

# Ani DiFranco, Self Evident

yes,  
us people are just poems  
we're 90% metaphor  
with a leanness of meaning  
approaching hyper-distillation  
and once upon a time  
we were moonshine  
rushing down the throat of a giraffe  
yes, rushing down the long hallway  
despite what the p.a. announcement says  
yes, rushing down the long stairs  
with the whiskey of eternity  
fermented and distilled  
to eighteen minutes  
burning down our throats  
down the hall  
down the stairs  
in a building so tall  
that it will always be there  
yes, it's part of a pair  
there on the bow of Noah's ark  
the most prestigious couple  
just kickin back parked  
against a perfectly blue sky  
on a morning beatific  
in its Indian summer breeze  
on the day that America  
fell to its knees  
after strutting around for a century  
without saying thank you  
or please  
and the shock was subsonic  
and the smoke was deafening  
between the setup and the punch line  
'cause we were all on time for work that day  
we all boarded that plane for to fly  
and then while the fires were raging  
we all climbed up on the windowsill  
and then we all held hands  
and jumped into the sky  
and every borough looked up when it heard the first blast  
and then every dumb action movie was summarily surpassed  
and the exodus uptown by foot and motorcar  
looked more like war than anything I've seen so far  
so far  
so far  
so fierce and ingenious  
a poetic specter so far gone  
that every jackass newscaster was struck dumb and stumbling  
over 'oh my god' and 'this is unbelievable' and on and on  
and I'll tell you what, while we're at it  
you can keep the pentagon  
keep the propaganda  
keep each and every TV  
that's been trying to convince me  
to participate  
in some prep school punk's plan to perpetuate retribution  
perpetuate retribution  
even as the blue toxic smoke of our lesson in retribution  
is still hanging in the air  
and there's ash on our shoes  
and there's ash in our hair  
and there's a fine silt on every mantle  
from hell's kitchen to Brooklyn

and the streets are full of stories  
sudden twists and near misses  
and soon every open bar is crammed to the rafters  
with tales of narrowly averted disasters  
and the whiskey is flowin  
like never before  
as all over the country  
folks just shake their heads  
and pour  
so here's a toast to all the folks who live in Palestine  
Afghanistan  
Iraq  
El Salvador  
here's a toast to the folks living on the pine ridge reservation  
under the stone cold gaze of mt. Rushmore  
here's a toast to all those nurses and doctors  
who daily provide women with a choice  
who stand down a threat the size of Oklahoma City  
just to listen to a young woman's voice  
here's a toast to all the folks on death row right now  
awaiting the executioner's guillotine  
who are shackled there with dread and can only escape into their heads  
to find peace in the form of a dream  
'cause take away our playstations  
and we are a third world nation  
under the thumb of some blue blood royal son  
who stole the oval office and that phony election  
I mean  
it don't take a weatherman  
to look around and see the weather  
Jeb said he'd deliver Florida, folks  
and boy did he ever  
and we hold these truths to be self evident:  
#1 George W. Bush is not president  
#2 America is not a true democracy  
#3 the media is not fooling me  
'cause I am a poem heeding hyper-distillation  
I've got no room for a lie so verbose  
I'm looking out over my whole human family  
and I'm raising my glass in a toast  
here's to our last drink of fossil fuels  
let us vow to get off of this sauce  
shoo away the swarms of commuter planes  
and find that train ticket we lost  
'cause once upon a time the line followed the river  
and peeked into all the backyards  
and the laundry was waving  
the graffiti was teasing us  
from brick walls and bridges  
we were rolling over ridges  
through valleys  
under stars  
I dream of touring like Duke Ellington  
in my own railroad car  
I dream of waiting on the tall blonde wooden benches  
in a grand station aglow with grace  
and then standing out on the platform  
and feeling the air on my face  
give back the night its distant whistle  
give the darkness back its soul  
give the big oil companies the finger finally  
and relearn how to rock-n-roll  
yes, the lessons are all around us and a change is waiting there  
so it's time to pick through the rubble, clean the streets  
and clear the air

get our government to pull its big dick out of the sand  
of someone else's desert  
put it back in its pants  
and quit the hypocritical chants of  
freedom forever  
'cause when one lone phone rang  
in two thousand and one  
at ten after nine  
on nine one one  
which is the number we all called  
when that lone phone rang right off the wall  
right off our desk and down the long hall  
down the long stairs  
in a building so tall  
that the whole world turned  
just to watch it fall  
and while we're at it  
remember the first time around?  
the bomb?  
the Ryder truck?  
the parking garage?  
the princess that didn't even feel the pea?  
remember joking around in our apartment on avenue D?  
can you imagine how many paper coffee cups would have to change their design  
following a fantastical reversal of the New York skyline?!  
it was a joke, of course  
it was a joke  
at the time  
and that was just a few years ago  
so let the record show  
that the FBI was all over that case  
that the plot was obvious and in everybody's face  
and scoping that scene  
religiously  
the CIA  
or is it KGB?  
committing countless crimes against humanity  
with this kind of eventuality  
as its excuse  
for abuse after expensive abuse  
and it didn't have a clue  
look, another window to see through  
way up here  
on the 104th floor  
look  
another key  
another door  
10% literal  
90% metaphor  
3000 some poems disguised as people  
on an almost too perfect day  
must be more than poems  
in some asshole's passion play  
so now it's your job  
and it's my job  
to make it that way  
to make sure they didn't die in vain  
sshhhhhhh....  
baby listen  
hear the train?