

The Story of Peculiar Spells



I began writing this album in 2018, while living in a small wooden shack in the mountains of Mendocino county, California. A single extension cord ran in the window, and my bathroom was an outhouse. Yes, I did have access to a main house, where there was a kitchen and a shower. I shared the land with five 70 year old ladies as I studied herbalism, nutrition and cannabis.

I had been flying back to Baltimore to complete Hominization (2019) a 3 song ep, and was piling up many songs I had been sketching out on my computer. I released the FIRST Our Maddest Edges (OME) 3 song EP, The Trojan Philanthropy EP (2016) 3 years before, but all in all, Since Orange Horse broke up in 2014, my total of original songs I had put out (not including my work with FaceKiller) was 6. 6 songs in 5 years. Granted, I am VERY proud of both of those EPs, and they mark significant departure from my EYN days. But, I had traded my arts for my pursuit of knowledge, and I was suffering without this critical nutrient abundant in my spiritual diet.

I had been into esoteric and occult (occult meaning “hidden”) knowledge for years. The writers of the history books have vested interests in maintaining their power and homogenizing the opinions of the common folk and weaponize the hive-mind against anyone who dares defy the commonly accepted narrative. Defying the narrative in this way is often portrayed as subduing to madness. Isolation and time to study the annals of history create obtuse individuals. It is possible to use your time in a noble manner, and bring back into the collectivity rare information. Putting it into use to aid yourself and others is key. This is alchemy. This is magick. Many people unwittingly use magick on a daily basis; and mostly it is used in a dark manner. But through consciousness and intent; repetition and patience, you can use the inherent magick inside you to create harmony outside you. All the dark and light magick, all the practices and intentions, all the ways in which we float with or swim against the current, are Peculiar Spells.

The subject matter deals with having a spiritual awakening in sideways times. Love and love lost; guilt, disgust, death, silliness, joy and peace. The journey to some form of enlightenment is certainly not a straight path, and

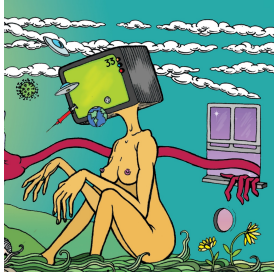
you may not be facing the same way when you come out the other side. The main thematics are Forgiveness, Acceptance, and Transmutation

We open “Thoughts Can Change” in a primordial state, with a didgeridoo rumbling the backdrop of the subconscious mind. The words that enter are from late self help author Louise Hay. My friend Whitney, who does the spoken word, is a professional voice over actress and radio personality. The encroaching ‘dark noodles’ guitars, represent the anxiety and discomfort when being presented with information that requires you to change your patterns. Healing often isn’t sunshine, fruit, and yoga. Sometimes it is blind turbulence and pushing through discomfort. It is lucidity and forgiveness. Let’s get right to it.

“Hella Fucky” enters like a mosh pit and shows our Main Character (MC) with their defenses up, ready for battle like a caged animal. In this state, they are often saying things that reinforce negativity. Our unconscious mind casts dark spells onto ourselves and others, that we cannot fully understand until we remove ourselves from trauma cycles and look at our problems with the intention of fixing them. You cannot change the world, so you must change your reaction to it. The first step is forgiving those who have hurt you- not for their benefit, but for yours, so you can let go. We often hold grudges and are critical more than we are reverent for our lives and relationships. They have things to get off their chest about people close to them. The ‘you’ll never get better’ at the end is the lingering doubts about the people they forgive and cut ties with. I used a talk box for the ‘Hella Fucky’ part, which was hella fun. The computer actually kept auto correcting the title to hella funky, which is a completely different song;) The heavily phased solo in the middle sounds to me like a spell being cast.

The transition between “Swirl Cone” and the first is supposed to be a bit disarming. This song is beautiful and relatively simple, while the last song was technical, odd, and aggressive. It makes you hesitant to open up right off the bat, and it may take a few listens to feel this 2nd track. This song is laying to rest unresolved hurt from an old relationship. Some love you must let go because there are circumstances outside of your control. This is about the bittersweet nostalgia and self discipline it takes to allow ‘going your own way’ to make you a better person. Hopefully. The song is written a bit like an ‘oldies’ song. There was a certain openness and honesty in songs recorded before the mid to late 60s that we don’t get in today’s mix nearly

as much. The significance of the 3 bar ending guitar riff, as opposed to the even 4, is that the relationship ended sooner than it should have, so, the song did as well.



