

# *The Velvet Jellyfish*

*Subtlety*



A NOTE FROM THE LABEL

## SAY IT THE PRETTY WAY

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Here is what the Velvet Jellyfish mean by subtlety: a song your grandmother can hum at the stove and your grandfather can grin at behind his paper, both of them knowing exactly what was just said, neither of them saying it. That is the oldest kindness in soul music — the truth in its Sunday clothes — and nobody alive tailors those clothes like these six, plus three Tides who arrive on every chorus like weather and take no follow-up questions.

Ten songs, and not one of them is about the weather. The bee and the flower. The corn and the butter. One hour on the nightstand clock, and a love that walks you to the door and out into the air — because this band would not dream of letting you leave unfed, or unaccompanied, or unloved.

They recorded it warm, because they do not do cool; cool, I am reliably informed, is a refrigerator setting. Play it low with the lights down, or loud with company coming. Either way: subtle, baby. Real subtle.

— *Simon Oré*

HEAD OF ONE HAND CLAPPING RECORDS

# BAD FOR ME

*Mama Pearl · the Sunday weapon, at sixty percent*

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VERSE 1

I knew the moment that you called  
That I'd say yes before hello  
I'm already out the door  
Even though I clearly know

PRE-CHORUS

You're bad for me  
Oh so bad for me  
But it's a bad that does me good

CHORUS

The kind of bad that's kind of wonderful  
That always leaves me satisfied  
The kind of pain that feels like pleasure  
The kind of shame that feels like pride  
The little devil on my shoulder and  
the little angel both agree  
That you're the kind of bad that's really  
good for me

VERSE 2

I knew the moment that you called  
That I'd say yes before hello  
And yes I know you'll use me up  
But I still answer, even though

My friends don't come around no more  
They've all stopped giving me advice  
They know each time you'll break my  
heart  
But God, it's worth the price

PRE-CHORUS, CHORUS -  
TWICE MORE

*(as before, and meaning it more each time)*

OUTRO

Yes you're the kind of bad that's really  
good for me

# HEAD IN THE SKY

*Indigo · the oracle, smoky and unbothered*

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VERSE 1

Since you left me  
Life's been okay  
I wake up happy  
and I face my day

And I don't miss the drama  
I don't miss the pain  
I don't miss hearing you complain  
I don't miss you in my bed  
But I miss the head

CHORUS

I miss the head in the sky kind of way  
that I felt  
When I held your hand and you held  
mine  
I miss the head in the clouds kind of  
feeling I got  
It felt so good and I miss it a lot

VERSE 2

But I don't miss the eye rolls  
And I don't miss the fights  
and I'm fine without those  
Tumultuous nights

And I don't miss those mornings  
That I wished you were dead  
But all things being honest,  
I do miss the head

FINAL CHORUS - AFTER  
THE BREAK

I miss the head in the stars little light  
show I saw  
When I held your hand and you held  
mine  
I miss the head in my heart kind of  
feeling I got  
It felt so good and I miss it a lot

# SUBTLE

*Julius · the lonely-man falsetto, smiling*

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INTRO — WARM HORNS,  
TAMBOURINE

*...let me say it the pretty way.*

VERSE 1

I'll be the bee and you be the flower —  
give me one hour, I'll watch you bloom.  
I'll be the rain and you be the garden —  
beg your pardon, I'm comin' through.

CHORUS

So let's make a little beautiful music,  
you bring the rhythm, I'll bring the  
rhyme.  
Do a little dancin' — the bedroom kind  
—  
no need for romancin', we got all the  
time.  
*...subtle, baby. Real subtle.*

VERSE 2

You be the candy, I'll be the sweet tooth,  
honest to goodness, I'll never quit.  
We'll be the beast with the two backs,  
darlin' —  
you bring the one, I'll bring the other  
half of it.

CHORUS

*(as before)*

VERSE 3

When I'm about to crash, let me smash  
right in,  
I'll roll in your hay, I'll round every base  
—  
you be the corn and I'll be the butter,  
meltin' for each other all over the place.

BRIDGE — THE HEART  
UNDER THE JOKES

And under every silly thing I say,  
it's the same sweet thing, every single  
way:  
I just wanna be the half that fits your  
half —  
the punchline to your laugh.

FINAL CHORUS —  
FULLER, WARMER

So let's make a whole lotta beautiful  
music,  
you bring forever, I'll bring tonight.  
One more round of dancin' — you never  
seem to mind —  
hold onto me, darlin', and turn out the  
light.

*...subtle. (so subtle)*

OUTRO

I'll be the bee...  
*(you be the flower)*  
mm — best part of the day.

