



EMBER LOTUS

The Ember Lotus EP

Becoming the Self

Track stories & lyrics



I II III IV V VI

SIX MOVEMENTS / ONE CONTINUOUS RECONSTRUCTION



The six movements

COLLAPSE

I The Glass Castle Falls

Story: The Glass Castle Falls

CONFRONTATION

II One. Two. Three.

Story: 3 Strikes, Look Within

QUESTION

III Who Am I?

Story: The Only Question

EXCAVATION

IV Layers to Love

Story: Secrets in the Attic

LOVE

V I Need to (Learn to) Love Me

Story: I Can't Love

BECOMING

VI What We've Always Been

Story: Me, For the First Time

Track 1 Story: The Glass Castle Falls

The Glass Castle Falls



It's funny how good we get at lying to ourselves. There comes a point when we can't even distinguish our delusions from reality, and we trap ourselves in a hellish prison of our own making. I say hell because, deep down in our souls, under the diligent watch of our inner being, we know these delusions for what they are. This uncomfortable knowing is at the root of our discomfort with ourselves. It's the little voice in our head that tries to tell us what's what. For those of us who are a little more sensitive, it's that gut feeling that something isn't right - a feeling that grows stronger the more we force ourselves in the wrong direction.

What I learned from my visit with my sister was that it is often those closest to us, the people we trust with the most authentic versions of ourselves, who hold the key to our enlightenment. This is especially true when we've strayed so far off our path that we've lost touch with our inner beings - shut them out, really - and are completely unaware of just how far we've drifted. When we enter a state of perpetual denial of our truths, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously, we lose the ability to realign with our true selves and purpose. This is when our loved ones can come into play, especially those with whom we're spiritually bonded.

The truth hurts. You don't have to accept it to feel the pain; you don't even need to face it. If you're living a lie, you simply need to hear something you know to be true for your mind to take over and shut you down. Hell, sometimes it does the opposite and riles you up to the point of implosion. Either way, this is what we call a trigger. It's nothing more than something that provokes a part of you that you're denying or repressing. When you distrust the source, it's easy to rationalize what you're hearing to pacify the painful experience of facing reality. However, when you do respect it, it can serve as a catalyst for the downfall of the house of cards you call your identity.

When we are lost and someone tries to point out a possible path back to self, we may find ourselves rejecting their help to avoid taking responsibility for getting lost in the first place. After all, who wants to admit that they have no idea what they're doing and that they've been aimlessly wandering in an attempt to find their way home? Oh, the lies we will tell ourselves to protect our egos. Oh, how the ego will do everything in its power to convince you of your own invincibility.

Lyrics: The Glass Castle Falls

The Glass Castle Falls



VERSE

Always been the one to try and fix you
Always thought I was the hero of your book
Never thought to question if that was true
Never found you 'cause I didn't stop to look

VERSE

I guess I never really gave a damn
I'm just a little boy pretending he's a man
Building walls from all these love scars
Try my best to love you as you are
To love you as you are
To love you as you are
To love you as you are

CHORUS

This castle made of glass, where I've decided I'm
the king
Shattering before me, now I'm forced to stop and
think
Do I want to be the ruler of a kingdom built on
lies?
A hero in my fantasies, a sinner in disguise.

BRIDGE

Bring me down
Blinded, flying too close to the sun
And now, I think I see you, I want to see you
On the ground
Dried up from the tears I've made you cry
And I, I want to see you, I want to see

CHORUS

This castle made of glass, where I've decided I'm
the king
Shattering before me, so I'm forced to stop and
think
I don't want to be the ruler of a kingdom built on
lies
The hero in my fantasies but a sinner in disguise
A man who's playing make-believe in his castle in
the sky.

Track 2 Story: 3 Strikes, Look Within

3 Strikes, Look Within



At some point in my life - I don't remember when - I made a rule that I would give myself 3 strikes when it came to taking feedback from the world. 1st strike: I let someone else's opinion slide right off me as just that, their subjective opinion. 2nd strike: I take the feedback seriously and make a mental note that this may be a recurring personality trait people can easily pick up on. 3rd strike: I can no longer ignore the feedback and must decide what to do with it. Do I let that personality trait define me, or do I change that thing about myself because I dislike how it feels to be that person?