“The Totalitarian Tiptoe” is a swaggery romp through a haggard Candyland of how twisted the world has become. This is the dark side of going against the grain. The MC sees the grand plan unveil and how their friends and family are being unconsciously coerced into harmful behavioral patterns, into mind sets that serve masters other than the light... The Baritone sax is my favorite instrument to get the pelvis moving. This is the allure of the dark side. People get stuck in this phase of ‘knowing’ and forget to put their knowledge into practice with action. This stagnates culture and allows the dark forces at play to make advancements while we bicker. The weird-ass middle part is, first, an expression of how poorly people communicate their feelings to one another; and how their vocabulary isn’t developed enough to articulate their meaning. The ‘Cold, Alone...’ are all simplistic negative descriptors that are trite and found in many songs and books, over and over again. This shows the lack of imagination from most pop artists today. The ‘Chewy vs Crunchy’ is a bit that highlights how people get their ego involved in arguments over petty, meaningless topics. My friend Brian’s daughters absolutely nailed their parts though! The ‘chocaly’ is one of those adorable unexpected gems that we highlighted. Zach’s ‘Big Man Vocals’ in the end represent the unwavering monolithic structure of evil and how it is wailing onto the chasm of our empty culture, void of respect for our lives and thirstily awaiting our demise, with it’s claws on the necks of our children. I wrote the lyrics to this part very late in the recording process, in probably 15 minutes, once I knew Zach was down to record the part. Yes, that’s a clip from ‘Dumb and Dumber’.

“Frozen Season” I the first track in a 5 song medley on the album. It is a cold (there’s that word!), forlorn track representing a transitional period where you are forced to ferment on and transmute the dark energies from the last track. It is the first instrumental song by OME. The electric drums and synth add to the lack of warmth felt during this time.

The MC is back in love, but this time, they are a bit more unhinged. The situation doesn't lend itself to easy connection, and they dance around each other like they were trapped in the winds of a cyclone. It goes from full

heart opening vulnerability and ecstatic love, to allowing the person to be who they have to be. “The Cyclone Waltz” is, at its core, a very simple song. The complexity comes through layers. Cello, violin, flute, sleigh bells, octave guitar lead... It can be overwhelming and a lot to take in, even in its beauty. The song is the excitement of a rekindled relationship, mixed with the destabilization caused when you realize how much work it will be to make it a thing. All relationships are work, but this is a particularly thorny patch of roses.. You must find your way out before it swallows you whole. In the end, you set them free, but your morale has been crushed from such a dramatic period. The important lesson in the end of this song is that the main character did the work while inside the relationship. He acknowledged his lovers cry for help from Great Spirit and politely allowed her to do what she needed to do, regardless of what it meant for their relationship.

“St. Lascivious” is not a real saint. Lascivious behavior is sexual behavior or conduct that is considered crude and offensive. In this way, the title is oxymoronic. This track is the first OME track without drums. The chorus of string instruments and voices together create a landscape of orgiastic rhythm. This song is about ridding yourself of the ‘burden’ of true love and searching out physical love, just for the humanistic connection. How we can blind ourselves (‘the city of blind love, obsidian black love’) to the depths of the work ahead of us, but still try to remain noble in our pursuits. We must acknowledge our physical needs, even in superficial manners from time to time. Shutting your body off completely from this is defying what Great Spirit has endowed us with. However, this type of connection can be lonesome.



“Slugs” was the most fun to write lyrics for. It gave me the opportunity to use a few \$5 words and string together some poignant and peculiar phrases. I had originally recorded the spoken word part with a 1920s gangster accent, but it ended up sounding more like Peter Griffin. I re recorded it with the now droney vocals. I had since fixed the gangster accent to sound more appropriate, but I ended up keeping the drone take, as it seemed to fit the mood better. Slugs is a reference to slow, sloppy, mindless humans who are simply going through the motions in life. This song starts, as the previous one ends, with a thunder crack. This is meant to convey an orgasm. But as I mentioned before, the meaningless sex of the last track is satisfying in the pursuit and

