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Bon Iver – Blood Bank

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Well I met you at the blood bank
We were looking at the bags
Wondering if any of the colors
Matched any of the names we knew on the tags

You said "see look that's yours!
Stacked on top with your brother's
See how they resemble one another
Even in their plastic little covers"

And I said I know it well

That secret that you knew
But don't know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that its good girl
'Cos its running you with red

Then the snow started falling
We were stuck out in your car
You were rubbing both of my hands
Chewing on a candy bar

You said "Ain't this just like the present
To be showing up like this"
As a moon waned to crescent
We started to kiss

And I said I know it well

That secret that we know
That we don't know how to tell
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks
What's that noise up the stairs babe?
Is that Christmas morning creaks?
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MY INTERPRETATION: First I read all these different interpretations, and afterwards my head was so full with different points of view, I got a headache. There’s one short comment that was stuck in my mind. Someone said it could be going about old lovers meeting again. I just couldn’t be satisfied with the pregnancy theory, so I dug in this comment, and it all made sense to me.

“WELL I MET YOU AT THE BLOOD BANK
WE WERE LOOKING AT THE BAGS
WONDERING IF ANY OF THE COLORS
MATCHED ANY OF THE NAMES WE KNEW ON THE TAGS”

THE BLOOD BANK—an actual place, not metaphorical—could be the place they first met, and regularly bump into each other, don’t ask me why. Maybe they donate to do good? They could be working there? Maybe they are both sick and need blood transfusion?

“You said "See look that’s yours!
Stacked on top with your brother’s.
See how they resemble one another
Even in their plastic little covers”

“And I said I know it well”

She recognizes his name on one of the tags, a sign that they must already know each other. When she says 'stacked on top of your brother’s', it could mean a couple of things: his actual biological brother? or as a metaphor for all the people in the world? I think the blood bags are stacked alphabetical, and it’s meant as a little joke because there’s a bag underneath his with the same name, but no biological connection. And it’s funny to notice that even though they’re not actual brothers, how much they look alike when it comes to the essence of their being.

“That secret that you know
But don’t know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that its good girl
’Cause it’s running you with red”

The secret that she doesn’t know how to tell is the fact that she’s still in love with him. She knows it, but somehow she doesn’t want to admit it to herself. It’s like her inner self is saying: “Been there, done that. Am I stupid to wanna try again. What will the people think.” Her heart and her head are not balanced. But the love feels good, because she blushes every time she sees him, it runs her cheeks with red.

“Then the snow started falling
We were stuck out in your car
You were rubbing both of my hands
Chewing on a candy bar”

It’s a very sweet scene here! Very romantic. She is rubbing his hands, which is a very familiar thing to do. And he recognizes her old banal ways, like always having candy with her and chewing it in every suitable situation. He thinks it’s adorable.

“You said "Ain’t this just like the present
To be showing up like this"
As the moon waned to crescent
We started to kiss”

“And I said I know it well”

This is the peak of the tension between them two. She says: ain’t I just like the present, to be showing up like this. The present is something unreal. We never realize what’s been happening to us until we can look back to it, and the present has become the past. So the present is something overwhelming really. It never waits for you, it always just shows up like that. And she’s mocking with it, like she’s saying “yeah, typical isn’t it, it’s like we’ve always known her, just always showing up like that.” Could be a wink to the blood bank,
where she’s just joking around about his ‘brother’ where he’s stacked upon. Referring to her as a nice and funny personality, someone who’s hard not to love.

“That secret that we know
That we don’t know how to tell
I’m in love with your honor
I’m in love with your cheeks
What's that noise up the stairs babe?
Is that Christmas morning creaks?”

“I know it well”

They obviously still love each other, and admitted it to one another, but the world can wait. Before they let others judge them, they’re keeping it as their secret, so they can enjoy it just a bit longer without others noses in their business. The Christmas scene was very strong proof that it was about a pregnancy. But look at it more general. Christmas is an intimate event with loved ones. They are celebrating it with just the two of them, because it’s all they need right now. They are very looking forward to it, like a kid who’s excited to open its presents.

