

= Ultraviolet (Light My Way) =

" Ultraviolet (Light My Way) " is a song by the rock band U2 and the tenth track from their 1991 album Achtung Baby . Ostensibly about love and dependency , the song also lends itself to religious interpretations , with listeners finding allusions to the Book of Job and writers finding spiritual meaning in its invocation of the light spectrum .

The song 's composition and recording incorporate both serious and throwaway elements , in keeping with the rest of Achtung Baby . While not released as a single , the song has appeared in two films and a U2 business venture was named after it . " Ultraviolet " played a featured role during the encores of the group 's 1992 ? 1993 Zoo TV and 2009 ? 2011 U2 360 ° Tours .

= = Recording = =

" Ultraviolet (Light My Way) " began as two different demos , one variously called " Ultraviolet " and " 69 " (which eventually evolved into the B @-@ side " Lady with the Spinning Head ") and an alternately arranged demo called " Light My Way " . Over the course of the recording sessions , U2 added various overdubs to the song , but producer Brian Eno believed these additions negatively impacted the track . Eno aided the group in editing down the song , and he explained his assistance as such : " I 'd go in and say , ' The song has gone , whatever it is you liked about this song is not there anymore . Sometimes , for example , the song would have disappeared under layers of overdubs . "

= = Composition and interpretation = =

" Ultraviolet (Light My Way) " is written in a 4 / 4 time signature . The lyrics of " Ultraviolet (Light My Way) " are addressed to a lover , and imply that their relationship is threatened by some sort of personal or spiritual crisis , coupled with a sense of unease over obligations . Indeed , lead vocalist Bono has called the song " a little disturbed " .

The song opens with 45 seconds of soft synthesizers and ethereal vocals , somewhat akin in atmospherics to the group 's early 1980s songs " Tomorrow " and " Drowning Man " ; during this , Bono laments that " sometimes I feel like checking out . " This is followed by the entrance of drums and guitar in a familiar U2 rhythm , as Bono describes the burdens of love and how he is " in the black ; can 't see or be seen . " Each verse culminates with the refrain " Baby , baby , baby , light my way . " Flood , who engineered and mixed the recording , noted that there was considerable laughter and debate during the sessions about whether Bono could get away with singing the repeated " baby " s , one of the most heavily @-@ used clichés in pop songs and one that he had avoided up to that point in his songwriting ; Flood later commented that " he got away with it alright . "

Although the song is ostensibly about love and dependency , like many U2 songs , it also lends itself to religious interpretations . Listeners have heard an allusion to the Book of Job 29 : 2 ? 3 and its tale of God serving as a lamp upon Job 's head walking through the darkness . Robyn Brothers suggests that ultraviolet light is " a metaphor for a divine force both unseen to the naked eye and ultimately unknowable to the human intellect . " Conversely , Steve Stockman , author of Walk On : The Spiritual Journey Of U2 , sees " Ultraviolet " as being about Bono 's wife Ali Hewson , and " how when he feels like trash , she makes him clean , " but says there is good reason to interpret the song as being just as much about God . The song 's title supports this view : indigo and violet rarely appear in song lyrics as frequently as other colours , while ultraviolet represents an unseen wavelength beyond the visible spectrum .

As such , the title evokes the image of black light or an invisible force permeating the darkness , whose connotations are spiritual and personal , as well as technological , reflecting themes of modern alienation explored elsewhere on Achtung Baby and its follow @-@ up album , Zooropa . Dianne Ebertt Beeaff , author of A Grand Madness : Ten Years on the Road with U2 , sees the song 's narrator as longing for assistance from any source , religious or secular : " This is a real plea , a

bleary worn @-@ down drained wish to disappear . A drowning man desperate to hold hands in the darkness , to have someone else point the way , to be safe and obscure . " Atara Stein sees " Ultraviolet " as one of several selections on the album in which the protagonist in crisis has elevated his lover into an object of worship , desperate for her to " return to her initial role as his guide and salvation . "

" Ultraviolet " is also one of several songs Bono has written on the theme of woman as spirit , and it echoes the band 's 1980 song " Shadows and Tall Trees " by juxtaposing love with the image of ceilings . A line in Raymond Carver 's late 1980s poem " Suspenders " , about the quiet that comes into a house where no one can sleep , was subconsciously recycled by Bono into the lyric . In Achtung Baby 's running order , " Ultraviolet " serves , with the other two songs at the album 's end , " Acrobat " and " Love Is Blindness " , to explore how couples face the task of reconciling the suffering they have imposed on each other .

The song features a Motown sound @-@ style " telegraph key " rhythm , which gave it the feeling of a pop song . This and the " baby , baby " refrain gave the song a throwaway quality that fit in with Achtung Baby 's mission of deconstructing U2 's image . Paradoxically , the arrangement also featured U2 's 1980s " repeato @-@ riff " guitar style and the rest of the lyric was a serious love song that dealt with themes of anxiety and despair . Bono has described " Ultraviolet " as " an epic U2 song [but] the key of it left my voice in a conversational place and allowed a different kind of lyric writing . " Producer Eno wrote that a combination of opposites within each song was a signature characteristic of Achtung Baby and that as part of that , " Ultraviolet " had a " helicopterish melancholy " . In Achtung Baby 's album package , " Ultraviolet " is presented next to a photograph of a crumbling Berlin building that has a Trabant parked in front of it .