Change is simple, sometimes even easy with the right support and mindset. Deciding you want to change is hard. I have a hard time distinguishing between the things I like about myself that are simply misunderstood and the negative traits that make me uncomfortable because I already know them to be true. I think many of us have trouble with this because becoming aware of something we never believed to be an issue forces us to confront ourselves. Thankfully, I've found that it's actually quite easy to know when you're dealing with an uncomfortable truth. Personally, I've learned that I shield myself by avoiding responsibility for the traits that make me uncomfortable.

It's hard to look at yourself and accept that you don't like some of the things you see. I believe that is because the person projected into the 'mirror' is someone you know you aren't. You don't hate yourself; it's impossible. Our default is love. However, if we keep pulling ourselves away from who we truly are and dragging our souls away from center, it's easy to understand why we may feel so conflicted by the person we see as 'ourselves.'

If we believe that we create our realities, then perhaps feedback from others is just our inner being's manifested desire for us to question what we've become so we can be who we are. After all, there is always a reality where you don't have a certain life-changing conversation with someone. We may as well accept the blessings we receive in disguise and use them to return to Self.

Lyrics: One. Two. Three.

One. Two. Three.

II

VERSE

Well, here I am in all my glory
Facing myself in the eyes of the crowd
Will I tell myself the same old story?
Will I lie to the ones who know it all?

VERSE

The voices that once made me feel so good
Now the words they say burn me with the truth
Light me up like I knew they would
But will I finally embrace the fall?

CHORUS

Tell me once and it's probably just you
Tell me twice and I'll consider if it's true
Tell me three and it's more than likely me that has
to change
Or everything will always stay the same

VERSE

This gravity that brings me down
Feeling heavy, hearing everything aloud
The only one who believes in all my lies
Lies alone with himself, never sleeps through the
night

VERSE

Is my pride worth a life where I'm alone?
Is my ego where I want to make my home?
What I'm asking, I think I've always known
So maybe now I stop this show I'm living

CHORUS

Tell me once and it's probably just you
Tell me twice and I'll consider if it's true
Tell me three and it's more than likely me that has
to change
Or everything will always stay the same

Track 3 Story: The Only Question

The Only Question



I believe that I saved myself when I made the rule to question myself and my behaviors after hearing something 3 times from 3 separate loved ones. If our world is a projection of our mind, something I believe to be true, then our interactions with the people around us serve as mirrors for who we are. It's extremely difficult to accept that you may be the reason some things don't work out, or that problems in your life may be rooted in your own choices and behaviors. Yet the possibility makes sense if you consider that the only true control you have in life is over the choices you make. What if you chose differently today? What if you were brave enough to dive into the deep end of the unknown and explore what life would be like if you didn't play it safe in the shallow end you know so well?

What if you even gave up control over the only thing we can control, freely and willingly letting life take care of itself? A terrifying thought indeed when we've become so accustomed to the fear elicited by change. Then I asked myself the question that would change the way I think forever: 'Who Am I?'

I didn't have an answer to this question, or at least I didn't really believe the answers I was spitting out. Am I a musician? No, not really. I don't tie myself to that identity. Am I Ecuadorian? Well, I suppose, but I've never strongly identified with my culture. I don't even consider myself American, really. I went through the laundry list of identities I had cultivated over the years, eventually treating even my defining attributes as identities. Sure, I'm smart. Sure, I can be funny. Sure, I'm a kind person while still assertive when necessary. However, is that me? What is 'me' if not the conglomeration of all these random characteristics I've picked up throughout my life, most of them given to me or adopted from my environment?

The more I tried to answer the question, the more questions came up and the more lost I became. With every question that popped up and remained unanswered, I slowly started to lose my grasp on reality and question life itself. Things got very existential very quickly. Why do I get so defensive when people call me out on things? Why have people called me 'self-righteous' and 'selfish' enough times to warrant this intense level of introspection? Why don't I know the answers to these questions? What is keeping me from knowing?

