

Mid-Ocean Reconnoiter: 2/13/11: Well, this mix has been in incubation

forever. It began as something called “Coming Up the Other Side,” but I never could believe that had happened and so I could never pull the trigger on the mix. But then it hit me, no, I’m crossing the ocean, with many, many miles to go, but I have to stop and do some reconnaissance (lovely word, that) or reconnoitering. So the front side is from my trans-Atlantic adventures this past summer, my time in London reconnecting with Robin and Val Corbett (MP, whom I worked for in 1978, and wife) and then Sally’s wedding that Tom and I rushed back for (and then some reading, upper right, and teaching, lower left, that kept me alive). Top right is from a hilarious essay on “postmodern urbanism” I read in the fall and from which I date my most recent recoveries. Bottom left is from the course syllabus that resulted from that reading. The back side is, of course, wish fulfillment. Upper left is my kids and sundry others yukking it up when I swept my dad off his feet in a wedding dance, lower right is what I wish they would accept (if not exactly applaud). So here it is. **1 Call and answer – bare naked ladies:** the signature song of the mix from the very beginning. “I think it’s getting to the point, where I can be myself again. It’s getting to the point, where we can make amends.” This has a surprise ending but you have to remember, most of it is me singing, but at the end, somebody else gets to sing the finale TO me. **2 sorrow – the national:** “sorrow found me when I was young, sorrow waited, sorrow won.” Well, not exactly. But “I don’t want to get over you” is that moment you wake up and realize you’ve made a mistake. Haven’t been there yet, not even close. **3 killian’s red – nada surf:** “when I’m with you I almost love this place.” Simple. The Habits Café (an Oakley watering hole) song. I always did say Cincinnati was a great place to drink beer – the architecture and all. **4 activation – atlas sound:** It isn’t healthy how much I love this song. Here’s the lyrics [do I have to spell it out?] “coral or uneven cloth under mirror-like surface [my old life] activation in the abyss mouth on mouth was catalyst [something happened] change the way you feel back home change the way desire folds [scheme and squirm] predict the maze and plan escape [wiggle free] as tens of thousands of portraits fade [an old life lost?] avoid the signal trace the call [am I being tailed?] abandon reason break his jaw [when Cotter told me to kill the boy friend] activation was described [long story but you know how Hannah Arendt makes a distinction between behavior, unconscious, routinized, predictable, and action, conscious, impetuous, for better or worse setting in motion unpredictable events] guard your land set traps and hide.... [hey, has anyone seen John?]” **5 Laredo – band of horses:** the beautiful song, Rachel says. Yeah, that’s why it is there. And the “are you really gone” line. **6 wichita lineman – freeddy Johnson:** I heard Terry Gross interview Jimmy Webb (who wrote this song) and she played this version (just a few bars) while I was in London and I had to buy it off iTunes. Webb said more people mention this song, and specifically the line *I need you more than want you and I want you for all time, and the Wichita lineman is still on the line,*

and said Webb hates it because it is a false rhyme: time/line. He said that he still didn't know much about writing songs and he'd never do that now. Well isn't that just like life. Because, hell, it is a good lyric. **7 when water comes to life – cloud cult:** a water theme, in case I go down mid-ocean, people will say he knew he'd never make it. But also, I didn't want them to cut me open and find the locket empty. **8 the way that he sings – my morning jacket:** I just love the song, that's all. **9 you don't have to lie – creep outs:** One of Andrew's bands (Andrew was once Polly's boyfriend, made cds on three continents). When they were still going out, I thought "hmm" to myself about this song. I wonder if they are friends. I still like him. **10 dirty hands – black lips:** John's anthem. **11 meet me in the basement – broken social scene:** a friend says this is me, stopping mid-ocean and looking around, doing reconnaissance. **12 treat her gently – creep outs:** Oh, Andrew. I miss you. **13 blizzard of '77 – nada surf:** I know someone who is both blizzard-like and born in 1977. **14 normandie – shout out louds:** from a long time ago but always liked the "are you lonely, I am lonely too" **15 chain reaction – cloud cult:** from my first days in Oakley. I was listening to this cd all the time. Rachel had to explain to me the chain reaction part (I just heard the "Am I you are me" and "put your face on my face" parts. Dopey romantic that I am. The chain reaction part rocks. I think of it all the time now. **16 the thrilling of claire – the national:** no comment. **17 black flowers – yo la tengo:** "some pretty boys in skinny ties." I'll go gracefully when it happens. Oh, and I dig the tuba. **18 relative ways – and you will know us by the trail of dead:** got nothing here. Just like this one. **19 take your medicine – cloud cult:** Yeah, mofo, stop moping and whining and take your freaking medicine.