The moments where he says “I know it well”, it’s vague. It depends on what has come before it. The first time it could be: I know how much people are alike without really knowing it. The second time it could be about: yes, I know it’s not going to be easy. And the last time he sings it, it most likely: yes, I definitely know this is love.

And if you look at the full EP, you could just put the songs in a different order and you have a full story.

1. Beach Baby (Season: fall)
About a girl he loved, but cheated on him. He doesn’t want anything to do with her anymore and kicks her out. He wants her to be out as soon as possible, but then he also doesn’t want her to rush, because when she’s out, it over. It’s done. Why season fall? Because he says ‘once a time I put a tongue in your ear on the beach.’ Which indicates making love. And in the transition from summer to fall, it could still be warm enough outside to do that.

2. Woods (Season: fall)
About being alone, pretty down and getting drunk. What most of us do after a break-up. To ‘delay’ reality. Why fall? Because forests and woods are at their best, and most beautiful then, with all the colors.

3. Blood Bank (Season: winter)

4. Babys (Season: summer)
About making babies. “Summer comes, to multiply" Flag AlexAsuraon June 21, 2013  Link

  o  No Replies  Log in to reply
GENERAL COMMENT: I feel that this song is about a family member, either a child or his wife, has cancer. They are looking at the blood to see who all donated for a "match". That is why his brother donated as well. They haven't told many people though, because it is a secret. I kind of know the feeling. When my son was 2, three different doctors mentioned cancer to us, and we kept it a secret from most people, even family. We didn't want to worry them. It wasn't until we went to Texas Children's Hospital and found out that he did NOT have cancer that we let family and friends in on what we had been going through. The part in the car, the kiss, the moon, the love, it is all explaining the feelings of mutual dependence and admiration during a stressful time. Flag ssaunderson May 21, 2013

My Interpretation: all but the part about the blood didn't make sense to me, but the pregnancy thing or car crash or whatever, they all sorta fit. But as for the actual blood bank part, I think in a way, he's trying to say that right down to the very core of our being, we're all, I don't wanna say the same, but we're similar in how we act and think, even if we desperately try to portray ourselves as being different and soley, unique individuals. Like we use all of this fake stuff to mask what we really are. Cuz he was writing about how the blood all resembles each other even if it's all dressed up in these plastic bags. And that was my favorite part if you think about it we're like all born the same tree. But our mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and friends and just other people prune out branches until we're old enough to prune our own, but by that point we've really only learned how to prune the way they do so we just blindly follow them but we play it off as we're doing something different for ourselves. But in the end we're all still the same tree. If that made any sense Flag dazedbella on April 09, 2013
**General Comment:** I love the phrase "I know it well" in this song. I was in a long relationship that was really unhealthy and my girlfriend was constantly taking advantage of me and hurting me and every time she'd hurt me she'd have some excuse and if ever I'd bring something up she'd turn it around on me saying something like "why don't you trust me" or something very similar. I caught her cheating on me more than once but for some dumb reason I couldn't let her go and for some even dumber reason she couldn't let me go. Either way, every time I'd learn she did something else to me I'd always get really quiet and speak very softly and in the same tone as Bon Iver sings that phrase of the song. And the words "I know it well" were words that I told her every time she'd give her excuses. She'd say something trying to exonerate herself and my thought "I know it well" would keep me from getting mad at her and keep her from thinking I was mad. It made her think I understood even though I meant it as I know how you feel about me. I felt like the phrase summed up everything and left it closed enough that she didn't have to bring it up again but open enough that she could let me go and be honest with me. Ultimately that's why I think I stayed with her...I just wanted her to admit that she didn't love me like she used to. Sadly that never happened. The phrase in the song brings back that same feeling for me though and I don't know why but it soothes me unimaginably.

**My Interpretation:** I think this song is beautiful because of its simplicity. Blood as the theme could just represent the ties we all have to each other, the most obvious being to that of family, hence the reference to his brother's blood at the beginning. Then, there is the more secret, surprising connections we find in love that run just as deep but are harder to express, yet seem so simple in places like a cozy car on a snowy day. Love this song, such a beautiful snapshot of life. And the metaphor "I'm in love with your cheeks" is just so lovely...it means to me that he loves the girl enough to notice the beauty in the mundane, usually unremarkable features of her.