The Only Question

III

I finally accepted that I needed help. These questions perplexed me, and my inability to answer them made me deeply uncomfortable. They ate away at me until I finally gave up and more than likely Googled something that started me down the rabbit hole of self-help content that would eventually bring me to the next point of this journey. All I knew was that I could no longer ignore what bothered me. Enough people in my life had pointed out things about me to create discomfort and a need for reflection. I still couldn't answer the question at the root of all my confusion and frustration: 'Who Am I?'

QUESTION

Who Am I?

Lyrics: Who Am I?

Who Am I?



VERSE

I don't remember me
All I remember are the things they said I'd be
Now I find myself lost in empty words
When was the last time I let my Self be heard?

VERSE

Is it really this easy to lose yourself?
All I think is what I've been told
All I know is what I've been sold
Will I finally get to know the "me" that lies behind
my heart and soul?

CHORUS

Am I all the things they tell me that I am?
Am I all the moments, all the things I've felt since
life began?
Am I the sum of all these parts of me I barely
understand?
Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?

BRIDGE

Who am I? What is "me"?
Does my past life really hold the key?
Who are you to tell me what's true?
Judging me for everything I do
But here I am with all these questions
Questioning all my intentions
Am I really who I say I am?
Will I let the world define me, just because it can?

CHORUS

Will I let them keep me locked up in a box?
Will I waste my time, keeping up while staring at
the clock?
Will I find the "me" who has the key to the doors
that I've kept locked?
Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?

Track 4 Story: Secrets in the Attic

Secrets in the Attic

IV

The mind is truly the work of a greater power. It's hard to fathom that, essentially, our brains are supercomputers that work as projectors of sorts. We come to this planet preloaded with everything we need to thrive and stay connected with our souls, our inner beings, so that we can interact with the playground that the higher powers created for us to explore and evolve. With time, however, I believe humanity lost touch with this 'Source' of infinite knowledge and energy, perhaps choosing at some pivotal moment to sever that bond and fend for itself.

Behind layers and layers of unresolved issues, and the impressions left by moments and experiences we'd rather forget than address, lies what I'd like to believe is our Pure Core. That core is the key to what many have called an 'enlightened' state. As we begin to peel back the layers and remove our misconceptions of who we are, we feel lighter and lighter. Shedding these layers is one thing psychologists try to support through modern therapeutic practices, but the mind is a formidable adversary in our attempt to accept the truths that allow our freedom. If we are successful, however, we gain new wisdom and insights that are only available when we tap into our authentic state. In this belief, remembering who we actually are requires us to unlearn the conditioning that separated us from Source.

Removing layers is difficult because of the nature of self-beliefs and societal and cultural expectations. Putting them on, however, can happen at any time if we aren't careful to follow the guidance of our Inner Being once we establish a connection to it. When we go against what we know to be true, we engage in self-deception, or what we call 'lying.' This lie is rationalized by our minds, our egos, especially when we lack a strong sense of self. Without a foundation of love for Self, the mind tries to protect the fragile identity it has built. If you are 'secure' in your Self, it is much easier to stay on the path and avoid detours that may force you to 'loop.' Excessive self-deception can block the path to your authentic self, that Inner Being who connects us to Source.

My first introduction to a more enlightened state came from my decision to address and remove layers of deception in my life.

Lyrics: Layers to Love

Layers to Love

IV

VERSE

Sitting all alone
Well, I guess I have myself
Truth be told I'd rather be with anybody else right
now.

VERSE

But no, I love myself. Don't I?
I know myself. Don't I?
Being this sincere, things are all too clear.

PRE-CHORUS

The me I'd love to be behind these layers
The me that needs to breathe, that needs the air
Buried in false narratives
What I receive is what I choose to give.

CHORUS

Layer by layer, moments I've become
Prisons of my past, I remove them one by one.
Layers that I strip away—they bring me closer,
bring me closer to Love
To Love
Every choice that's hard to make—it brings me
closer, brings me closer to Love

VERSE

Tears keep falling, truth keeps calling
The brighter side lies right behind my pain
Lies I'm lost in, loops I'm caught in
Always seem the same, and I'm the one to blame

PRE-CHORUS

The me I'd love to be behind these layers
The me that needs to breathe, that needs the air
Buried in false narratives
What I receive is what I choose to give.

