

Last Chance Lounge (2000)



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Getting Off the Dime

Do you ever feel the forces
That you have to work against
They fight you all along the way
On both sides of the crooked fence
Seeds of indecision

Are constantly in bloom
They grow the flowers of regret
In an empty low lit room
My feet were firmly planted
Or at least I thought they were
I tipped the cups of morning light
Of so many things I wasn't sure

Blowin' through the pages
Of a burning book I found
That beauty was revealed by design
C'mon baby, we're gettin' off the dime

Second handed souls
And Salvation Army stores
The smell of one too many lovers
And one too many tavern doors
Addictions isolated
To the closets/confines of your mind
That abuse you and confuse you
In the hopes that you get left behind
One day at a time they say
That Achange comes from within
I've been trying each and every day
To tell myself I'm gonna win

Stumblin' way back home
It's not that hard to realize
It's just another wall I have to climb
C'mon baby, we're gettin off the dime

I was standing by the fountain
In some strange Italian dream
The sermon's so confusing
I can't discern just what it means
It said Ablessed those who hunger
Blessed those who thirst
Blessed are the lost and last
For they in turn shall be the first

I woke up to the sounds
Of the construction drummers beat
The same old voices in my head
Singing me songs/symphonies of defeat

Stagnant like a pool of hope
In a desert filled with doubt
I'm so fucking sad and sick of the
wasted time
C'mon baby, we're gettin off the dime

Listen to the sounds
Of the city while it sleeps
It steals the life right from your soul
And what it takes it always keeps
The winds of understanding
Blew through the curtains of your faith
It's a long road you've been traveling
The struggle shows up on your face

Open up your windows babe
Open up your doors
And let the light of life begin to shine
C'mon baby, we're gettin off the dime

Michael McDermott

Broken Down Fence

Ball Turret Gunnar
He was talkin' on the phone
To some lady that he loved
And left broke in San Antone
Week willed Willie
And that trucker that he'd known
Headed down the to blue note
To hear that blind saxophone player
Nobody noticed
That Kenny left the scene
He was on his way to Venice
With some Merchant Marine
He said Ayou better read the signs
Before Paris starts to burn,
But you cats round here
You're never gonna learn

It seems normal enough
It doesn't make any sense
When you find yourself leanin'
On a broken down fence

Suzie closed up shop
And to Portland she was bound
But first she had to make a deal
With that man in Charlottetown
She walked in wearin' a straw hat
I'd only seen it once before
She sat down and knocked my heart
And my drink on to the floor
It's been a long time since we were over
A long time since we were through
She said she'd never get to high
Or fly far from my view
The place was pretty empty/crowded
When she got up to leave
She wore a smile on her face
But her tears were on her sleeve

It seems normal enough
It doesn't make any sense
When you find yourself leanin'
On a broken down fence

It seems normal enough
It doesn't make any sense
When you find yourself leanin'
On a broken down fence

Into a hip-hop daydream I go walkin'
And the Courvoisier keeps on talkin'
And on the same stone I keep on stumblin'
With the same mistakes, baby, time and time again
Walkin' up Milwaukee
I'd seen the brother's Grimm
They were talkin' trash and treason
About the kind of shape we're in
They were workin' on a story
About a princess and a frog
I told 'em one about a junkie
And a philosophizing dog
Just around the corner
From a brand new day
Right around that time I thought

I'd heard somebody say
It seems normal enough
It doesn't make any sense
When you find yourself leanin'
On a broken down fence

Michael McDermott

Unemployed

I know how to turn water into wine
I'm flithy rich but I haven't a dime
I'm luck in love by my girls' got a man
Most of these things I can't understand

I can take tragedy, loss and defeat
Choke your bitterness until your blood turns sweet

Hallelujah, I'm over joyed
I'm drunk again and I'm unemployed
Say hey mama ain't I still your boy

