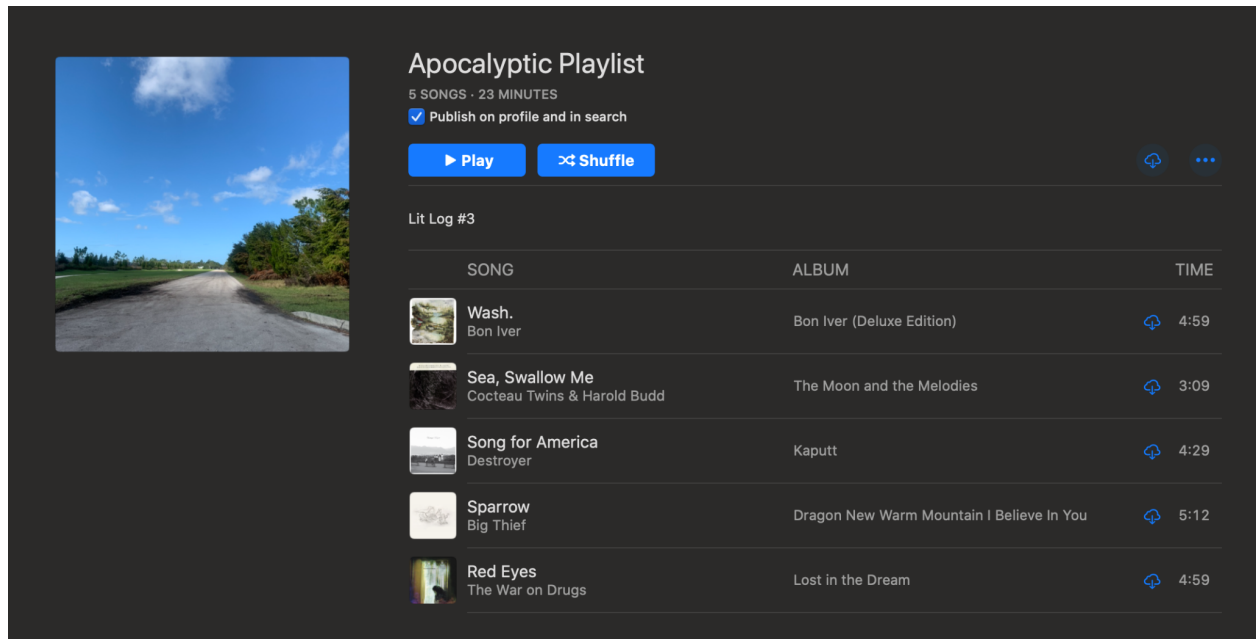


Lit Log #3  
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Mrs. Giknis  
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### Apocalyptic Playlist



#### **Wash.** by Bon Iver

The album that this song comes from is rustic and woodsy from start to finish. The music has a distinctly spiritual, moody tone.. From melody alone, any of the songs from the album belong on this playlist. *Wash.*, however, has key lyrical ties to *The Road*.

*“Climb  
Is all we know  
When thaw  
Is not below us  
No, can't grow up  
In that iron ground”*

The first verse reminds me of how the man and boy must traverse endlessly through the harsh, cold environment. The boy will never have an opportunity to grow up with a normal life. His formative years are spent endlessly in fatigue, pushed to his physical limit and traumatized again and again by his surroundings. The man laments this often. “This is my child, he said. I wash a dead man’s brains out of his hair. That is my job.” (74). The only option for the man and the boy is to keep pushing, keep travelling down the road.

*“I... I'm growing like the quickening hues*

*I... I'm telling darkness from lines on you"*

The boy is at an age where the world around him should start to come into perspective. These lyrics from the chorus draw ties to a key motif of the story, as well as how his outlook on the world is shaped by his father. Gray is the most prominent color in the story; it's written 84 times over the 287 pages. "The boy stared bleakly at the gray drifts," (98). As the world around him comes into focus, all he can see is gray. It's both an effect of the ash blanketing the earth as well as the general dismalness of the story.

As the story progresses, his father has a harder and harder time staying optimistic, and it rubs off on the boy. After an encounter with another little boy, the boy has given up hope completely. "Do you want to die? Is that what you want?" the man asks him. "I don't care, I don't care," (85) he responds.

