



All songs written by C J T Midgley (Published by Cherry Red Songs)

1 I Plagiarise Beethoven (2.52)

In the end, the truth will out!

Some call it an affliction And say I must confess; That surely as a syndrome, It's causing me distress? I'm thinking they must take me To be some kind of jerk It plainly is unthinkable When in my line of work...

I plagiarise Beethoven, And lean on J. S. Bach. I've stolen from Vivaldi, And knocked 'em out the park. I've pirated Debussy, And lifted from Ravel, And so far no one's noticed it So far as I can tell!

Most of my creations That have become well-known, In every way it's fair to say Were never mine alone. Many express wonderment How I became a star. For those who think the tunes are mine, They very rarely are!

I plagiarise Beethoven, And lean on J. S. Bach. I've stolen from Vivaldi, And knocked 'em out the park. I've pirated Debussy, And lifted from Ravel, And so far no one's noticed it So far as I can tell!

It's not the odd note here and there, But line on glorious line I've borrowed from their masterpieces, Claiming them as mine. The challenge comes with each and Every international hit, But certainly I'll guarantee 'Til someone serves a writ...

I'll plagiarise Beethoven, And lean on J. S. Bach, Keep stealing from Vivaldi, And knock 'em out the park. I'll pirate Claude Debussy, And plunder more Ravel, 'Cos so far no one's noticed it So far as I can tell!

I polled up at the Palace To collect my MBE In person from the regal fingers Of His Majesty. Composed I was, and dressed to kill And bowing right on cue. I answered when he asked of me, "Remind one what you do?"

"I plagiarise Beethoven, And lean on J. S. Bach. I've stolen from Vivaldi, And knocked 'em out the park. I've pirated Debussy, And lifted from Ravel, And so far no one's noticed it So far as I can tell!"

2 Twenty-Twenty Vision (2.36)

... a severe condition in which distortion of reality becomes the norm.

Magicians aren't alone in manufacturing illusion; Today, we in our own sweet way come up with a profusion! I'll make it clear, I'm exercised – Though more dismayed than being surprised! – At how, conveniently disguised, We revel in intolerance and mask it as inclusion.

We've readily declared ourselves supportive of a pantomime, Embracing the preposterous and making it sublime. I'm willing to concede here How I blame a social media That has made us so much needier Than we, throughout our history, have been at any time.

The few who fearlessly alight upon a different point of view Are vilified, their reputations roundly pummelled black and blue By legions of the paranoid Until they're finally destroyed; Condemned to join the unemployed, The way all narrow-minded orthodoxies try to do.

Historically, this surely will be found an aberration When everyone who counts can only cope with affirmation; Where confidence is brittle, And biology means little, And by being noncommittal We sinners lacking empathy are ripe for cancellation.

Some will doubtless raise a voice to praise our twenty-twenty vision. Whether this applies to you must of course be your decision. Perhaps you value self-esteem, Or maybe you will always seem A foreigner in your own dream? It all depends upon the kind of world that you envision.

My sceptic tanks have overflowed. See where all the follies swirled, Gathering in gay abundance for abuses to be hurled. Little merits so much mirth as Pandering to virgin birthers; Even certified flat-earthers! Welcome to the weird wasteland of our twenty-twenties world!

3 Glimpse Of Venus (2.40)

Eat your heart out Poly Styrene! Eat your heart out Blondie! This is the real deal...

She was sexy, she was sixty and retained the impish grin She'd used when, forty years ago, the guys had let her in. Venusians reminisce around the final gig she played, The mix of punk and metal that had been her stock in trade. We fans had aged disgracefully, yet nothing came between us – Some had come a thousand miles to catch a glimpse of Venus.

Her legendary backing band responded to her call – The Suiciders seemingly had hardly aged at all! The man who played the boss guitar had been a pal of Peely's. His wheelchair sparked when he embarked upon his trademark wheelies. But that was as of nothing when, despite the bassman's age, He pogoed on a shotgun as he bounced across the stage.

