

Leyla McCalla: vocals, cello, banjo, guitars
Shawn Myers: percussion, drums
Nahum Zdybel: guitars
Pete Olynciw: electric bass, piano
Maryam Qudus: synthesizers, organs, backing vocals
Louis Michot: fiddle on "Tower"

Recorded and Produced by Maryam Qudus at Dockside Studios, June 20-29, 2023

Assisted by Justin Tocket
Mixed by Maryam Qudus at Best House
Mastered by Heba Kadry, NYC

All songs written by Leyla McCalla (Makala Music (BMI)) except "Love We Had" music by Ali Mohammed Birra, arrangement and lyrics by Leyla McCalla (Makala Music (BMI)).

This album was created at Dockside Studios in Maurice, Louisiana during a deeply collaborative 9-day session in June 2023. The sounds on this album were shaped by this specific collaboration – a connection and synergy established over the past 5 years of playing and touring together.

Cover artwork by Cubs the Poet
Photography by Chris Scheurich
Styling by Ali McNally

Management: Left Bank Artists
leftbankartists.com

Open the Road

I am trying
To be free
I'm am trying, I'm trying,
I'm trying to find me

In the morning
As day breaks
I am finding, I'm finding,
I'm finding my way

Open the road
Carry me home

Open the road
Carry me home

Under star light
Without fear
I am calling, I'm calling
I'm calling you near

Under night sky
I am here
It is coming, it's coming
It's coming so clear

Open the road
Carry me home
Open the road
Carry me home

Love is here
Something's whole
I am seeing, I'm seeing
I see it unfold

Without fear
I am free
I can see, I can see
I can see, I can see

Open the road
Carry me home
Open the road
Carry me home

Scaled to Survive

for Alexis Pauline Gumbs

I don't have to tell you
What I'm thinking
You can already hear
the songs I'm singing
I try to hide
I try to hide

The truth may be thin but it yearns for the light

Thank you for laughing me into this portal
What you learned drowning
Taught me how to breathe.
One ear to the earth,
One ear to the sky,
Reminds me that life is not a straight line

How do you let yourself feel all the pain,
So much is given,
So much more to gain.
You brought me here
The world on its side
Gave me a love, scaled to survive.

Take Me Away

Take me away to that far away place
Take me away to that far away place
Take me away to that far away place
Take me away to that far away place

Make me unafraid of change
Make me unafraid, make me brave
Make me an angel
Who can see where we're going
Make me unafraid of change

Take me away to that far away place

Take me from harm
Make me clear
Help my heart listen
Make me hear
Give me the courage
To face me head on
Make me unafraid of change

Make me an angel
Take me away to that far away place

So I'll Go

I just want to love you
Give you everything
I just want to love you
Can you hear me?

I just want to love you
Give you all I can
I just want to love you
Can you hear me?

But oh, oh
That would be too easy
So I'll Go

If I were to love you
Would you understand?
If I were to love you
Would you see me as I am?

If I could not love you
Would you set me free?
If I could not love you
Would you see me as I am?

But oh, oh
That would be too easy
So I'll Go

Well the flowers love the trees
And the sky loves the clouds
And the earth loves the rain
Cuz it's easy

The grass loves my hands
And grass loves the sky
And the sky loves the clouds
Cuz it's easy

The roots love the soil
And the birds love to fly
And the fish love to swim
Cuz it's easy

Your mouth on my hand
And your face near my lips
And the sky on my tongue
Is so easy

But oh, oh
That would be too easy
Oh, oh,
I just want to love you

So I'll Go
Go
Go.

Tree

I became a tree
Thought no one could care for me
Standing on the side of a cliff
By the sea, by the sea
Thought no one could care for me
Standing on the side of a cliff

Tears fall to the sea
Will the ocean
Heal me?
I'm going down
I'm going down
To clean my soul
Clean me

Fear hovers above
With a voice
Louder than love
So she went down
She's going down
To save her soul
To be free

Will she jump?
Will she swim?
Will she jump?

Will she swim?

Fever hovers above
With a voice
Louder than love
She's going down
She's going down
To save her soul
To be free

Will she jump?
Will she swim?
Will she jump?
Will she swim?

Sun Without the Heat

For Susan Raffo and Frederick Douglass

You want the crops without the plow
You want the rain without the thunder
You want the ocean without the roar of its waters
Can't have the sun without the heat
Nothing that I say hasn't been said before
Nothing that I feel hasn't been felt before
These wounds are so old
These wounds are so old
These wounds are so old
These wounds

You want the crops without the plow
You want the rain without the thunder
You want the ocean without the roar of its waters
Can't have the sun without the heat

So much waste
So much waste
The waste of the city
In the city lights
Weighing so heavy on our minds
'Cause nothing is right
And there's so much wrong
Only we can change ourselves

The road is so long

These wounds are so old
These wounds are so old
These wounds are so old
These wounds

Tower

The veil is lifting
And the tower is falling
I hear a voice
I hear it calling I'm suddenly aware
Of all I fear
I'm suddenly scared
I'm finally clear

You never promised me
You wouldn't break my heart
That was the end and this is the start
You tried to do your best
It's not a game
It's not a test

There is no shame
In what we had
It wasn't wrong
And it wasn't bad
But Love that is true
Has nothing to prove
Love that is true
Has nothing to prove

I never said
We'd never part
You didn't know
How to hold my heart
There is no shame
In what we had
It wasn't wrong
And it wasn't bad

But Love that is true
Has nothing to prove
Love that is true
Has nothing to prove
Love that is true
Has nothing to lose
Love that is true
Has nothing to prove

I never said
I wouldn't break your heart
This is the end
And that was the start
You tried to do your best
It's not a game
And it's not a test

There is no shame
In what we had
It wasn't wrong
And it wasn't bad
It wasn't made to last

Love We Had

When we were younger
Our hearts were open wide
I felt my heart
Stretching so wide
My heart stretching so wide

I thought the love we shared
It would hold up the sky
Meant you would always be mine
I thought the love we shared
Meant that we would never die

It is a race
Against time?
A race against time

And now I'm older
I can not feel your love

Remembering how I hurt you inside
How I hurt you inside

I thought the love we shared
It would hold up the sky
I thought the love we shared
Meant you would always be mine

I thought the love we shared
Meant that we would never die

Is it a race
Against time?
A race against time

Give Yourself a Break

Give yourself a break
Of what you're going through
Give yourself a break
Before you're gone

Give yourself a break
Of what you're going through
You're gonna have to be wrong
It's gonna have to feel wrong?

Sometimes I forget
I was only a child
I thought I always had to know
Everything, everything, everything,
Everything
All the things that you learn as you grow.

So give yourself a break
Of what you're going through
Give yourself a break before you're gone
Give yourself a break of what you're going through
You're gonna have to be wrong

Sometimes I forget
What it means to be a child
I thought I always had to know

Everything, everything, everything,
Everything
All the things that you learn as you grow.

I Want to Believe

I want to believe
In a world I can not see
I want to believe
In a world I have been given

I want to believe
In a love I have not seen
I want to believe
In the love I have been given.

I want to believe
in the light I can not see.
I want to believe in the light
I have been given.

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