LINDSEY WROTE US A LETTER TO SAY

Hi David and Effrain-

I am new to your podcast and community. In gearing up for this years tour I discovered your podcast. I am not sure how many years it will take me to get through all of your content but it sure has been a pleasure these last few weeks. In my adult life I have lost my connection to her, her music and some elements of myself. Your podcast is helping me reconnect. So thank you so much for your perseverance, unrelenting dedication and willingness to take on such a giant undertaking.

All that said, I recently listened to the Precious Things Episode, It was a little cathartic and jarring for me. In listening to a number of episodes beforehand I felt a longing every time you would both talk about your first memories of being introduced to her work and ultimately her impact. You cite many moments very specifically and it seemed to be a black hole for me. Until I listened to this episode. While Precious Things was not my first introduction to Tori and most certainly I do remember being struck when I first heard “Crucify” or “Me and a Gun”. But this song, I now remember, hit me like a train. It stirred me and brought up some really important feelings that most definitely changed my life.

So, I wanted to write because the themes in this song that most struck me weren’t even addressed in your podcast! I feel like, maybe (just maybe) you may have missed an opportunity by not having a women’s perspective in this episode and I’d love to share why - so I will and hopefully you’ll read it!  I’ll go a little ways down your rabbit hole for a minute if you don’t mind.

So while this song has been cited to be about coming of age as a woman and dealing with the atrocities of being a teenager (more specifically a girl), sure - it’s there. But to me, this is actually THE rape anthem. When I heard this song it immediately brought me back to the feelings of sexual assault in a very specific way. I know “Me and a Gun” is the most obvious choice of her rape anthem and that song most certainly takes you back to her rape experience, but there are so many musical and lyrical elements of this song that speak to that or the many experiences any “girl” might have. More specifically rape culture or the hypocrisy in being a sexualized woman (as if there is any other kind).

So the song opens with this huge riff, that as you cite that feels like you're running and I agree. But then next, she also talks about specifically falling. So the song immediately feels like you are in the middle of a trauma. The very first time I listened to this song, I felt that. Then you move into “running after the rain”, the rain being something terrible

happens. You're running from the experience or the feeling that come with this dark moments.

I think then as we move forward she cites a specific trauma, being told she's ugly. This trauma then coming in the form of a compliment. So seriously toxic, she has to remove herself from the song and turn to us to say "can you believe that, sick" (so very Kevin Spacey in House of Cards). Then she explains herself to say we (women) "holding on to this picture" of these handsome "boys" that are so perfect, "christian" in fact. That we are dressing up to impress them, "running after them". As if we are expected to love them and appreciate them (but they are hurting us) and to me there's the first major theme in the song.

This idea that violence comes in the form of something we were taught to be trusted, something or more specifically someone that we are pushed toward. As women we are told early to sit nicely, be pretty, look good so that all the nice boys will admire us. But then those very same boys are cruel, they abuse us and rape us (but that is our fault anyway).

And furthermore, that even in that violence we might experience a little pleasure, it's bullshit how our bodies betray us. She cites this idea twice actually when she says "And I died But I thanked him" and "So you can make me cum that doesn't make you Jesus".

That is why this line is so very profound. Sure, she is citing her religious background but also remember Jesus is a healer, meant to save others.  So the message to me was always that all these men, "put on a pedestal" as you say, are like fucking "Jesus" gonna save us from ourselves, because we clearly need saving at this point (when we mature) because we are  "pretty girls" but also "ugly girl"s.

After she mentions how someone making her cum does not make them her savior or even maybe ruler, it feels like she moves ahead out of the trauma maybe years later. So we fast forward and apparently no one told Tori that the Pretty Girls are the ones everyone is looking for, the ones who are the demigods that we are supposed to be, the second theme. You can hear a longing in her words, where she's clearly not one and looking for them as if to say "what do they have that I don't have". So that theme about how a woman is supposed to be pretty but you get the sense to remain pure.  The "pretty girls" are maybe the clean ones.

So in my opinion, the Precious Things are all these little girl ideal's that we are taught we are early on in our life our girlhood. She doesn't say exactly what they are but they are clearly precious, like a little beautiful newborn girl, so sweet and innocent. Then we

start to bleed and we become sexual and “my god” we become the anything but the nice girl, we are bad. We’ve had sex or even just been raped and made a mess of ourselves. Left alone “in our peach party dress”, literally broken and alone.

And by that point in the song she is so fucking angry ( I think many of us are) about these double standards. You told us to be pretty, you told us to chase the boys but you didn’t tell us that we were walking into a trap. A trap where I chase something that I am supposed to love, violates me but the result of that violation is that I am now the one who should be ashamed.

Here’s where she’s sharing her own anger. I just want to “smash their faces". Can I have my Precious Things (my innocent self back) to wash me clean? I’m dirty now, how the fuck can I wash all this off? Even so far as “letting them bleed”, as if blood could make us clean? But then, when we have sex we beg to bleed so we know we are not pregnant. Especially if we are adulated or raped or even young. Bleeding is so gross and dirty but we are so dirty that being cleaned with blood feels better.

This is the end of the song or the “exorcism" as you say. The clawing and begging to have her innocent self back. It’s almost as if the song comes full circle again, big and loud. As if to say yes I am this angry fascist bitch but there was no where else to go. I am asking for help but no answer comes.  We become a women and we fucked it all up, everyone shames us because we are dirty (need so badly to be cleaned).  In her live version sometimes she begs her dad for her precious things and begs to be cleaned. But the song just ends in almost a quick reflection - remember your precious self as if we are grieving it. Also, maybe a calling. Maybe she’s learning it’s still in there.

I love how the song ends, like she’s still working out this incredible problem for herself - crisis but no solution yet, just a mic drop.

I think she also poses some big questions in this song, are we supposed to break the precious things? Are they supposed to go away or are they broken and therefore we are broken? I also think she was implying that there is a fascist in every nice girl. That’s the point, we are both but that’s the other question, is that even bad?

So that’s it, my reflection on a very powerful song but I thought i’d also weigh in on whether the cum line is one of the most poignant in the album AND more importantly if it’s an emotional line. Fuck yes. When you’ve become silent and fallen away and a man thinks he’s so amazing because he did that thing, it’s one of the most demoralizing moments. You’re fucking powerless to your body and this person, and this line takes our

power back in one of the most powerful moments in musical history. I'd argue there are as few so poignant. Give it it's due please.

I, for one, don't think Tori is ever searching for controversy, in fact I think she doesn't appreciate it. I think she's not afraid of it. She speaks emotional truth and that is what makes her so impactful and so it cums….

If for some crazy reason you read this, thanks. Keep up the great work.

Yours in service and with gratitude,
Lindsay