# A COUPLE OF JAYS

*Ezra "Hush" · behind the beat, lights down*

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## VERSE 1

Oh it's another day  
where I try not to think  
Of the state of the world  
and that we're on the brink  
Of disaster and trauma and  
there seems there's no point  
But I think the secret,  
is to light up a joint

## CHORUS

With a couple of jays  
The universe plays  
And the state of the world  
Just quietly fades  
into the background  
And gives you a wonderful smile  
And it makes life a beautiful breeze for a  
while

## VERSE 2

If I know where I'm sleeping  
And I know how I'll eat  
If I'm not just surviving  
Then my life is complete  
Just as long as there's fire  
And as long as there's flowers  
Then the world ain't that bad  
And so I spend my hours—

## CHORUS

*(as before)*

## BRIDGE

Smiling and laughing  
That's how I spend my days  
As long as I got me  
A couple of jays

## FINAL CHORUS

*(as before, in no hurry at all)*

# CIGARETTES AND RUM

*Julius · grinning all the way home*

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VERSE 1

Been a long time since I've seen you girl  
And you know it's getting harder  
When I think of your loving smile  
Not to burn with love and ardor

But I'm heading home to you babe  
And the first thing that I'll do  
Is walk right up to our front door  
And come inside for you

CHORUS

Oh I'm coming to your pretty face  
I'm coming to your smile  
I'm coming hard and coming strong  
And just might stay a while  
I'll get us some good cigarettes  
And some imported rum  
So get that cute face ready  
Cause baby, here I come

VERSE 2

I keep thinking 'bout you girl  
And I just keep on grinning  
Every day I'm with you babe  
Is another day I'm winning

For every curve and crevasse  
I thank the Lord above,  
And I can't wait to see you  
And coat you with my love

BRIDGE

Life can be upsetting  
And stress is everywhere  
And life can sure be draining,  
But you can drain me, I don't care

FINAL CHORUS - UNTIL

I miss your laugh, your eyes, your smell  
I miss your little bum  
So get that cute bum ready  
Cause baby, here I come

# THE TINGLE

*Indigo · the oracle, incense admissible*

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## VERSE 1

Well it's clear to everyone but you  
Though it's obvious as can be  
That I get a certain kind of way  
When I'm near your energy

It's a special secret feeling  
That I didn't think was real  
But it's warm — and wet — and  
wonderful  
The way your presence makes me feel

## CHORUS

When I'm with you, baby  
I get the tingle  
It itches nice all the way up and down  
my spine  
I feel the pressure  
I get the tingle  
It's how my body lets me know that you  
are mine

## VERSE 2

You awoken something in me  
That keeps vibrating my heart  
You arouse my curiosity  
And babe, that's just the start

## THE WINK

*Some girls will cry a river  
for their man, what a surprise  
I'll give you more than rivers,  
but they won't come from my eyes*

## CHORUS

*(as before)*



PRE-CHORUS 2

So don't be tender with me, baby,  
don't you treat me like I'll break —

CHORUS

*(as before, the Tides answering)*

BRIDGE — B3 AND  
STRINGS, THE CRACKED  
FALSETTO

See, every time you broke me,  
you showed me where I'd cracked —  
every weak spot I was hiding,  
every ounce of love held back...  
so I built it up in brick this time,  
I built it up in stone —  
now the only way to hurt me, baby  
*(the only way)*  
is to leave me here alone.

THE EULOGY — OTIS,  
LOW

*They say what doesn't kill you  
makes you stronger.*

**I say what doesn't kill you  
makes the love last longer.**

FINAL CHORUS — UP A  
WHOLE STEP,  
EVERYTHING IN

*(as before — full band, full Tides, strings  
sweeping)*

OUTRO

So hurt me, baby  
*(hurt me)*  
hurt me good  
*(hurt me)*  
sweetest pain I ever knew —

# NOT TO BE ME

*Mama Pearl · regal, amused, marquee lit*

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INTRO — BOND BRASS,  
HARP, VINYL CRACKLE

*Name's at the top of the marquee. Say it with  
me.*

VERSE 1

Say my name  
Say it slow. It tastes expensive.  
I woke up and the day apologized.  
I forgave it. I'm extensive.

PRE-CHORUS

Pity's not my color, but I'll wear it just  
this once—

CHORUS

How hard it must be  
not to be me.  
To wake up on a Wednesday,  
in a body that's just... fine.  
How hard it must be  
not to be me.  
I'd send a card. I don't have the time.

BRIDGE — STRAIGHT, NO  
WINK

And yes — I have the other side. The  
dark one.  
The one I keep behind the velvet rope,  
until I don't.  
You'd want it too. You can't have it.  
I could lose it but I won't.

VERSE 2

Say my name  
Say it slow. It feels delicious.  
I always get exactly what I want.  
It's suspicious.

FINAL CHORUS — ALL  
SIX BURIED UNDER IT

How hard it must be  
not to be me.  
*(not to be — not to be)*  
Got that can't stop me, can't be me  
energy.  
How hard it must be  
not to be me.  
I'm not bragging, darling. I'm just me.

OUTRO — BRASS DECAYS,  
A DOOR

Say my name  
*(a door)*

# ONE HOUR

*Julius - one eye on the clock*

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INTRO - MOTOWN STOMP,  
A CLOCK IN THE MIX

*Clock's on the nightstand, baby. Don't mind it.  
...all right.*

VERSE 1

I'm the bee to your flower —  
let me linger and hover —  
but the hour's half over,  
so I'll cut to the bloom.  
I'd take the long way home,  
the slow and the proper —  
ain't got time for the proper.  
Come on into the room.