The drummer, always manic, now approaching seventy-five; The breathing apparatus that was keeping him alive Was perilously wedged between his tom tom and his snare For use between his cigarettes when he came up for air. The Suiciders truly were a superhuman force, But then you won't be needing me to tell you that, of course!

I'm sure you know why we'd all gathered, those who still remain? The album of the decade, "Venus Flytrap Rides Again!" Was being played out live on stage the day of its release, The rioting effectively controlled by the police. It's true the venue caught alight; the question "Why?" depends – There always had been arsonists among the Flytrap Friends.

But even these demented souls resolved to go in peace, Revelling in their thoughts of Venus Flytrap's new release. Many suffered broken heads; indeed, that could have been us But man, it would be worth it all for one more glimpse of Venus! So will there be another one? We're planning our campaign! For now though, just be happy! *"Venus Flytrap Rides Again!"*

4 Green Hill (4.24)

Many with vested interests will tell how life is greener on the other side of the hill. They'll even offer to get you there! Oh, the altruism...

It was steep, but they'd climbed to the top of Green Hill From the swamp of the marshland below; Each of them high on an optimist's pill, Their confident faces aglow. They'd been told how the valleys were verdant and lush – At least, that had long been inferred; "A bird's in your hand, but there's two in the bush!" They'd told them; "We give you our word!" So now they'd all scrambled their way to the top, To the peak, to the start of the end Where suffering should grind to a shuddering stop, And all they must do is descend.

If that was their hope, the dream they'd been sold, The promise of wealth and goodwill, Well, reality rose up to tarnish the gold – A cloud had enveloped Green Hill. The deluded who'd pictured a Palace of Light Were bewildered to now understand How seasons had failed and a terrible blight Scarred that noble and green pleasant land. Disillusion was painful to swallow, The first and the bitterest pill For folks, and the fooled who might follow Those scaling the heights on Green Hill.

A commonplace saga with nomads beguiled By words of a comforting kind, They had in the end to become reconciled To the mud they could not leave behind. It wasn't expected! It couldn't be true, The multitude plainly abashed Without reassurance, and hopes of a new Jerusalem having been dashed. "This never was more than a beautiful dream, But then," they said, "you were aware That life is uncertain and, so it would seem, Was never designed to be fair!"

5 Cuckoo Land (2.49)

Cuckoo Land is a work of the imagination. Any similarity to actual countries, now or in the past, is purely coincidental.

The time has come to make it plain regrettably how life's transformed; Even-handed preconceptions now unwelcome, I'm informed. Rumblings of a new world order, countenanced through gritted teeth Merely bolster our resolve to emphasise what we bequeath, And self-assuredly expand The influence of Cuckoo Land.

I am, you see, a devotee of blatant, narcissist motifs, Of wishful thought, and litanies of self-delusory beliefs. My country is, I can confirm and with much confidence declare, The envy of the universe and everybody else out there. So this is where I proudly stand, A citizen of Cuckoo Land!

It isn't only what we do, but sterling values we've espoused. Boundless thankfulness has flowed from latent talents we've aroused. Our greatest gift above the rest that places us beyond reproach Is summarised in four fine words; "Our Famous Tolerant Approach"! No wonder there is such demand From all to come to Cuckoo Land.

The standards we've so widely spread are entertained with endless joy, Our morals and our high ideals a model for the hoi polloi. Our principles bring endless hope to those exploited and explored; We know this from our fearless group of missionaries we sent abroad To fly the flag by royal command That flutters over Cuckoo Land

Though we may modestly demur, it's surely no coincidence We're universally perceived a civilising influence. We know that in this day and age supremacy has been reduced, But nonetheless we raise a glass "To cuckoos coming home to roost!" And – whilst we have a glass in hand – A loyal toast; "To Cuckoo Land!"

6 Opportunity Knocks (3.11)

When political parties – particularly those in government – have had multiple leaders in a very short space of time, there's obviously everything to play for...

You know, Machiavelli was wise About hiding the truth between lies. The name of the game – And it's always the same – Is you must keep your eye on the prize.