**General Comment:** I think this song is a lot deeper than it seems. I personally believe it is about him meeting someone at a blood bank whom he falls in love with after getting into a crash but they don't know how to explain it to each other. Especially her because I feel like she might be taken by someone else but she knows what she has found is good, as suggested by the line, "but you know that it's good girl."

Eventually they show to each other this new found fondness of each other but he loves that she's honorable to previous engagements with another person. The christmas morning I believe would be them
being pulled out of the car and he's delerious. That's the only part that truly throws me for a loop. Mastful lyrics here in this song, and it's truly beautiful. Flag Jailbreak66 on April 28, 2012 Link

• No Replies Log in to reply

+1

General Comment: I think I am going to make you all very sad but this is what I think this song means -

They were in a car accident in a winter snow storm and she was seriously injured in the accident. When they get to the hospital they give her a blood transfusion where they find out she is/was pregnant and she had not told him yet. She miscarries but she is under morphine and thinks she hears the child up stairs on Christmas morning but it's the child in heaven ie The moon is waning to crescent ie the womb is not full anymore. He comforts/distracts her by making light of the blood containers and encouraging her that the child is just upstairs and they are all going to have a happy Christmas together.

Really sad... Flag Mosby on April 24, 2012 Link

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General Comment: I personally think people read too far into this song. The whole love triangle/affair thing just doesn't sound right to me. I think it's just what Vernon says it is; two lovers stuck out in the snow. Flag suburbanson on March 24, 2012 Link

• 2 Replies Log in to reply

+3

General Comment: Does anyone think that it could be about two people that used to be in love that just randomly ran into each other? And that secret that they both do not know how to tell is that they still do love each other? I do not buy into this whole pregnancy theory. Flagged Musicman062592 on March 20, 2012 Link

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Lyrics submitted by sidelinedseason

Track duration: 04:45

"Blood Bank" as written by Justin Deyarmond Edison Vernon

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General Comment: Every time I listen to this song I get so sad. It just seems like one big recurring dream. Like a story with no faults, a tale of coincidentally occurring, perfectly placed people and their love that all circumstances in life would never allow. A dream. The narrator knows it well because its the one dream that they cannot have a night's sleep without.

I realize how depressing that sounds but I have nowhere else to write my personal interpretation so its going here. Though I'm glad there is a literal meaning to the words that is beautiful on it own (and a little more hopeful), I just can't shake these feelings whenever I hear this song. Justin Vernon and Bon Iver do great things. Flag subtracting on March 06, 2012 Link

0

General Comment: I know he said that it was about being stuck in the snow with someone new. But the more I listen to it I highly doubt that. I feel like he is resurrecting a buried moment of falling in love with someone he already knew over simple, quiet moments and being completely surprised by it. And from that, that person has become 'new' in his eyes. Flag Alyric27 on February 24, 2012 Link

0

General Comment: I just saw Bon Iver in concert in Madison this past weekend and he introduced this song as "a made up song about meeting someone because of the color of their blood." Flagged dahlia02 on December 13, 2011 Link

0

General Comment: I love this so much. There's way too much imagery to try to guess what it's about and it's obviously about something very personal to him. I don't think it really matters, it's stunning. But for god sake, stop commenting on people's posts to call them stupid because you don't agree with their interpretation. Beyond childish and totally needless. Flag jusechelon on December 05, 2011 Link
My Interpretation: I think this song is about a man (Bon Iver) who is in love with his brother's girlfriend/wife. I'm assuming that the brother/boyfriend has some sort of illness, which is why they are both at the blood bank and why the man is donating blood. She says his blood resembles his brother's; she thinks their personalities are similar. That is her excuse for falling for him.

The "secret" she doesn't know how to tell is most likely that she is in love with the man (Bon Iver) and not his brother anymore. Many people believe it is pregnancy, but if so, it's definitely Bon Iver's baby and not his brother's because "it fucks with her honor." She is falling for the man.

Snow represents change - feelings are changing. She kisses him.

Then, suddenly, the secret becomes his secret as well. "That secret WE know, but don't know how to tell." They are both in love and the feelings are both known for them, but they don't know how to tell the brother. (Again, this could also mean that she is pregnant with Bon Iver's baby. Either way, it has something to do with cheating.)