Drunk again and I'm unemployed

Singing la hey, it's gonna be ok

People always ask me what it is that I do
And very rarely do I ever tell them the truth
I'm a consultant, a pilot, a thief or a cook
Or I'm just about to publish my very first book

Sometimes I'm a hunter, sometimes I'm a clown
Sometimes I'm a matador, who just moved to town

Hallelujah, I'm over joyed
I'm drunk again and I'm unemployed
The things I've wanted I've just destroyed
Drunk again and I'm unemployed

Drunk again and I'm unemployed
Singing la hey, it's gonna be ok

I must admit that most times I get bored
Cause the things I want I still can't afford
People say AMichael you're very easily amused
Ask if as a child I was somehow abused

Call me a slacker, call me a waste
I'm just a pauper with a prince's taste

Hallelujah, I'm over joyed
I'm drunk again and I'm unemployed
Say hey mama ain't I still your boy
Drunk again and I'm unemployed

Singing la hey, it's gonna be ok

Michael McDermott

Spark

Some doors seem like there always shut
The hand of faith still seems corrupt
When you're caught on the wrong side of your own
generation
Thunder cracks like midnight barks
Intoxication the slipstream narcs
Does the temple of your soul need restoration?
Garreth lived here his whole damn life
His job, his lover, his complex wife
But he said, I've never even thought of leavin'
He said, Abelieve it or not I'm quite conent,
Every now and again, I'll kneel and repent
But I never seem to find that feelin', of healing baby

Spark the heart in a godless night
Spark the dark until it turns to light
Spark the colors in the eyes that blame
Spark the embers, until they turn to flame

From the small town where the dream don't hide
To the big cities where they do collide
To the hotel rooms, where the clocks have ceased
their tickin'
I dreamt of Paris and MTV
Ireland and the BBC
But now those dreams they only make me sickened
No one knows my name or even cares
As I stumbles so drunk down those stairs
And the spirits fire that burned within is tempered
I'm haunted by every train running south
And every lover that I've brought to my mouth
For fear of secrets that may soon be rendered or
surrendered baby

Spark the heart in a godless night
Spark the dark until it turns to light
Spark the colors in the eyes that blame
Spark the embers, until they turn to flame

She dyed her hair since the last time they spoke
I got her a drink and I lit up her smoke
She said I don't know how I wound up so defeated
She said These pictures in this place always make me
so sad
Make me think about the family that I never had/
make me think about my dad
And I hate the fact that I'm always feelin' cheated.
And the jukebox played Your Cheatin' Heart

You can't see the wounds as well when you're standin
in the dark
She said, I'll be right back, but I knew she was lyin
And me I knew I needed different company
Those kind of talks always get to me
This place smells like everybody's dyin', or tryin' baby

Spark the heart in a godless night
Spark the dark until it turns to light
Spark the colors in the eyes that blame
Spark the embers, until they turn to flame

Michael McDonald

Murder On Her Lips

Quarter Girl in that Brazilian bar
You were right where you wanted to be
From a distant world you'd traveled so far
Into a head-on collision with me
Yeah, you held my hand, we moved to the band
I put my hands upon your hips
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
And Murder on Her Lips

You talked about the mountains, talked about getting
free
I remember thinking you seemed kinda stoned
In that hotel by the water where you spent those
nights with me
Remember the way you moved and moaned
I held her so and I could feel the undertow
I thought the night was just playing tricks
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
And Murder on Her Lips

I was still recovering from the night before
I was trying to put the pieces back into place
I remember Jackson Square when the rain began to
pour
Your hair fell down around your face
You spoke to me of him and how you knew it'd be a
sin
You said "The man deserves everything he gets"
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
And Murder on Her Lips

Somewhere cross the bayou
Somewhere where the canebrake ends
Is a ghost that still haunted her inside
I was due in Memphis, had to meet up with some
friends
She said she couldn't come along for the ride
She whispered in my ear, without the slightest bit of
fear
And her words got my stomach doin' flips
She had love in her eyes
She had love in her eyes