CHORUS

Layer by layer, moments I've become
Prisons of my past, I remove them one by one.
Layers that I strip away—they bring me closer,
bring me closer to Love
Every choice that's hard to make—it brings me
closer, brings me closer to Love

Track 5 Story: I Can't Love



I Can't Love

I remember sitting in my room alone, probably on day 5 or 6 of my search for self, what I called intense self-therapy. So much crying, so many epiphanies, so much pain I was putting myself through for the promise of existential and emotional liberation. It was around this time that I concluded I had lost myself a very long time ago. Because of that, I believed that even if I miraculously loved myself in this state, it would not really be love for my Self. It would be love for a persona I created. Maybe that's the difference between Self-love and narcissism: one is a true love for your core being, that connection to Source that is pure in essence, and the other is a fabrication of Love that we claim to feel for something created by our choices of self-deception.

When I realized that I could not possibly love my Self, my inner being, I became acutely self-conscious. I finally understood what people meant when they said, 'You can't love anyone if you don't love yourself.' When I expressed my 'love' for others, it came from a place of false profundity. The words felt empty because I could neither accept Love nor recognize it within myself. Since I had lost touch with my Inner Being, I had no concept of Self. I could not love something that I inherently did not acknowledge, let alone understand. Where was this lack of self coming from? Why was it so hard to accept love? How could I have ever sincerely told anyone else that I loved them without knowing the answers to these questions for my Self?

In that moment, for reasons I still believe to be an act of divine intervention, I chose to dig into all of my traumas with the intention of understanding why I was the way I was. I had enough of making excuses for myself. Some time before this, under the guiding influence of psychedelics, I had confronted myself and asked what I was most afraid of. The answer was that my biggest fear, the demon that had haunted me so relentlessly throughout my life, was actually my inner child. I remember looking at that shadowy figure my mind projected from my subconscious and thinking that, if I let it, it would utterly consume me in an attempt to regain control of my Self. Instead, I stopped shutting it out, gave it a hug, and chose Love rather than Fear.

Though I made serious progress that day, it was simply the beginning of this journey within. That memory gave me the will to explore places I didn't want to explore before. I feared what Truth would reveal, but in actively seeking it, I knew my choice was to either accept it or create yet another inescapable demon.

No, thank you. I'd rather come to terms with the truth that I have issues I'm avoiding than add another layer of self-deception I'd have to unravel later. So, sadly and happily, paradoxically, I accepted that I simply didn't love my Self. I didn't know who my Self even was.

Lyrics: I Need to (Learn to) Love Me

I Need to (Learn to) Love Me



VERSE

Did they believe me when I said the words “I love you”?
'Cause lately I'm not sure if that was true.
Trying to convince myself I mean the words I say,
But I don't even love myself that way.

VERSE

I love ideas, especially the big ones.
The bigger, the better, the easier to hide.
Can't be disappointed if I didn't even try.
I guess I'll die alone with all my lies.

CHORUS

My Soul can't really love the way it wants to.
'Cause I can't give my Soul the love it needs.
Deep in my heart, I know that's where I have to start.
But 'til then, I guess the truth is that I don't really love Me.

BRIDGE

I want to open up
To remember the way it felt to love so openly
I want to fill my cup
So I can give all the love that overflows in me
I want to say “I love you”
I want those words to be true
But I need to learn to love me
I know I need to love me

PRE-CHORUS

I know I need to love me
I need to learn to love me
I know I need to love me

CHORUS

My Soul can't really love the way it wants to.
'Cause I can't give my Soul the love it needs.
Deep in my heart, I know that's where I have to start.
But 'til then, I guess the truth is that I don't really love Me.
But 'til then, I guess the truth is that I don't really love Me.