***Sea, Swallow Me*** by Cocteau Twins

The title of this song alone has the same desolate, naturalistic feeling that is present throughout the entirety of *The Road*. The lyrics reflect the angrier side of the book. The man holds a lot of anger in his heart over the way his life has become. He curses whatever higher power has caused the life he lives. He tries to conceal these intense emotions as much as he can, especially in the presence of the boy.

The lyric that repeats throughout the song is "*Yell, I wanted more.*" This lyric reminded me distinctly of how the man would cry as his son slept. "There were times when he sat watching the boy sleep that he would begin to sob uncontrollably but it wasn't about death. He wasn't sure what it was about but he thought it was about beauty or about goodness." (129). The man tries his best throughout the book to not let himself feel anything. His sole mission is to keep the boy alive. Only when he thinks about what more he could have, or how things could be different, does he break down.

***Song For America*** by Destroyer

While only the outro of this song feels directly related to *The Road*, all of the lyrics have a wry, bleak, and generally creepy vibe that I feel works well with the book. The melody is actually jazzy and the song feels upbeat at first, but the lyrics are quite the contrast.

*"Jessica's gone on vacation  
On the dark side of town forever  
Who knew? Who knew?"*

The first verse introduces us to a character but offers us very little information about her, besides the fact that she's gone to the dark side of town. This reminded me of how context is given throughout the book. We are placed right into the life of the man and the boy, but don't learn about the dystopia they live in until much later. Context is revealed over time, rather than all in the beginning. The author presents us with facts about the lifestyle of the characters, then later we understand why their lifestyle is this way. It's an extremely effective method of storytelling.

*"Winter, spring, summer, and fall  
Animals crawl towards death's embrace"*

This lyric from the outro lines up with the book exactly. While it hasn't been revealed why yet, the vast majority of animals have died out in the setting of *The Road*. "There was yet a lingering odor of cows in the barn and he stood there thinking about cows and he realized that they were extinct." (120). While it's an indubitable fact that the animals are gone, the man struggles to reckon with it. As they traverse the landscape around them, he's reminded of a time when animals did exist among them.

***Sparrow*** by Big Thief

This song has a broader theme of catastrophe and grief using motifs of nature, which I believe connects to *The Road* perfectly. The beginning of the second verse describes a woman leaving, similar to the book. While there is no reference to suicide in the song, similar feelings of abandonment are expressed.

*"Nakedly running, I saw her  
Boy chasing after to stall her  
I wish I'd have spoken to call her"*

At the beginning of the transition into the dystopian society, the woman is pregnant with the boy. After his birth, she feels disconnected, wary, and depressed. She and the man argue a lot, and in time she decides she has to go. "She was gone and the coldness of it was her final gift," (58). She uses one of the three bullets remaining in their gun to kill herself.

*"Threading the blood through the apple  
Sucking the juice from the apple  
Eating the seeds of the apple  
Bearing the tree of the apple"*

In a life where there is never a promised source of food, anything the man and boy can find to eat holds huge significance. When the man finds an orchard with apples on page 120, he eats one with the intensity conveyed in these lyrics. Finding the apple trees is the difference between life and death for him and his son. Even though the fruits are "hard and brown and shriveled...dry and almost tasteless," (121), they are written about with reverent emotion.

***Red Eyes*** by War on Drugs

The lead vocalist on this song, Adam Granduciel, has this labored, gritty way of singing that conveys emotions that I feel belong with *The Road*. Lyrically, it brings together themes of losing faith, being physically and mentally lost, impurity, and struggling with an internal dialogue.

*"Surrounded by the night  
Surrounded by the night and you don't give in  
But you abuse my faith"*

Darkness is a difficult and inevitable obstacle for the man and the boy, both mentally and physically. There are moments throughout the story in which they have to flee through the uneven terrain of the forest, and it's absolutely more difficult to do in the pitch black night. "They set out through the dark woods...They staggered on like drunks," (115). Often, one or both of them falls but they must get up and keep running. Mentally, darkness brings an onslaught of dark, disturbing thoughts that the man is unable to push out of his head. "*Don't want another dark time to think to myself*" this lyric from the chorus reminded me of the man's attempts to not let his mind wander when the darkness settles in.