You'll have heard it of course on the box How we're already out of the blocks. So now it's clear-cut That the game is afoot And again, opportunity knocks.

They'll say I'm a rogue and a heel; At least that's how most of them feel. When events go awry, I'll promise the sky – It has an enduring appeal!

It's always been thought as a virtue – What nobody knows cannot hurt you. I know what they mean; The unknown and unseen Must not be allowed to divert you.

I don't want to know what they're saying In messages they'll be relaying – It's better to share You were never aware Of the promises you'll be betraying.

Is conscience a myth or a fact Or merely a means to distract? My friends, overall It's no problem at all If the cards are all properly stacked!

I can't, by the way, comprehend The alternative you'd recommend! Put loyalty first? If our roles were reversed, Is it country or party or friend? If I'm honest how all of this feels, We're not looking at compromise deals. Take the bull by the horns, Skip over the thorns, And show 'em a clean pair o' heels!

Whilst emotions will surely be stirred, Revolution is too big a word. We're doing this thing For our country and King; Though at times, a few lines may be blurred....

It candidly isn't much cop Being doomed to live over the shop. But as we've discussed, It's a question of trust And the vacancy there at the top!

One has to be somewhat adept At hiding ambition; except When one has, one contends, Been persuaded by friends, One reluctantly has to accept!

7 The Joke (3.03)

A joke is just a joke. Bawdy, blasphemous or banal, witty, wise or woeful, a joke is simply a joke. Though it may not be to my taste or be in accord with my beliefs, I promise I won't try to censor your joke. In return, I ask you not to try to censor mine. We do, after all, live in a free society...

The funny man was laughing, and the undertaker too – The Joke was there for everyone's appraisal and review. "But times have changed!" the undertaker told the detainee. The hangman sighed and shook his head and looked round for a tree. "We're all in this together now!" the undertaker spoke, Then whispered to the funny man, "Remind us, remind us of The Joke".

A solitary complainant claimed the man had gone too far, But that's the way it is today – you know how people are; Custodians of conscience automatically proclaim A victim list disciples must demolish and defame. The hangman, on determining a bough of sturdy oak, Whispered underneath his breath, "Remind us, remind us of The Joke"...

The funny man, inevitably playing fast and loose – His tongue still in his cheek although his neck was in the noose – Remarked how on the whole he would prefer the guillotine Then stoically began again to run through his routine. The hangman said, "We have no wish to see the arty choke 'Cos all of us are jesters now. Remind us, remind us of The Joke"..."

That's when the undertaker – for he had to earn his wage – Took over from the hangman, stepped forward to the stage And opened up the box already set and standing by For those so-called comedians condemned by hue and cry. The casket lid was quickly sealed and on it a bespoke Inscription read for all to see; "Remind us, remind us, Remind us, remind us of The Joke!"...

8 A Target On Your Back (2.56)

... an homage to all those courageous souls who fight for realities that are; rather than as a minority of vociferous influencers would have them be...

You're blinded by the searchlight that comes raging through the sky. They've told you time and time again it's crucial to comply, But you know deep inside yourself you have to disagree. It takes a cult to openly confront reality. That's why in spite of everything, and after some defeats,

It's with a heavy heart you've brought your battle to the streets. It might be true that even you believed you'd lost the knack! When you're above the target, you've a target on your back!

A creed that has been built on threadbare reasoning at best – That only can survive where any challenge is supressed – Can never stand when its foundation steadily erodes. Prepare now for the fallout when the lunacy implodes! Inevitably, there will come a changing of the guards, With fantasies they've peddled folding like a pack of cards. Salute the selfless souls who'll cause this artifice to crack; When you're above the target, you've a target on your back!

There'll come a time when everyone will surely realise And when they do, as always happens, they will galvanise. Gone will be the peaceable submissions of the dove, In offering Big Brother their devotion and their love. They'll feel it deep in every cell, in every chromosome, And this will be the day the truth bomb finally hits home. But be prepared! The jeopardised will counter, and attack! When you're above the target, you've a target on your back!