Track 6 Story: Me, For the First Time

Me, For the First Time

VI

I always tell people the story of my name, and I always get the same ‘yeah, sure’ reaction. After 3 weeks of self-imposed therapy, I literally just woke up one day, sat on my bed, and had the thought, ‘I need to change my name. I am not Bryan anymore.’ My biggest obstacle has always been facing the darkness within me, accepting that there’s more to me than just the people-pleasing doormat I felt everyone saw me as for most of my life. Behind all that niceness was an angry, controlling, manipulative, egotistical, self-righteous part of me that I had shut out for most of my life because I didn’t know how to control it. This, this was my darkness. That day, I recognized that the progress I was looking to make was completely dependent on making peace with the side of myself I had never explored.

I had always been afraid of the dark, but I needed to find peace within it. Peace in darkness. That resonated with me. Because Latin sits at the root of many languages, it felt right to use it as I renamed myself. Peace in Darkness. Pax in Tenebris. Paxin Tenebris. There it was.

The name empowered me. I felt strong. I felt as if I had tapped into something that amplified my Being. When I told everyone that I was changing my name, it caught them by surprise. There were those who understood, those who didn’t, and those who couldn’t care less what I called myself. I hid my true reason for changing my name behind the silly lie that I was doing it so that, when I made it big, people wouldn’t associate me with my family. Typing it out, it sounds narcissistic. The irony is that I used the implied narcissism to hide a much more self-loving reason: I changed my name because every time someone called me by my old one, it acted as a trigger, reconditioning me to be someone I no longer accepted as my Self.

My first time introducing myself as Paxin was surreal. It was my most intricate creation, a whole new me. Who was Paxin? They didn’t know, but neither did I. I knew who Bryan was, so every time I introduced myself with that name, I subconsciously acted out the program I’d been conditioned to associate with it. Now, however, I had a clean slate. I could make Paxin anyone, so I made him into what I needed him to be: everything I wasn’t as Bryan.

This step gave me insight into the dark side of myself I had shunned for most of my life. As I explored it, I felt the power of not caring what others thought of me, the power of walking into a room as someone important because I made myself feel important, and the power of putting myself first for the first time in my life. I unearthed a part of me I had repressed for years. The only way to master this side, I thought, was to lean into it hard. Unfortunately, as I would soon learn, I didn’t know how to control it. A very dangerous thing indeed. A risk. Through that experience, however, I remembered my most honest and true Self. Worth it.

Lyrics: What We've Always Been

What We've Always Been

VI

VERSE

Here he is, the part of me I locked away in fear.
The one with all the battle scars
I tried to drown in all my tears.

VERSE

Not a whole man, but the broken boy I tried to
leave behind.
In the dark, so long, that now my light can make
him blind.
Cry little one, cry. Cry little one, cry.

PRE-CHORUS

It's your turn, I gave my best.
After all these years I must confess
I need you now, my oldest friend.
I'm giving in to who I've always been.

CHORUS

In the dark, that's where I found my peace in
pieces.
One by one I picked them up and built again.
In the light is where we'll be, you'll see.
The love we find inside ourselves stays with us till
the end.

VIOLIN SOLO**CHORUS**

In the dark, that's where I found my peace in
pieces.
One by one I picked them up and built again.
In the light is where we'll be, you'll see, my little
me.
The love we find inside ourselves stays with us till
the end.

HARMONIZED A CAPPELLA

The love we find inside ourselves stays with us till
the end.



PROCESS & CREDITS

The work, and how it was made.

CREATIVE AUTHORSHIP

Written and creatively directed by Paxin Tenebris. AI-generated vocal and instrumental performance created with Eleven Music.

PROCESS DISCLOSURE

Human-written lyrics and human-authored source melody, rhythm, and structure by Paxin Tenebris. AI-generated vocal and instrumental performance created with Eleven Music, then shaped through iterative direction, selection, production, mastering, and sequencing.

VISUAL WORLD

Artwork created with AI under the creative direction of Paxin Tenebris / Ember Lotus.

No collaborators. Production, mastering, version selection, and EP sequencing by Paxin Tenebris.

The process is transparent.

The emotional world is the headline.