She had love in her eyes
And Murder on Her

Love in her eyes
She had blood in her eyes
She had love in her eyes
And Murder on Her Lips

Michael McDermott

Hand of the Hunter

There's tethers of truth, tongues telling lies
Cracks in the colors of your bloodstained eyes
The wolves are dancing in sheep's disguise
And their presence is very unnerving
Backfiring engines in fields full of knowing
There's blood in the dirt with the seeds you're sowing
Are you aware of the gifts your gods are bestowing
Even though you feel undeserving
You're standing in line, waiting for rations
Like Jericho, the walls down came a-crashing
Stiletto the sounds, the lights all a-flashing
Do you bow to the one that you're serving
Are you free from the Hand of the Hunter
Are you free from the Hand of the Hunter
Are you free

There's many hills to climb, many rivers to cross
And if you're not careful, boy, you're bound to get lost
You might not have a dime, but you'll cover the cost
Or you'll dance in the circles of sorrow
Meanwhile, alone, far across town
Judy laid her newborn baby down
She said "It's hard to fly when you're chained to the ground
Anybody got some wings I could borrow?"
And I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free

The ghost of Michelangelo
They carved me from my world of stone
Listening to a fading fire
Is it true, they say, all dreams one day expire
I believe it
Succulent sermons sung from the sun
Broken descendants are out on the run
The art of war, it has only begun
The silence is rolling like thunder
Spilling like wine, the healing was landing
Our only bastion was our understanding
With my fist in the air, the winds I was commanding
Free from the spell I was under
The hostages of iniquity
Were put on display for all to see
The chosen tongue, the communion of three
Left everyone dazzled in wonder

I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free

I believe it
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free from the Hand of the Hunter
I'll be free
I believe it
I believe it

Sing a song, sing a song of freedom
Sing a song, sing a song of freedom
Sing a song, sing a song of freedom
Sing a song, sing a song of freedom

Michael McDermott

20 Miles South of Nowhere

Dan sat at the bar, talkin' about his car with Alice
She was heading out to Vegas, running from her dark
days in Dallas
She had a brother she could stay with,
Said he didn't know she was coming
Yeah, but I bet he never guessed what kind of person
she was becoming
Jimmy Moran and his one-man band played every
note like it was his last
He played "Strangers in the Night" too slow
And always played Neil Diamond songs too fast

20 Miles South of Nowhere
Yeah, me and mine
20 Miles South of Nowhere

Gray-haired Marie watched her sports TV and began
to write somethin' down
Tommy Turrets twitched his regrets that the Celtics
were coming to town
Dora came in, she was stinkin' of gin
She referred to me as "sailor"
She was beautiful not long ago
Before everything began to fail her
Now Will's been in the bathroom for so long
Now he either jumped out the window or died
Everything's been so dull around this place
But everything's been done or at least been tried

20 Miles South of Nowhere
Pearls and swine
20 Miles South of Nowhere
Doing my time
20 Miles South of Nowhere

The Last Chance Lounge on the near North Side
Everybody's watchin' the news
Music comes back when "Friends" comes on
Hear Van the Man singing the Irish blues
Colleen just got a 550 SL
I wonder what the hell she's doin' here
She asked me if I wanted to go for a ride, I said
"Babe, I just ordered a beer"
She wants everyone to think she's made it,
But I know her mama bought her that
A guy asked me if I was an artist,
I said "A con artist, mon frere" and turned my back

20 Miles South of Nowhere
Yeah, me and mine
20 Miles South of Nowhere
Doin' my time
20 Miles South of Nowhere
Pearls and swine
20 Miles South of Nowhere
Yeah, me and mine

