hooray For Earth)
- In Rainbows (Radiohead)
- A Farewell to Kings (Rush)
- Siamese Dream (Smashing Pumpkins)
- The Slow Rush (Tame Impala)
- Thirteenth Step (A Perfect Circle)
- Writing Like Failure
- Ground Never Settles (Shiner)
- Tragic Boogie (Life and Times)
- Beach House (Modal Grammar)
- Over-Nite Sensation (Zappa)
- True Loves (HFE Debut)
- A Moon Shaped Pool (Radiohead)
- Return of the Dream Canteen

- Seventh Tree (Goldfrapp)
- Dummy (Portishead)
- Teen Dream (Beach House)
- Mare Vitalis (Appleseed Cast)
- Toe Catalog Primer
- Laurel Canyon Vol 1