

Hold Tight

7

0:05 **T**he first note is clean, familiar. But as I begin to stretch my range, I find the dust abrasive on my fingertips as I fumble through a familiar tune. I have to stop myself. This isn't my song. This isn't your song. How am I supposed to know when it's my song?

A quick Google search – 'how to transfer feelings into music'. Sorry Rachel Claudio, singer-songwriter, DJ and live performing musical artist from Perth; I do not have the mental capacity for a sixteen minute TEDx talk right now.

I try for another sip instead – Milo's still too hot, and I've already eaten the crunchy top layer. These truly are desperate times.

0:42 Why did she have to go? Things were fine. We were fine. More than fine even. And, she would know the right thing to say now. Some encouraging words and a kick up the arse probably. But no. This place just wasn't big enough for her, even though she always made it seem so grand to me.

Ughhhh, I can't do this again. *Focus on the music.* Major 7ths and sharp 11ths, inversions and arpeggiations, progressions and harmonies. My mind flits back to the hike, lost in the sky and its endless stars. There must be beauty to the chaos, I just need to open myself up to it. *Breathe it in.*

1:10 That first note again, crisp and clear. Then another. I had already cleared some of the dust in my last efforts, so pushing through what's left is beginning to feel much less daunting. *Start small, start slow.* My body begins to release a tension I had not been aware of – neck and shoulders relaxing, then elbows, wrists, and fingers. The dust has cleared now and I can revel in the smooth pressure of the faux-ivory as it pushes back into the pads of my fingertips. I close my eyes and let go.

I'm overwhelmed with a feeling, like I've been running underwater for so long and I'm only now beginning to surface.

1:47 I open my eyes and the music stumbles. It felt like only a blink, but the angle of the sun suggests otherwise. My hot chocolate is now cold chocolate, I've completely neglected it. I wouldn't have wanted it now anyway, as the heat in this room is quickly becoming stifling.

Of course, just as I was finally beginning to loosen up! However, my aching fingers agree that it might be time for a break, so I suppose I'll just leave a bookmark on this life-altering moment and hopefully pick up right where I left off. Anyway, all the reviews of this place say not to miss the sun setting over the lake, so a bit of a walk can't hurt.

2:42 I step past my day bag through the sliding glass door, winding my way through the overgrown back garden until I reach a very tired looking back gate. *I feel ya buddy.* I start to turn left onto the well-reviewed boardwalk, but out of the corner of my eye I catch some movement - another blur just beyond the tree line. I turn to face it but, predictably, there's nothing there. However, I do notice an old animal trail that seems to pick up just beyond the facade of shrubbery.

A few scratches on the legs later I am off, glad to have found somewhere to walk away from the beaten path (or the beaten boardwalk in this case). After all, lots of good reviews implies lots of people; and lots of people implies that I might bump into one of them and accidentally get stuck in a conversation. Which implies small talk, and a fragmented walk. I did not come all the way out here to be around people, that's for sure.

The sun is getting dangerously close to setting now, and my rabbit run has led me well away from the lake's edge. I would kick myself if I missed this sunset, after I specifically paid extra for a place that backed onto the boardwalk.

I admit I was definitely distracted thinking about that piano. It was finally starting to feel right, you know? I'm not big on spirituality or anything, but... there was something. I could feel it drawing things out from places I didn't even know I had, like the music was crashing around recklessly inside of me, dislodging bits and pieces everywhere it went.

I can even hear it now, the steady thrum of music, though it is rapidly becoming overwhelmed in the evening chorus. I don't think I even need a metaphor for this one... but if forced, I'd say I was emerging from the gluey confines of the water, finally moving effortlessly in concert with the warm evening air.

Skipping lunch and sitting at the piano all afternoon must've messed with my head a little though – because as the path finally opens up onto the lake's edge, this music sounds an awful lot like an acoustic guitar accompanied by a smattering of butterfly singing.

Oh.

2:42