He says he's in love with her honor and her cheeks. Either this could mean that he loves her no matter what she does or he loves the way she wants to keep him happy and continues to be in love with him even though she really has fallen out of love, in respect to his illness. He is in love with her cheeks because of the way they have changed from when they first met to now.

The noise they here is most likely his brother, that he is slowly finding them out. "Christmas morning" represents excitement of knowing that, even though they may have hurt his brother (or they might have not seen Santa in his sleigh), it still brings the joy of Christmas to know that his brother finally figured out that they are in love with each other.

General Comment: This remembrance of winter warmth was recorded during the For Emma sessions, but Justin Vernon, better known as Bon Iver, told Guy Raz on NPR Music that it didn't quite fit in the record. He explained: "It just didn't seem to fit the story and lineage, I guess. So I just sort of surrounded 'Blood Bank' with three other songs that were very different from one other, and they all kind of came together as a palette cleanser for the last record."
**My Interpretation:** I think the usage of "met" in the first line is metaphorical and in reference to falling in love. The unspecified mention of meeting someone is comparable to seeing someone on a whole new intimate and revealing level. A similar symbol found in later verses is the idea of a secret, which can be applicable to being in love.

**Bon Iver's lyrics are beautiful and deep even, or especially, when the subject matter is common or simple.**

**Flag mg1682 on October 11, 2011**

- No Replies Log in to reply

**Song Meaning:** This song is definitively about a woman that is in love with a man and they are going to get married and everything is going great, but then the woman has feelings for her fiance's brother. The fiance resembles his brother very clearly but there are things that the brother has that the fiance does not. That the woman is looking for.

**Flag amylou22 on September 16, 2011**

- No Replies Log in to reply

**General Comment:** I'm having difficulty believing that this song is merely about two people's first encounter and the progression of their relationship.

"You said, "See, look, that's yours! Stacked on top with your brother's See how the resemble one another Even in their plastic little covers"

This portion of the song strongly indicates a previous relationship between the two, likely through the "brother". My interpretation is that the woman is in a relationship with the brother, and due to the fact that both brothers have donated blood, the woman is terminally ill.

"That secret that you know But don't know how to tell It fucks with your honor And it teases your head But you know that it's good girl Because it's running you with red"

This part of the song is fairly straightforward. They two clearly have feelings for each other but the relationship between the woman and the brother is the source of the "honour being fucked with" and the fact that the secret is being kept regardless of the obviousness of their feelings.

"Then the snow started falling We were stuck out in your car You were rubbing both of my hands"
Chewing on a candy bar

You said, "Ain't this just like the present
To be showing up like this"
As a moon waned to crescent
We started to kiss"

Definitely my favourite verse of the song... the tone of the song fits so perfectly to how I picture this. Two tortured souls in the dark and cold of winter, trapped together in a situation where their feelings for eachother can no longer be kept a secret.

"And I said I know it well
That secret that we know
That we don't know how to tell
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks
What's that noise up the stairs, babe?
Is that Christmas morning creaks?"

The secret that they initially hid from eachother has now become a secret they hide together (specifically from the brother). The part where he states he loves her honor and loves her cheeks (her blushing, a metaphor for the love she has for him) address the previous verse where he pointed out her hidden feelings fuck with her honor but she's full of love (running her with red). I take this as their feelings are still there but she stayed with the brother and kept her honor, but still blushes (again, a metaphor for her hidden love) when he is around. The christmas morning part has me a bit baffled, but here's how I take (might be a bit of a stretch). This indicates time has past since their moment and that the woman has overcome her illness. They are having another late winter night together, but this time its at the home of the woman and the brother... The sound of the morning creak would be the brother and their children waking up for christmas morning.
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My Interpretation: Whenever I come on here, I often find that nobody shares my point of view about a song. And I think that's what's actually brilliant about lyrics, that they mean something completely different to each individual. So, here's my view on it...