That they're shooting in the darkness will comes as no surprise. Of late they will not wait to see the whites of both your eyes. They'll open up with cannonballs to mutilate and maim, Coercion unsurprisingly the name they call the game. In trying hard to silence you for thoughts you might express They'll show themselves as persecutors lacking in finesse. You don't need me to give you reasons why you're drawing flak – When you're above the target, you've a target on your back!

The armourers have done their work, so now it's up to us; Untruths and unrealities decreed superfluous. No longer will we have to sacrifice our self-esteem, Or be condemned to live our lives in someone else's dream. Veracity will be again a weapon in the hand To fortify the confidence of our benighted land. But let this be a post-it note for every person jack: When you're above the target, you've a target on your back!

9 Cultural Appropriation Blues (2.46)

... a brief history of the Blues that dare not speak its name!

With tortured tonsils, flashing eyes and wild and wayward hair, She told her tales of torment and of anguish and despair. A voice akin to Janis came a'tumbling from her mouth, The raucous drawl betraying how she hailed from way down South. A national living legend, an inspirer of emojis, She'd leapt into the limelight from the juke joints of Stoke Poges. She'd earned our admiration and our passion to enthuse; Chiquenena Basquet was the gal who sang the blues!

Her early deprivation told a sad, unhappy story. Isabella Cressida St. John-Montefiore Went on the run from Roedean in the spring of sixty-nine. By hook and crook and cab and train, she crossed the borderline, Evading her pursuers and – according to the chatter – Disappeared into the crowds at Henley Royal Regatta. T'was later in the evening that she met and came to know The Devil at the crossroads on the A4130.

She changed her name that very night upon his shrewd advice – A seemingly innocuous and minor sacrifice – And later, as she told us in a thousand interviews, Sat down and wrote her "*Cultural Appropriation Blues*"; An age-defining classic, plus a hundred other gems And took them to the meanest streets of Abingdon-on-Thames. However unacceptable, from Stoke to Syracuse Chiquenena Basquet was a byword for the blues!

We hardly could believe it when we learned of her demise. The unforeseen had happened, and the Devil claimed his prize. A signpost at the crossroads was inscribed for all to see, *"Beneath here lie the last remains of Chiquenena B!"* Some insisted later she resurfaced with a fella – Chiquenena once again being known as Isabella – But no contrived conspiracy could ever light a fuse Like Chiquenena's *"Cultural Appropriation Blues"*!

10 Epigram (3.06)

I'm fascinated how so many on social media live idealised, amplified lives; strongly opinionated, with legions of likeminded friends etc. Why should I be left out?

I have this unforeseen condition I've tried hard to decommission – One I'm loath to even mention And, by logical extension, Still less keen to publicise – It would, I'm told, be quite unwise – But here I am, with due conceit, Jumping in with two left feet When I should emulate a clam; But that's the kind of chap I am...

I'm customarily, you see, Indulging in hyperbole. I've found, or so I've seen of late, Compulsions to exaggerate The most inconsequential things. Instinctively I give them wings, Reporting as an insurrection Any minor disaffection; More an ogre than a lamb, But that's the kind of chap I am.

I phoned a friend, a wise Physician. "'Tis," he said," a known condition!" Seemingly, it's in the head – A syndrome, I believe he said, Seeking all the while endorsement. I took in what he of course meant. Though indeed it seemed misguided, Ultimately he'd decided I should try Diazepam 'Cos that's the kind of chap I am.

It hasn't done a lot of good, But then I never thought it would. I've never been one who's preferred To be unseen and never heard. I think now I've been sold a pup – I'm still inclined to big things up, Advocating apprehension Simply to secure attention. Now I've penned this epigram, You know the sort of chap I am!

Show me truth and I'll distort it. It's a sickness, and I caught it! It's improved, but isn't great 'Cos sadly still I overstate. I will, with backing from my chum, Regain my equilibrium. Is this preposterous? No, it ain't! By exercising real restraint I'll turn the tide, create a dam, And show the kind of chap I am!