CHORUS

We only got an hour,  
so let's not waste it baby —  
Let's get to lovin', we don't have much  
time.

I know you'll be going,  
so let's not waste it baby —  
gotta love you in a hurry,  
but I'll love you so fine.  
*...smooth, baby. Real smooth. (clock's tickin'.)*

VERSE 2 —  
ACCELERATING

I'm the shucker to your corn,  
I'm the butter you churn —  
I'd do it nice and slow,  
but we got nowhere to turn.  
That hand on the clock  
is a jealous old man —  
so love me back quick now,  
fast as you can.

CHORUS

*(as before)*

SIXTY MINUTES

You leave me at 11 and I miss you by  
noon,  
I'd hand you a lifetime — but they only  
gave an hour,  
and it's going too soon.  
So I'll be yours forever from now till the  
door —  
sixty little minutes... make 'em sixty-one.  
...or more.

FINAL CHORUS — THE  
GOODBYE

*(as before, until —)*

One last little dance,  
before you leave me baby  
hold onto me, darlin',  
'fore the clock kills the light.  
*...worth every minute. (worth every dime.)*

THE CLOCK CHIMES

...there's the hour.  
*(don't go.)*  
...same time next week?

# IT'S TIME TO GO

*Mama Pearl · the kitchen, closing time*

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VERSE 1

It's been amazing  
Having you here with me  
I've had a wonderful time  
In your sweet company

We've had some laughs  
And shared good wine  
We smoked and joked  
It was divine

PRE-CHORUS

And you know I love you dearly  
And you know you feel like home  
But I think it's about time  
You should be heading for your own

CHORUS 1

It's time to go  
it's time to go  
Don't want to say that you can't stay  
But baby, it's time to go

VERSE 2

Not trying to be subtle  
I stretch and even yawn  
I turn all of the lights off  
But you're still not catching on

CHORUS 1

*(as before)*

CHORUS 2

It's time to go, my friend  
it's time to go  
It's nearly one, and it's been fun  
but time to go

BRIDGE

Your story's getting longer  
And there is no end in sight  
And my eyes are growing heavy  
And I want to say goodnight  
And I love you, oh I love you,  
but the love I have to share  
Is the love that walks you to the door  
and out into the air

CHORUS

It's time to go  
it's time to go  
Don't want to say that you can't stay  
But baby, it's time to go

OUTRO

It's time to go  
Mmmm... it's time to go  
The night was sweet, the night was kind  
But oh... it's time to go

L I N E R   N O T E S

# THE VELVET JELLYFISH

ONE HAND  
CLAPPING

NOTHING BUT HEART

*Pearl · Julius · Ezra · Indigo · Otis · Cleo — Memphis, Tennessee*

01 Bad For Me

02 Head in the Sky

03 Subtle

04 A Couple of Jays

05 Cigarettes and Rum

06 The Tingle

07 What Doesn't Hurt You Makes You Weaker

08 Not to Be Me

09 One Hour

10 It's Time To Go

L E A D S   0 1   P   -   0 2   I   -   0 3   J   -   0 4   H   -   0 5   J   -   0 6   I   -  
0 7   J + O   -   0 8   P   -   0 9   J   -   1 0   P

*All songs performed by The Velvet Jellyfish · all songs written by Julius Sweetwater, the songbook*

O D E S S A   ' M A M A   P E A R L '   R H O D E S *lead vocals, Hammond B3 — the matriarch*

J U L I U S   S W E E T W A T E R *falsetto lead, the songbook — the lonely man*

E Z R A   ' H U S H '   O K A F O R *vocals, everything with strings on it — the ghost*

I N D I G O   M E R C Y *vocals, vibraphone — the oracle*

O T I S   C A L L O W A Y *bass, velvet baritone, the eulogies — the undertow*

C L E O   ' T I C K '   H A R D A W A Y *drums, percussion — the heartbeat*

T H E   T I D E S *three voices, one credit — no further questions*

P R O D U C E D   B Y   S I M O N   O R E

*(P) & © 2026 One Hand Clapping · released June 15, 2026*

FROM THE BAND

# THE KITCHEN STAYS OPEN

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ONE HAND  
CLAPPING

NOTHING BUT HEART

Baby, you made it to the last page. That's good manners, and manners get fed around here.

Julius wrote these songs the way he does everything — politely, holding the door for you on your way out of his life. Ezra played half of what you heard, in the dark, in one take; no, he won't say which half, and no, you can't have a spoon. Indigo knew you'd wear out track six before you'd heard it. Otis has one word for how this record came out — exactly — and Cleo kept every minute honest without once looking at that stopwatch.

Me, I sang at sixty percent. If you want the other forty, come by the Kitchen some Sunday and earn it. And if anybody asks was any of this record about what it sounded like it was about — sugar, we do not answer questions we already sang.

Now. You don't have to go home, but you heard the last song. The love I've got left tonight is the kind that walks you to the door.

— *Mama Pearl*

*(the Tides were offered the last word. the silence has been entered into the record.)*