Michael McDermott

Annie & The Aztec Cross

"Its much more gripping than fiction,"
Delilah said of her book
I hadn't been paying attention
When she gave me that disapproving look
I said "I was thinkin' 'bout Annie,"
Delilah said "Please not again."
She said "Babe I'm just not in the mood,
to hear about your dying friend."
She was torn by the waves of the city
But the price was too high a cost
I remember her lookin' so pretty
Thinkin' 'bout' Annie and the Aztec cross

Annie found religion in Lima
At the temple of Martin De Pourus
She said, "I never understood the love of God,
And just how much he adores us
So pray for the wicked, pray for the weak
Pray for the martyrs and pray for the meek
And pray for all the forgotten souls
That passed in vain before us"
Her words flowed just like a river
But her ghost hung like Spanish moss
There was a peace that nobody could give her
Thinkin' 'bout Annie and the Aztec cross

Annie painted pictures of Jesus
She could talk for hours about Magdeline
And how the gates of the free and the righteous
Are open to hearts heavy with sin
She was Indian on her mother's side
Irish on the side of her dad
That girl could drink you under the table,
But the drinkin' got to gettin' her feelin' sad
Burning with amber and sandalwood
A soul so beaten and lost/tossed
But things never worked out the way I thought they
would
For Annie and the Aztec cross

She traveled South and Central America
I got a letter every month for years
Until one day I opened a package
And with the letter realized my deepest fears
I don't know if she was shootin'
She just said, "my days are few
And enclosed is my beautiful Aztec cross

I only wanted Michael to be with you
But when you think of me, think with a smile
Shed not a single tear for me
Cause you know my faith is oh so strong
Know that I'll be watching over thee"
Peacock feathers blowin' around in this room
A raven beauty that we have lost
I dream of her dancing 'neath the Peruvian moon
Remembering... Annie and the Aztec cross

Remember!

Michael McDermott

Bourbon Blue

Graceful, moving like a dancer
I was waiting for an answer
She just sang along
I didn't know that song
Captured, raptured by your spirit
In the words I couldn't hear it
What was I to do?
I was feeling like a fool

Listen to the wistful sounds of morning coming through
I keep holding on for my Bourbon Blue

Ballerina, she moved slowly
Her air was almost holy
Restored what I had lost
Put nails in the cross
Breathless, caught myself drifting
With the weight I had been lifting
To try and figure out
what this whole thing was about

Downward, I was falling... reaching... for a strand so
true
I keep holding on for my Bourbon Blue

I know it's stupid
It's a stupid way of thinking
When the clearness clouds my drinking
And I'll kneel and confess
To my total lack of purpose
Singing, writing songs by number
Living life locked in a slumber
For reasons I can guess
I felt so useless

Downward, I was falling... reaching... for a strand so
true
I keep holding on for my Bourbon Blue

For my Bourbon Blue... I keep holding
My sweet Bourbon Blue... I keep holding
My sweet Bourbon Blue

Michael McDermott

Leave Her to Heaven

Drop me on Damen
With a vulturous stare
And I'll talk till I'm drunk
With the ways that they don't compare
Spark like the stranded
Until I fall down
And don't throw me a line
If it looks like I'll drown
So where does your God go
In an hour like this
I thought of his son
When you gave me that kiss
I thought I was on target
But I know now I missed
Yeah I rolled the dice
Then he broke my wrist

So leave her to heaven
Won't you be surprised
To find me gone
When you look for my eyes
Somewhere in the crowd
Somewhere in skies

Leave her to heaven
Its time for good-bye
Stick with the knife
Of the blade of your tongue
And don't ever forget
Where it is that you're from
Dreams are like shadows
That never/until they appear
Or maybe just not
On the streets around here

Leave her to heaven
It was so hard to say
That line to myself
While I walked away
To witness such beauty
And then let it stray
Oh leave her to heaven
I knew I couldn't stay

Leave her to heaven
She belongs to the skies
And the mystery hidden
Deep in her eyes

Leave her to heaven
And leave me right here
For in darkness will light
Be the first to appear