I see this song as the story of a relationship, where the guy is talking to the girl, about how they met, "Well I met you at the blood bank, etc.", about a secret she had, which I think is self-harm, though I'm probably completely wrong - that's what it means for me! "I said I know it well, that secret that you know, but you don't know how to tell, it fucks with your honor, and it teases your head, but you know that it's good, girl, because it's running you with red". He then goes on to talk about how they grew closer, getting stuck in the snow together, etc. And then I see it as a leap forward in time - they're married, and the secret becomes both of theirs "I said I know it well, that secret that we know, etc.". But he loves her anyway "I'm in love with your honor, I'm in love with your cheeks". The "Christmas morning creaks" could be a reference to children... Which could also explain the "That secret that we know, but don't know how to tell"... Anyway, that's just what it means to me. Flag miss-roöckon August 03, 2011

General Comment: I believe it is an interracial couple who recently "hooked up" and she is now pregnant with his baby and the blood bank bag comparisons is how the blood looks similar to his "brothers" (or other men) and color of skin is a non-issue, yet society does have an issue. Flag cwell73 on July 18, 2011

Lyric Correction: "See how the resemble one another" they not the Flag SaraanalyzingTHESongson July 06, 2011

General Comment: "that secret that we know...but we don't know how to tell"

This has to go down as one of the lines of a song that best describes love. Flag EdwinMontoyaZorrillaon July 02, 2011

General Comment: sorry it posted so many times but it seemed to fail each time... Flag shecan on January 23, 2011
General Comment: The way I understand it:

- First they meet and she is sick, joking about the fact that she needs his blood and someone else's as well although it "fucks with your honor"

When he says "I knew it well", meaning he understood her, he knows what it means to keep a secret ("That secret that you know / But don't know how to tell")

- Second, they get involved in a relationship, and the secret becomes his as well ("That secret that we know / That we don't know how to tell")

- Third, they started a family and the "Christmas morning creaks" may be those of a kid getting up, impatient to open up the presents

There are themes such as love ("you" becomes "we"), birth ("Christmas is associated with nativity") isolation ("secret") etc...

The fact that he repeats "I knew it well" throughout the song shows that he is remembering someone he felt empathy for.

My two cents...

Shecanon January 22, 2011  Link
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Matched any of the names we knew on the tags
You said "see look that's yours!
Stacked on top with your brother's
See how they resemble one another
Even in their plastic little covers"

And I said I know it well

That secret that you knew
But don't know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that it's good girl
'Cos it's running you with red

Then the snow started falling
We were stuck out in your car
You were rubbing both of my hands
Chewing on a candy bar

You said "Ain't this just like the present
To be showing up like this"
As a moon waned to crescent
We started to kiss

And I said I know it well

That secret that we know
That we don't know how to tell
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks
What's that noise up the stairs babe?
Is that Christmas morning creaks?

And I said I know it well
I know it well
And I said I know it well
I know it well
And I said I know it well
I know it well

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Lyrics submitted by sidelinedseason

Track duration: 04:45

"Blood Bank" as written by Justin Deyarmond Edison Vernon

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GENERAL COMMENT: The way I understand it:

- First they meet and she is sick, joking about the fact that she needs his blood and someone else's as well although it "fucks with your honor"

- When he says "I knew it well", meaning he understood her, he knows what it means to keep a secret ("That secret that you know / But don't know how to tell)

- Second, they get involved in a relationship, and the secret becomes his as well ("That secret that we know / That we don't know how to tell")

- Third, they started a family and the "Christmas morning creaks" may be those of a kid getting up, impatient to open up the presents

There are themes such as love ("you" becomes "we"), birth ("Christmas is associated with nativity") isolation ("secret") etc...

The fact that he repeats "I knew it well" throughout the song shows that he is remembering someone he felt empathy for.

My two cents...