moment, but leads to a hollow, dismal state of mind. The rain and the muted trumpet are a whole mood. Who am I? Who are these fucking people all over the place? People are unconsciously wandering this earth seeking short burst pleasures instead of delaying gratification and doing work to create true alchemical gold. There is a lyric recall here from “Hella Fucky” where I repeat the line ‘no passion in your replies’, as I see the repeated behavior of people using talking points assigned to them by news sources, gatekeepers, or talking heads. The line ‘If wishes were horses then beggars would ride’ is a Scottish proverb from a 1620s nursery rhyme that I found through the work of one of my dearly departed heroes, Terence McKenna. The ‘Out in the sun’ part is the biggest ‘hook’ on the album. At first listen it seems like a beautiful moment and sentiment, but the dissonance of that second chord, the diminished, adds to this air of uncomfot in the part. What happens to slugs when they are left in the sun? If wishes were horses then beggars would ride out in the sun. If we gave people what they THOUGHT they wanted while in diseased mental state, they would absolutely kill themselves. Money, drugs, women, power...We have our values set by psychopaths and not by the healthy people we should hold in high regards. The end part is the synapses of the mind misfiring as the character become wrapped up in this death fantasy about those around him. Mind you, this is not something the main character WANTS, but something they feel unable to stop. The descent into madness. All those weird sounds in the breaks at the end are either me playing the mouth harp, or little quick clips from random bits I love on the internet. One is a funny goat, one is a puffer fish, one is a cuckoo clock. They are meant to convey the absurdity you find in ‘normal’ society when you look around from this vantage point.



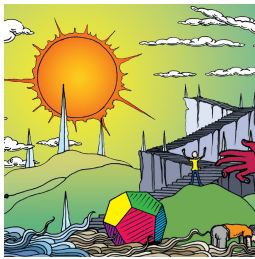
Oracles be damned! You are now opening dark portals to odd worlds where you can be enslaved if you don't watch out. Allowing your brain to run in the wrong direction- Self destructive behavior, negative thoughts, all causing physical ailments to your body, just through the power of your mind. While “Ohmwrecker” doesn’t necessarily flow out of the previous track as the last 4 have, it is meant as the last song in the medley. The title is a play on home wrecker and the Ohm being the universal sound of meditative peace. This song might be the most ‘Jeff’ on the album, as people recognize my quirky, teeth-bared style from EYN and Orange Horse. Chaos. More swagger. Odd time bratty rap section with ‘bow wow chicka wows’. 9 parts on a 2m30s song. I used the laugh from the 90s show “Ren

and Stimpny”, because Billy West’s voice acting on that moment, was absolutely untouchable. The greatest laugh ever recorded in history... The MC feels like the forces of dark are winning in their life. The crystal ball used to foresee the future, is broken. Walking across it creates a blood ritual which opens doors to demonic realms of spiritual slavery. The MC peers over the edge into the darkness. The middle ‘bratty rap’ is all about shrinking back from the outside world. Internalizing things. Much in the way the opening line of ‘armor across your chest’ suggests, this is a timid position created by knowledge, vulnerability, and trying to change. The ‘bow wow chicka wow’ is just a funny phrase that makes me think of people winking and pointing at you, perhaps as a defense mechanism meant to disarm someone. But we see through the uncomfortable charade and recognize this is an attempt to guard oneself from the crashing reality of their world. The photograph noise on the 2nd bow wow is meant as a nod to the vanity in which the person is trying to look good for their audience, be it social media or whatever, trying to fall with grace, but comes off looking desperate. Desperation is a stinky cologne. ‘The world around you pushing down’ is the claustrophobia and buried feeling of pushing through the final layers of resistance, into a new paradigm. Birth is a motherfucker.

Hark! At your lowest point, a light breaks through the dreary canopy and a soft voice sends peaceful vibrations through your core. The MC awakens after a hard fought battle to find an angelic presence healing them. In “Livingstoned” ‘the air up there’ refers to that heady feeling of being smitten in the moment and allowing it to repair your callous heart. It’s not a fix all, but it shows you that there is still wonderment, beauty and innocence worth fighting for. This song nearly got cut from the album because I didn’t have the people around me to make it really work. Big props to Sean Mercer for helping me figure it out. The guitar line that duels with the Rhodes during the middle break is something Sean prompted me to write on the spot. I really like it. Later, I also used a talk box for the harmonies of the 2nd half of the verse. I’m gonna bring the talk box back. It’s so much fun and it’s been 50 years, Frampton can’t come alive forever.