11 Lost For A Cliché (3.48)

I remember being mightily impressed by the use of language when the SpaceX "Starship" blew up in what was euphemistically dubbed "a rapid unscheduled disassembly!" We need more of this kind of thinking!

Journalists by trade are very seldom lost for words – Rumours to the contrary being strictly for the birds! Rare it is for a columnist when a tale come along To prove this proposition either dubious or wrong. Unknown are the sagas of such magnitude That all of the stock phrases we've carefully accrued Are patently imperfect, embarrassingly so; So, cards upon the table, I think you should know Experienced though I may be, this time I have to say No matter how I tried, I was lost for a cliché!

I'd consulted my thesaurus to unravel my malaise. I was searching for a cliché, a concise turn of phrase, But sadly I found very little there to float my boat; A few tired trivialities, but nothing much of note. Being almost out of options I remember, to be blunt, I contemplated then and there abandoning the hunt. But in a cliché's absence, I was driven to concede A euphemism might gratify and satisfy my need! And that's when out of nowhere, as so often we find That flawless little euphemism came to my mind!

Excellence we never must imperil or augment – Very few, I think it's true, will offer up dissent! It didn't need embellishment or any kind of change And would be, I was confident, a sin to rearrange. And since that day, I've polished up my journalistic tools. The cliché's day has been and gone – now euphemism rules! For unforeseen misfortunes nobody could rehearse – For even a calamitous electoral reverse! – When I need to summarise or otherwise distil, There'll always be a euphemism there to fill my bill.

A lesser man than I am might have striven to preserve Those clichés that were valued by the readerships we serve. *"The leafy suburbs..."* always had been widely revered In the same way *"...the room lit up whenever she appeared!"* My editors were sceptical, but came round to agree It was unquestionably logical and plain for all to see That euphemisms have to be both commonplace and trite. I'm pleased to say I'm happy they have all seen the light! Now we use them unremittingly, and venerate the day No matter how I tried, I was lost for a cliché!

12 The Worshipful Company Of New April Fools (4.53)

"They have created a desert and called it peace!" was what Tacitus supposedly said of the Romans. Different times, but those who wish for whatever reason to limit free speech are destined – in the long term, like the Roman Empire – to fall!

We're living in truly Orwellian times, And standing accused of unspeakable crimes. The sun has gone down on the side of the glen, Enlightenment lost to a final Amen. Their papers are drawn up and ready to serve On those who are standing and holding their nerve. It seems not unreasonable, flouting the rules To the Worshipful Company of new April Fools.

The Worshipful Company let it be known That those who stand with them will not stand alone. People, they'll argue, are free to express Without hazard or hindrance or fear of redress Any thought or conviction, whatever the theme, No matter how loud the censorious scream. Realities often leave tyrants distressed, But hope lingers on in humanity's breast...

It is, they will tell you, at best untoward How truth is so often routinely ignored; How that in itself is enough of a curse, But here they are fighting a fate even worse With dogma and fantasy now to the fore – And even of late being enshrined into law! But at least they have logic as one of their tools In the Worshipful Company of new April Fools.

Of course in the end it will be the police Creating this desert and calling it peace. But they're only doing what others dictate, And playing their part on behalf of the State. Nobody expects the police to rebel – Therein lies democracy's highway to hell – But irrationalities will be revealed And lunatic laws will be surely repealed.

Until that arises, for what it is worth, The Fools who've determinedly stayed down-to-earth Continue persisting in legal harm's way And patiently waiting for Thanksgiving Day When all of the lunacies draw to a close. Then there will be tributes, remembering those Who fell in the battle but righted the rules In the Worshipful Company of new April Fools.

13 Ballad Of The Rowdy Knave (3.22)

"...would it not be simpler if the government dissolved the people and elected another?" Bertolt Brecht

My friends, it appears I was wrong! I ought to have known all along. It's all gone awry, And now I see my

Career is reduced to a song!

"Go check with the people", they said! I must have been light in the head! I'm supposed to be shrewd In reading the mood Of those I supposedly led!

Referenda, they told me, were fair With nothing left up in the air. "There's nothing to do! You just sit back, then you Wait for results to declare."