FLAG shecanon January 22, 2011  LINK
○ No Replies Log in to reply
○

○

GENERAL COMMENT: Now, this is a bit of a far fetched idea, but I think it can be interpreted to be about a poor family. The parents donate plasma (a part of blood) and get money from it to be able to give their kids a better life, like Christmas presents. Just throwing another idea out there. FLAG noiamnotwhereibelongon January 19, 2011  LINK
○ No Replies Log in to reply
○

○
General Comment: I feel like the whole brother thing is an interesting way to see it but I've always thought that by brothers he just meant other people. Everyone being his brothers. MaryMaryMangoon January 19, 2011

No Replies Log in to reply

General Comment: I think this song is about how close family is, and how the people you love can almost be family. Him and his brother have the same blood in there veins, they are from the same blood line. She is also running with blood but not of the same family, they except there differences and move on. I also think she could be pregnant, which would make them the same blood line. Its open to many interpretations. gillyguitar January 14, 2011

No Replies Log in to reply

General Comment: I can listen to this song on repeat and never get tired of it. Simply gorgeous.

I take the meaning of this song to be a man meets up with his pregnant wife/girlfriend at the blood bank to "give blood". His brother already did. It's likely to determine who the father of the child actually is. They both know the baby is not his but he loves the woman and accepts it. When a woman is pregnant, her face tends to swell ("I'm in love w/ your cheeks"). He's in love with her honor because she didn't have an abortion or leave him for his brother. After you give blood, you're given sweets ("chewing on a candy bar").

"I KNOW IT WELL"- He knows the child isn't his but children are gifts. Christmas is associated with presents- the creaks are the child getting up in the morning a few years later. The child is happy and the couple is still together despite the circumstances. KristaSelene December 24, 2010

No Replies Log in to reply

General Comment: I think its great people have their own interpretations of the song.

I like to not really think to deep into what HE is trying to say about THE SITUATION in the song. What I love about Bon Iver is half the time I have no idea wtf hes talking about. To which I overlay the feeling and color of the song with things in my life, making the song about whatever I want it to be.

To me, the song represents making cold warm. Don't know why. Bon Voyage. Fender240 November 26, 2010

No Replies Log in to reply
General Comment: I think that she is having an affair with the narrator, who is also the brother of her actual partner. They have a secret (their love, the affair, their possible child...any or all of those). It is the kind of bittersweet love song that happens when the love and resultant situations and actions are not easy, nor "proper", and yet not anything out of line with what is human and completely natural. Those completely human and natural things being: having feelings for someone with whom it is not commonly accepted to love (like your man's brother), acting on those feelings, and dealing with the consequences.

Flag kbnyc on November 24, 2010

No Replies Log in to reply

General Comment: The pregnancy ideas are stretching quite a bit, and don't make sense when you consider the song in its entirety...just saying.

Flag acleveron on November 15, 2010

No Replies Log in to reply

General Comment: I really don't see this as pregnancy, but rather as a more general concept that can be applied to anyone in any situation in their life.

Blood symbolizes life in this song - remember this to understand my interpretation.

You said, "See, look, that's yours!
Stacked on top with your brother's
See how they resemble one another
Even in their plastic little covers"
The brother is not necessarily his biological brother; brother simply means anyone close to him. This stanza means that everyone is connected in some way. The blood looks the same, so the lives look very similar when the physical appearance of the body is ignored.

That secret that you know
But don't know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that it's good girl
Because it's running you with red
The secret doesn't have to mean pregnancy; it can mean anything. Everyone has secrets and inner struggles; they're what make us human and connect us to each other. Therefore, our secrets and inner struggles are good and "run [us] with red," meaning that they give us life.

Then the snow started falling
We were stuck out in your car
You were rubbing both of my hands
Chewing on a candy bar
You said, "Ain't this just like the present
To be showing up like this"
As a moon waned to crescent
We started to kiss...
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks
He loves her honor and her cheeks, which are the parts of her that he mentioned previously as being affected by her secrets. This shows that he accepts her secrets and her flaws. The peaceful description of nature in these stanzas shows the simple beauty and calmness of nature in contrast to the struggles of the human world. But the two are finally at peace when sit in the car and kiss because they have accepted their flaws.

So overall, this song is about human nature and how we are more alike than we believe, not about pregnancy. **Flag briigiddon** October 25, 2010  Link
- No Replies  Log in to reply

**General Comment:** This song is about his wife having an affair with his brother.

"That secret that you know, but you don't know how to tell"

He knows what happened, even though she didn't admit to it.

"What's that noise up the stairs babe, is it Christmas morning"

That parts talking about him knowing what going on, but he tells himself that it's something positive.

