

# GOOD TRACKZ HANNAH LIKEZ

## Issue 4 (30/6/22)

Happy summer everyone in the northern hemisphere! Welcome to issue #4 of GTHL, arguably one of the better music zines written by a trans woman called Hannah.

This month has been very God-heavy for me, I've become comfortable enough in my beliefs to start talking about them with friends. This is reflected in the tracks I've picked, and I've tried to include music that is religious to me, but not what you think of when someone says "religious music".

Not all these songs are about God, but they are all bangers: hope you enjoy them!

### ***Circumstances*, Devi McCallion & Katie Dey**

<https://blacksquares.bandcamp.com/track/circumstances>

I'd love for Katie and Devi to release more music together. Their lyrical and music styles complement each other so well: *Some New Form of Life* and *Magic Fire Brain* are my two most played releases from either of them.

Every song on *MFB* has some reference to God, from the obvious

i flew above hell carrying christ's cross  
he asked me to hold it up for him

to the more conceptual

glowing pink vortex of beauty and compassion [...]  
a sort of jealous yam  
bending reality into joy and acceptance.

The question hangs over the album: what do we owe God and each other as humans? How can we act morally — is it even possible in a modern world?

back in genesis they never thought it'd be like this  
they never thought it could be like this

*Circumstances* is structured as a dialogue, a human petitioning God about her moral failures. It's kind of an inverse of Job — rather than asking why bad things are happening to her, she wants to know why she can't ever seem to be good.

Like in Job, God actually answers her. And this answer really speaks to me: she's told with love by God that her moral failures are an inevitable part of

being human. That this was how she was “meant to be”. She wasn’t meant to be “useful/good”, she was just meant to be.

Truly we can’t be good, not all the time. We weren’t made to be perfect moral actors. We will all fail, and that’s okay, because we are still loved.

i wish i was good to the world  
(you don’t need to, you don’t need to be good)  
but i love you  
i still love you

## **999999999 IN A DREAM, Ada Rook**

<https://adarook.bandcamp.com/track/999999999-in-a-dream>

It’s over, bitch!

This track goes *insanely* hard. It’s huge, industrial banging and driving. The synth line in the intro and — this word isn’t accurate — choruses are so big and clubby, a moment of hands-in-the-air-get-your-breath-back before you dive back into the dark screamed verses.

## **Hardline, Julien Baker**

<https://julienbaker.bandcamp.com/track/hardline>

Last month I got to see Julien Baker play live, and she opened with *Hardline*. A full live band only amplifies the dynamic changes in this song, and they did a fantastic job of highlighting the quieter moments as well as the loud ones. If you get a chance, I recommend her live shows!

Let’s talk *Hardline*. It opens with these huge organ chords which really sets the tone for Julien’s use of a band on the album. The lyrics are utterly devastating (it’s Julien Baker what do you expect), really hammering home this idea of moral perfectionism and seeing yourself as a “bad person” for crossing lines you set for yourself.

If you set impossible standards for yourself then you don’t need to worry about failing — you’ll always wind up a failure. It’s a dark take on the idea from *Circumstances* that people are fallen and will fail, but God forgives and loves them despite it. Rather than God setting the boundaries here it’s humans, and a lot of the time we aren’t graceful or loving.

## Isaiah 45:23, garbagewitch

<https://mountangoatsshittingposting.bandcamp.com/track/garbagewitch-isaiah-45-23>

(Whenever I listen to *The Life of the World to Come* I always have the Bible verse open at the same time, so here you go!)

By myself I have sworn,  
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness  
a word that shall not return:

“To me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall swear.”

—Isaiah 45:23 (NRSV)

I absolutely love *Isaiah 45:23* and I might include it another month, but for now I'm going to focus on the changes that garbagewitch makes and why I think they make this cover so damn good.

One big change is the tempo and instrumentation: the original is at about 128 BPM, while garbagewitch's cover is around 180. Much faster, much more urgent — the very “folk-punk” guitar only adds to that feeling of “needing to get this off my chest”. To me this completely changes the message of the track: the narrator knows that salvation is coming, but unlike in the original this doesn't give comfort. There is still felt pain and discomfort here.

Second, vocal delivery and of course the lyric change. John is *very* laidback in the original — you can almost imagine a peaceful little smile on the narrator's face as they pray. This is *not* the case for garbagewitch's narrator. There's a lot more almost-voice-breaking and note resolution at the end of lines — very folk punk, but also really serving this theme of “someday I'll be free” not providing the comfort that it maybe “should”. That's what I love about that lyric change. From

I am not this body that imprisons me.

to

I am in my body imprisoned here.

The promise that I *will* be free doesn't change the fact that right now, I am **not**. There's this quite toxic notion that preventing earthly suffering is less important than spiritual salvation, which goes unchallenged in the original track. The comfort that people do try to offer the narrator only ends up hurting them: holding the magazines hurts their hands, and their pain is worsened by the nurse moving them to change their sheets.

Here's what this track says to me: our suffering is real and present, and the promise that one day it will end doesn't help us **now**. We should all try our best to help people who are in pain, and not ignore our own pain either. Acknowledge suffering, and do our best to care for each other through it.

Also garbagewitch's *Sadgirl Prayerbook* is a great folk punk album. Check it out!

## **Links and listens**

*Some New Form of Life*, Devi McCallion & Katie Dey

*Magic Fire Brain*, Devi McCallion & Katie Dey

*Sadgirl Prayerbook*, garbagewitch