Leave me with whiskey
Poetry and verse
I'll tell you which life
That I find to be worse
And I don't know how
I was graced with this curse
Or these pools of frustration
In which I'm immersed

Leave her to heaven
And leave me to hell
I've got such a sweet
Little story to tell
About a girl on the run
A ghost and a cell

Leave her to heaven
Leave her to heaven
Leave her to heaven
And me where I fell

Gonna leave her
Gonna leave her

Michael McDermott

Aces & Eights

Good morning sunshine
You got dreams on your lips

Was it the moonshine
That got you to shake your hips?
We eluded danger
But it'll be coming around again
And again

It's a town of dreamers
That's why I'm still here
Nobody's a stranger
If they whisper into your ear
Everybody knows my name
But nobody knows who the hell I am
Foe or friend

I'm a prince and a pauper
I'm the gutter and the magistrate
Still looking over my shoulder, one more time
Holdin' aces and eights

I had to steal for everything
Everything I ever held/loved
Listen to the blackbird sing
From the ruthless carousel
Babe I ain't got no regrets
It's only failed opportunity
Hey that's me

You better be careful
Is that a staff or a rattlesnake?
Your never too safe, one more time
Holdin' aces and eights

Do you ever start to feel
Like this whole thing's a fix?
No matter what hand they deal
Every dealer's got their tricks
Maybe some sweet surrender
Will be coming around again
In the end

I know my days are numbered
Me and salvation got a date
It's never too late, so sick of this hand
Holdin' aces and eights

Michael McDermott

Thinking About You

I thought I had come far enough
To forget what I'd left behind
I thought I'd grown up enough to know
What is and isn't mine
I'd like to say it doesn't bother me
Like it did not long ago
I'd like to say I'm over it
But it seems that isn't so

I hate to admit it
But I'm afraid it's all true
Cause I wake up every morning
Thinkin about you

Last time I called you
I had too much to drink
But it seems like in those moments
It's like I'm about to sink
Everything around this dump
Reminds me of what we had
I think about the good time
I'm unclear about the bad

Stumblin' way past midnight
Lookin for healin in the moon
I'm driving myself crazy
Thinkin' about you

These corners are so lonesome
And I'm lookin to score
And it seems like this town
Holds nothin' for me no more
Baby I'm sincerely sorry
I never meant to cause you harm
I'm sorry about my drinkin'
I'm sorry about your arm

I don't know what it was
That made me act so cruel
I wish there was something to stop
All this thinkin' about you

So I've been keepin' all your paintings
Hidden deep beneath my bed
I've been keepin' all these secrets
Hold up in my head
I've been findin' all these letters
In notebooks by the phone

But none of these things
Can help me feel any less alone
Third act curtain rising
I present to you a fool
Who's got noone to blame
For always thinkin about you

Michael McDermott

Junkie Girl

Eyes as black as Kentucky coal
Looking like a vulture for the rest of her soul
A day not long ago she cannot recall
White witch in her red velvet shirt
Across the tracks where it no longer hurts
Stories of daggers and the veils hung at Rose Hall
The smartest woman that I've ever met
A sweet soul lover that I'd never forget

She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
I really do think that I love her

She's been with women and she's been with men
See the gates of the kingdom from Lucifer's den
What are you hiding, girl, what are you running from
Pain from panes just looking out
Was it the fear or was it the doubt
That got you running, girl, that got you feeling numb
I don't think she felt me at all
Countin' all the ways she could make me crawl

She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
I really do think that I love her

She talks to me in ways I cannot recognize
Rings on her toes and bruises on her thighs
Strangely enough she was impressively well read
Caught like this it doesn't do much good
To read your horoscope or knock on wood
Strange to be living with so much of you that dead
There's not much anyone can do
When a sucker's soul has turned black and blue

She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
I really do think that I love her

She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
She's my Junkie Girl
I really do think that I love her

Think that I love her
Yeah, think that I love her
. . . think that I love her

Michael McDermott