All in all,
They're at the blood bank to see whose baby it is. **Flag Csepul01on** October 15, 2010  Link
- No Replies  Log in to reply

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Well I met you at the blood bank
We were looking at the bags
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General Comment:

I think that he uses two main metaphors:

- **Blood:** life, selfishness and nature of humans
- **Snow:** purity, opposite of blood

He is just saying that he knows her secrets and thoughts and he knows his blood as well. Maybe even implying that all humans are the same at their core by saying that it is just like his brothers blood.

"Then the snow started falling" is the main crest of the song both lyrically and musically. It saying that then the opposite of all of that blood imagery is now covering them. Which means they probably kiss out of relief and joy.

She could be pregnant. The moon is a very good hint to that. **Moon:**

- **Hips:** Pregnancy.

The most abstract line would have to be the Christmas line.

I think that he is just trying to convey how they are now together, and close at that. They are obviously living together and calling each other "babe". Christmas morning is romantic imagery he adds.

That is all I have noticed.

Flag Kelbstron March 09, 2010  Link

- No Replies  Log in to reply

General Comment:

I got a different take on this song than most of you. I think it's about a guy and girl who are in love with each other, but are very pessimistic and lonely. They're keeping their love to themselves, not telling each other. Hence "That secret that you keep but don't know how to tell." The Part about fucking with your honor I think has to do with insecurity. When someone is suffering from a hidden love I think they worry about why the other person might not want them. The red that's running through them is both love and red. I get the sense that they're lonely and bitter by comparing everyone to blood bags that are all the same. Then one of them is telling the other that they know this well. The blood bank could represent anywhere where there are a lot of people. Then they get stuck in a car together. When the girl talks about the present showing up, she means that they're finally at a point where they're over the past. Then they come clean with each other, by explaining what they love about each other. Finally they kiss. Flag SparkleNShineon February 26, 2010  Link

- No Replies  Log in to reply
General Comment: I think she's very sick, the guy's blood and his brother's help her to survive.

We were looking at the bags (blood of course) Wondering if any of the colors matched any of the names we knew on the tags You said, "See, look, that's yours! (his blood to help her) Stacked on top with your brother's

That secret that you know
But don't know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that it's good girl
Because it's running you with red (the blood runs through her)

Then the snow started falling
(Time passes, she's still alive so the blood worked)

And I said I know it well
That secret that we know
That we don't know how to tell
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks
What's that noise up the stairs, babe?
Is that Christmas morning creaks?

After time, she survives and celebrate Christmas together
But maybe she was sick because of an abortion, that's why they would call it a secret.

Flag amberVP on February 25, 2010 Link
No Replies Log in to reply

General Comment: Everyone is completely over thinking the simple meaning of this song, but some previous reviewers have analyzed it completely right. It's not about some deranged soap opera with brothers having affairs with brothers' girlfriends, nor does it have anything to do with pregnancy. You can't literally interpret the word "brother" in this song, it just means brother, like human brother, we are all "brothers", we all have blood that looks the same. The simple conversation in the first verse is just a simple conversation that started a relationship, and the narrator reminisces about the simplicity and innocence of human interaction. This song is quite clearly about past, present, and future. Two people meet at a blood bank, a simple unassuming random location, and soon realize that presently, they are falling in love with each other. Neither of them expected to fall in love, it just happened. The present just showed up. And in that moment, it was cold and day
turned to night, and the moon became visible. At defining moments in your life, small details are everything. You can't forget them, and this is a description of them. The last lines of the song clearly depict a view of the future, but it is not a concrete view, but its obviously a reference to a future together with children.

To completely refute anything involving affairs and pregnancy, the secret that we know, that we don't know how to tell, is love. If you're having an affair, its easy to know how to say it, just say it. Love is random and beautiful and undefinable. Sometimes you literally don't even know how to say it or how to describe it. Plus, the secret is a good one, as its making them "red", or blush or become excited. The song is undyingly uplifting and hopeful and simplistically beautiful. Don't ruin it with overanalyzing and literal translations. Flag snakes11 on February 21, 2010  Link

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**General Comment:** Wow... I've never really thought about this song as much as I just have. Due to everyone's comments on this amazing song, I have lost my original opinion about it and cannot seem to comprehend the lyrics anymore. Even though I no longer understand this song, it is still truly amazing. By the way, I think Godzuki makes a great point and somewhere I read that Emma was not the name of his ex-girlfriend. I'm not quite sure about my source, but I'm pretty sure it was right. Just letting you know. And yes, thescientist is correct about one thing, this whole album is based upon having children. Flag toykeyboards on February 18, 2010  Link

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**General Comment:** This song makes me melt, even though he’s sings about the cold.

