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SONGS OF YEARNING FOR VALENTINE’S DAY

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Are you someone who has tried repeatedly to secure a romantic relationship, but just can’t seem to make it work? Or perhaps a hopeless romantic who tries just a bit too hard? If you identify with either of these, or if you just don’t have someone to spend Valentine’s Day with this year, these songs with strong themes of yearning might be relatable or comforting for you.

Jeff Buckley – “Lover, You Should’ve Come Over”

Perhaps the quintessential yearning song, Jeff Buckley’s “Lover, You Should’ve Come Over” captures the full emotional spectrum of wanting a relationship while not being ready for one. With verse after verse of despondent imagery, heightened by the aching refrain: “Too young to hold on / And too old to just break free and run,” it’s a masterclass on the feeling of wanting something unobtainable. Buckley manages to heighten the intensity in the bridge with a series of earth-shattering lines that keep building on each other.

The version that appears on Buckley’s only studio album, “Grace,” is fiery and cinematic. But if you want a stripped back performance that exudes desperation for an exceptionally wistful Valentine’s Day, I’d recommend the version that appears on the live album, “Live at Sin-é.”

Black Country, New Road – “Concorde”

What does Concorde — a failed European supersonic passenger jet — and unrequited love have in common? Well, if you were to ask Isaac Wood, former frontman for the United Kingdom indie rock band Black Country, New Road, the answer would be a lot. On

“Concorde,” Wood uses a series of clever similes and metaphors to create a rich profile of the speaker, who stumbles up hills just to barely get closer to their person of interest, characterized as Concorde itself.

The Concorde fallacy, referring to the immense resources put into the Concorde jet only for more problems to arise, is also at play here. In the verses, you see the speaker investing their all into this person but not getting any closer to a meaningful relationship. With a constantly changing chorus and explosive ending, where guitar and saxophone lash out in cathartic release, this is the perfect Valentine’s Day song for those actively pursuing romantic relationships but constantly and frustratingly falling short.

Joni Mitchell – “All I Want”

“All I Want,” the opening track to Joni Mitchell’s classic 1971 singer-songwriter album “Blue,” is a simple yet perfect depiction of desire. Mitchell’s longing is multifaceted — while mostly about a romantic connection, she extends this yearning towards the broader self-fulfillment and sense of purpose she hopes to gain from being happy with someone.

The words “want” and “wanna” together appear 23 times within the three-and-a-half-minute runtime, and Mitchell accentuates the lyrical passion with a voice that freely soars into piercing, airy falsettos. It’s an apt listen for anyone mildly rueful about not having a valentine on the 14th but confident about having better odds next year.

Sufjan Stevens – “Futile Devices”

Sufjan Stevens’ “Futile Devices” has appeared in a few places, primarily on his 2010 album “The Age of Adz,” though its most known for its use as a remix for the 2017 film

“Call Me by Your Name.” It’s a quiet, reflective ode to a male figure the narrator seems to be attracted to. But despite the romantic admiration, the narrator never acts, instead thinking: “And I would say I love you, but saying it out loud is hard.” While barely over two minutes in length, “Futile Devices” is a powerful listen that shines light on internal and social limitations that can make queer love feel confusing and unattainable.

Slowdive – “Alison”

Rarely does a genre name describe a song’s sound as well as “dream pop” encapsulates “Alison,” the opener to U.K. shoegaze act Slowdive’s 1993 album, “Souvlaki.” The track describes a psychedelic journey while sounding just like one, with lead vocalist Neil Halstead’s echoing vocals working with reverb-soaked guitar to craft a transcendental experience. Halstead makes references to “floating,” “sinking” and feeling “lost,” but the narrator ultimately feels stable thanks to the comforting presence of Alison.

But at the end of the song, Alison seems to disappear, with the final call “I guess she’s out there somewhere” producing no answer. The last minute of swelling and then fading instrumentals feels like a fruitless quest to find her, cementing this as yet another solid though abstract depiction of longing.

Cameron Winter – “Love Takes Miles”

Somehow, singer-songwriter Cameron Winter has found himself in some sort of niche cultural moment as an indie sensation, at least online. At the center of his success as a solo artist and as frontman for the New York indie rock band Geese is the song “Love Takes Miles,” released toward the end of



COMIC BY JASON J SAMPSON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST

2024. On the track, Winter explores wanting to love, yet not being ready because “Love takes miles, love takes years.”

The song’s upbeat, jaunty cadence is almost enough to overshadow the craving lyrics and Winter’s warbly, unconventional vocals. Still, the sense of unavoidable pain ma-

terializes when Winter cries: “I need somebody sent down from the sun that talks to me how you used to.” But even with this sense of loss and constant pining, there’s the underlying belief that given time, love is possible. This one’s for all the optimistic yearners out there willing to bide their time.

5 tips for surviving a long-distance Valentine’s Day



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Whether you are a two-hour car ride or an entire continent apart, long-distance relationships can be tough, especially around the holidays.

Valentine’s Day, for most, is a day of celebration. It’s a day of gratitude and showing up for your loved ones extra so they know how much they mean to you. But for those in long-distance relationships, the holiday can be a harsh reminder of all the things you might be missing out on because you are apart. Long-distance doesn’t have to mean you can’t celebrate, though. Here are five tips to surviving a long-distance Valentine’s Day from a seasoned long-distance veteran.

Do something for yourself

Valentine’s Day is supposed to reflect how much you love someone, so why not treat yourself to something special. Buy yourself flowers, order your favorite dinner, watch that new show you’ve been dying to watch but haven’t found the right time for and enjoy your night.

There are a lot of misconceptions about the holiday, like if your partner isn’t around or you don’t have one, you just shouldn’t celebrate, but I think life is too short to waste your time waiting around

for a traditional Valentine’s Day. You’re the only constant in your life and I think it’s important to celebrate that.

It’s okay to be upset, but don’t wallow

It’s human nature to be upset or even jealous during Valentine’s Day, especially when those around you can be with their partners and go to fancy dinners. It’s important to remember that it’s okay to feel that way, but don’t let it consume you.

I honestly think it’s beneficial to allow yourself time to grieve what could have been. But bottling up how you feel only makes things worse. Let it out and then get up and do something that makes you feel good. You don’t want to be miserable, and I promise your partner doesn’t want you to be either.

Spend time with family and friends

There is so much more to life than waiting. Finding friends who also don’t have plans and having a special night with them can be a great distraction. Celebrate “Galentine’s Day,” watch a sports game, go to a gym class or just spend quality time with them. It gives you something else to focus on and allows you to nurture other relationships rather than your romantic one, which are equally important.

Going out to dinner with your family is another

great way to celebrate. It’s a holiday full of love and company; it doesn’t matter who you spend it with.

Send gifts and cards via mail

Just because you can’t see your partner doesn’t mean you can’t celebrate them. Sending a gift or card in the mail is a great way to show your partner that the distance doesn’t mean they aren’t loved. It doesn’t have to be anything big or grand either. A meaningful gesture can go a long way, even something small like sending your partner money to buy flowers and chocolate can mean a lot.

Utilize Technology

We are so lucky to have technology that allows us to talk to anyone, anytime, anywhere, so utilize it! Set up a cute dinner date over FaceTime, play a card game through the phone or just spend some quality time chatting with your partner. If you do send each other gifts, open them together on the phone and make it a special night anyway. Just because there is a distance between you doesn’t mean you can’t make it a special holiday.

Distance doesn’t have to mean doomed. It’s only when you let the distance get in the way that you open a relationship up to failure, so don’t let it stop you this Valentine’s Day or any day!



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