“I Ain’t Done” is the MCs return to stark reality. But this time, they are motivated to not allow the darkness purchase on their soul. They are taking inventory of the things wrong and seeing where they went wrong. While the song sounds bleak and aggressive (my most ‘metal’ song to date) it is coming from a place of emotional detachment from the negativity, until the end, which is an expression of sacred anger. We don’t hear about sacred

anger a lot. It is thought that anger is a bitter, revengeful and draining emotion. The truth is, you sometimes need anger as motivation to get shit done. And that's right where the lyrics go after the break. "Eyes of the sphinx, burning holes into all that serve greed" was a line inspired by one of my favorite childhood movies "The Never-Ending Story." In one scene, Atreyu walks in between two sphinxes who will shoot lasers from their eyes and fry your ass if you try to pass through them without finding true confidence in yourself. Spoiler alert, he makes it.



The astronomical blurb at the end of the last track is the setup for "Red Giant." I used 'Lucy', a generated voice program and the beginning of the Wikipedia entry for what a red giant is. How its fate is to detonate and swallow the earth. A Red Giant is obviously a star, but the song is in loose reference to an old friend of mine, Jack Starr. He was a 6'6 300lb red-headed Jameson-drinkin' blues musician. We were friends for years before he came unravelled. In a short period of time, he went off his medication, went in and out of several psych wards, and brought traumatizing tumult into his life. I wasn't able to do anything lastingly meaningful for him and, in the end, he took his life. This song is about the mental health crisis in the world today, and a hopeful prayer to everyone who listens to the refrain 'Peace will find you'. I truly wish this for all humans; whatever that may mean for you individually. Do not allow the insanity of the world to stir you to the point of madness. See people's adverse reactions as their traumas, and take it as a sign to not participate in conversations or relationships that create stress and cannot be solved. The drastic entrance of the distorted guitar and what bassist Brendan Clarke deemed 'the Hollywood riff', is the jarring, turbulent journey we must endure to shut out the noise. To distance ourselves from that lower version of ourself, which spoke those primordial, irrational beliefs into our life in the first place. The big, odd time riff and discordant note the song ends on are a testament to how things rarely wrap up nice and neat, but alas, they do end.

This is where the album ends.

But...

If you buy the cd (or wait 1 year for me to post them), you have access to the bonus tracks.

“Divinely Guided” Starts off with a 5 minute meditation of silence and is brought in by my Fibonacci tuning forks with healing frequencies (look em up, I’m not getting into it here). There are more words by Louise Hay, but this time, they are reinforcing the healing that has taken place. This is a spiritual affirmation to listen to over and over again and memorize. Make it your mantra. Speak it to others. Become the words. Find that peace.

“Stay Gold” is easily one of my most vulnerable songs to date. It is a proud anthem declaring the MCs new found love for life and attitude towards the divine. “The long divide from eye to I” refers to the concept that who we are physically and spiritually is actually not separate. We are all fragments of Great Spirit, discovering one another, sometimes clumsily, sometimes gracefully. While the beginning of the song sounds almost a bit jovial and fancy free, the break and end of the song is a testament to the beauty and power of a strongly held spiritual belief. The big baritone riff in 5 and Frankie’s incredibly tasteful solo over the top were the perfect hidden gem for the end of this long journey.



The illustrations were done by my good friend Alex Sabur, who is a professional tattoo artist; and the coloring and graphic design were done by another good friend, Matthew Mayer.

xxxxxxx My Next Album xxxxxxx

I have a story with its own mythology lined up as a full concept album. It deals with a Goddess of pleasure and beauty who gets birthed into a human

so that she may experience pain, to understand pleasure that much more upon her return to the astral realm.

I am in the process of writing the music, but much of it I am still learning how to play better guitar for. I will be taking more lessons, both guitar and vocals, over the coming years, to achieve what I see as a timeless spectacle that will be revered for ages. I will be leaning heavily on the talents of others to make this. It might be my last epic work. It will likely take me 5-6 years minimum to properly execute. Stay tuned.