= = Reception = =

Rolling Stone noted that " Ultraviolet " was one of the album 's songs that hearkened more to the group 's past than their new sound , saying that Edge 's " soaring peals on [it] are instantly recognizable " . Jon Pareles of The New York Times wrote that compared to much of the album 's grim depictions of personal relations , " Ultraviolet " depicts love as a haven . In contrast , U2 write John Jobling sees " Ultraviolet " as continuing the album 's theme of " two people tearing each other apart " , despite its " spectral pop " arrangement .

The Boston Globe heard echoes of The Rolling Stones ' 1966 song " Out of Time " in the chorus of " Ultraviolet " . Entertainment Weekly called it the album 's highlight , " where Bono 's soaring voice and the Edge 's pointillistic guitar meld to create one of those uplifting moments we listen to U2 for " . Cedarville University literature professor Scott Calhoun says of one lyrical portion of " Ultraviolet " , " That 's so evocative and works as beautiful writing away from the music . It can stand on its own on the page and , of course , it 's even more effective when accompanied by the music . "

Other writers were less enthusiastic . Q magazine felt that the song was weak and that " Bono falls back on his old habit of trying to be ' inspirational ' by banging up the heat from simmer to meltdown between the verse and chorus . " U2 chroniclers Bill Graham and Caroline van Oosten de Boer also see the song as a throwback to the group 's earlier sound , but say that " the band doesn 't sufficiently develop the initial idea to warrant the five minutes of ' Ultra Violet ' " .

While " Ultraviolet " was not released as a single , it was used in a scene in the 2006 Adam Sandler film Click , and was featured in the 2007 film The Diving Bell and the Butterfly .

The name Ultra Violet was also given to one of U2 's improvised mid @-@ 1990s business initiatives , a joint merchandising venture with MCA Inc . ' s Winterland division ; the partnership soon dissolved , but not before producing several hundred thousand pairs of Bono " Fly " glasses .

= = Live performances = =

" Ultraviolet " is unusual in that the band has only ever played it in concert as part of an encore , usually preceding " With or Without You " . It was first performed at Lakeland Arena in Lakeland , Florida on 29 February 1992 at the start of the Zoo TV Tour , and it remained a staple of the band 's

set lists for the first four legs of the tour , often preceded by a prank call by Bono as his alter @-@ egos Mirror Ball Man or Mr. MacPhisto . The Edge played the song on his Gibson Explorer . It was staged with silver @-@ and @-@ mauve lights thrown against two glitter balls , causing light fragments to swirl around the audience , and with lasers flashing in quick rhythms . Anthony DeCurtis of Rolling Stone characterised its essence as " desperately searching " and said that it helped transition the Zoo TV show towards an ambiguous , introspective conclusion . It became writer Beeaff 's favourite live song on the tour , with Bono 's intense , unrestrained singing producing a strong communal energy ; she singled out the March 1992 Hampton Coliseum show as one in which Bono 's fervent performance approached the point of emotional breakdown and generated " a transcendent and draining experience for everyone . " Although acknowledging the song is an " epic ... with some gorgeous aspects " , Edge has said the song is unwieldy to play live . During Zoo TV , almost all of the numbers from Achtung Baby (and the rest of the set list) were augmented by sequencers to fill out the sound ; on " Ultraviolet " , under @-@ the @-@ stage keyboard tech Des Broadberry playing a sampled guitar figure in the background during Edge 's solo parts . Its last performance as part of the tour was on 28 August 1993 in Dublin , after which the song was retired and did not appear on any of U2 's next three subsequent tours (PopMart , Elevation , and Vertigo) .

The song was revived a decade and a half later with the launch of the U2 360 ° Tour on 30 June 2009 in Barcelona , where it was once again performed as part of the encore . It was introduced by a robotic voice reading excerpts from the poem " Funeral Blues " by W. H. Auden , followed by Bono 's appearance wearing a laser @-@ studded jacket on a darkened stage illuminated only by a glowing steering wheel @-@ shaped microphone that hangs from above . During the performance , Bono would alternatively embrace or hang from the microphone , or twirl around it , or swing it overhead to emphasize the lyrics . The New York Times said its use as " a love song that can double as devotional " helped keep the show 's music and messages in balance , while the Chicago Tribune said that Bono sang the song with fervor as part of an encore during which " the show 's outsized ambitions produced a neon @-@ lighted moment that nearly justified the costly enterprise . " Rolling Stone called the song 's performance " one of the show 's highpoints . " " Ultraviolet " continued to be performed during the encore throughout the first two legs of the tour , with minor changes such as the use of a different introduction .

The band also played the song during its television appearance on Saturday Night Live on 26 September 2009 . In an appearance that avoided both their recent singles and best @-@ known hits , " Ultraviolet " was played as the group 's third number , in full 360 ° Tour staging style as the show 's end credits ran by .

= = Covers = =

The Killers reworked the song for the 2011 tribute album AHK @-@ toong BAY @-@ bi Covered . " Achtung Baby was U2 's ' Holy shit ! ' moment , " remarked drummer Ronnie Vannucci , Jr . " I was in high school when it came out and we 'd drive around in my friend 's mom 's car and rock that shit all the time . When we were asked to record a cover , ' Ultraviolet ' was a unanimous choice . It 's reassuring to know that we 're still on the same page after all these years . We brought it back to its bare bones , dumbed it down a little , took it back to the rock song underneath . "

The beginning of the song was also sampled by Enigma in their 1994 song " The Eyes of Truth " .