We are where we are, anyhow. The FTSE is down, and the Dow. We lost, I'm afraid, And a price must be paid So that's where we find ourselves now.

I don't think I need to explain. It's proving a pain to contain When some rowdy knave Declines to behave. This never must happen again!

It has been proposed, I believe – Though this may take time to achieve – Only persons of note Should be sanctioned to vote, And not the unwashed or naïve.

The stars somehow failed to align. By accident or by design, A mountain of stress Has come, I'll confess, And so I am forced to resign.

Now sadly I'm bound to reflect A stellar career has been wrecked! They certainly used to – But lately refuse to – Respond in the way we expect!

So what are the lessons we've learned? Alas, that we had not discerned The popular mood; From which we conclude We ought to be rather concerned!

I speak now as yesterday's man. We're back where our story began, With this songs intent To record the event As only the balladry can!

14 Celebrity Memorabilia (3.50)

Dedicated to all who, as Oscar Wilde didn't quite put it, know "the value of everything and the price of nothing!"

I see now that I must come clean, With all the hoo-ha there has been All around each holy grail Celebrities bring up for sale. It's asked from London to Beijing Why is my hat not in the ring? And so, to answer this demand, It's time to tell you where I stand...

There's gold in them that hills, y'know As Sotheby's and Christie's show. The best advice will be, "Let go Celebrity memorabilia!"

I fully see why folks adore The anorak that once I wore. It's true, I'd overdone the hooch I shared with Paul McCartney's pooch. It was, it turns out, heaven sent When Martha had her accident. I never thought to get it cleaned, And have its heritage demeaned!

There's gold in them thar hills, y'know As Sotheby's and Christie's show. The best advice will be, "Let go Celebrity memorabilia!"

From what was but a slight mishap, Consommé stains from Watford Gap Still gaudily grace its lapel; Though personally, I blame Adele. You'll know how few have been immune When she flicks gumbo off her spoon. Of course, these never were removed, Its value being much improved.

There's gold in them that hills, y'know As Sotheby's and Christie's show. The best advice will be, "Let go Celebrity memorabilia!"

One night I ventured, at a loss, Around the back streets of Kings Cross. The recollection still remains, As do a few distasteful stains; But there are even more allures; A half a KitKat bar endures. One now, I'm certain, of the few Marked '...best before May '72'.

There's gold in them thar hills, y'know As Sotheby's and Christie's show. The best advice will be, "Let go Celebrity memorabilia!"

This anorak would have enthused, But I will not stand here accused Of ever seeming to appear A vain, ignoble profiteer. So this is why, with good advice To now be up front and concise, I shall – no doubt to much dismay – Donate it to the V&A.

There's gold in them thar hills, y'know As Sotheby's and Christie's show. The best advice will be, "Let go Celebrity memorabilia!"

15 The Song (3.39)

... I guess pretty much sums up what it's all about...

I heard a song that took me back; you maybe heard it too? It wasn't deep or so profound, but every word was true; Something long forgotten, though I guess I always knew From deep inside me what it had to say.

The tinny little radio was trying hard to please; The words and music were as one and floated on the breeze. I waited there, still listening, and hoped for a reprise; That maybe it would get another play...

It never was a melody I'd readily have sought – I'd usually have passed on by and never given it thought – But strange things sometimes come about, and this time I was caught And captivated in a kind of way...

I know we'll never comprehend, or even come to grips, Why certain kinds of music bring a quiver to the lips, Aligning in the firmament – a planetary eclipse; An infinite emotional display...

A song will sometimes strike a chord when everything aligns, One perfect place where words and notes and sentiment combines; And all of this I recognised in four transcendent lines. And here they are; make of them what you may...

As long as we have memories, our yesterdays will live; As long as we have hopes and dreams, tomorrow will forgive; As long as we have in us love, we never will outlive The beauty that surrounds us every day...

As long as we have memories, our yesterdays will live; As long as we have hopes and dreams, tomorrow will forgive; As long as we have in us love, we never will outlive The beauty that surrounds us every day.

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