<3 Flag GiveMeLife on January 25, 2010  Link

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**Song Meaning:** He loves her, she loves him, but is or was with his brother. There is a familiarity with the way she speaks to him so they did not just meet for the first time. It fs with you honor would be cheating/adultery. The next line is more tongue in cheek, you know that it's good girl...a nod to the inconvenienec pf their attraction, and running yo with red would be Scarlet Letter esque. Also, the candybar is more practicle. When you give blood, they give you candy/food when you leave so you don't pass out. Also, you are not supposed to drive right after, hence the sitting in the car. She's rubbing his hands because it Christmas time and cold in Wisconsin. The moon wanes a crescent is so beatiful of a line...I just wish if he does really say it, that he would of said it more clearly. Ain't that just like present is a way of saying isn’t it crazy how life is. To be
showing up like this: to a family gathering where his brother would be. What's that noise up the stairs is a third family member yelling at them as they quietly make love. **Flag Steelgageon January 08, 2010**

**General Comment:** I interpreted this song to be about his brother having aids or some other blood related disease, whilst he was at the hospital he met a girl who was in a similar situation at home. **Flag george1992on January 02, 2010**

**General Comment:** Well I met you at the blood bank. We were looking at the bags. Wondering if any of the colors matched any of the names we knew on the tags. You said "see look, that's yours! Stacked on top with your brother's. See how they resemble one another. Even in their plastic little covers"

I said I know it well.

I see this as the story of how the two of them met... The may be long time friends (the way I interpret it) or this could have developed rapidly but either way this is an origin anecdote. The girl points out some bonds that are deeper than the surface, like those of brothers through blood. He looks at her and feels a strong connection, similar to that which she describes with the blood, (I said I know it well).

That secret that you know.
But don't know how to tell.
It fucks with your honor.
And it teases your head.

He knows he wants her but doesn't know how to tell her. I don't see this as him narrating the girl's emotions I see it rather as a soliloquy of the phrase he wishes he could say to her. Or even a phrase that he directs to the listener. He realizes that the with the secret lying beneath the surface he can't be happy with her and can't see himself in the light he wants to. "It fucks with (his) honor" because he feels as if he's betraying her friendship by having these thoughts. "It teases (his) head" because when you're in love with a friend (we've all been there)... you read the smallest signs and gain hope from the smallest things. In essence, the secret and the hope that you hold 'teases your head'.

But you know that it's good girl
'cause it's running you with red
Definitely a statement he wishes to direct to the girl. He's confident she feels the same way, you know that it's good girl. It's running (her) with red is either a reference to the way she blushes when they talk, or perhaps a reference to the blood metaphor and the strength of the bond that he knows she feels as well.

Then the snow started falling
we were stuck out in your car
you were rubbing both my hands
chewing on a candy bar
you said aint this just like the present
to be showing up like this
there's a moon ______ crescent (waiting to?)
we started to kiss

This is the moment where the friendship transforms. As Vernon alluded to in his live performance, this song is about being stuck in a car with the girl. A moment created by pure chance where they finally break through the barriers of friendship that have stood in their way. A platonic moment which evolves. Rubbing his hands (likely because he was cold), chewing on a candy bar shows that this action is comfortable... but you can feel the tension in the moment. "Aint this just like the present to be showing up like this" (It figures. that in the one moment that I've stopped worrying and thinking about this happening, it finally comes together). They kiss.

And I said I know it well - "allusion to the moment he first realized he loved her"
That secret that we know
That we don't know how to tell - "The same secret that they both held is now being revealed"
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks - "The secret was always his love for her"
What's that noise up the stairs babe?
Is that Christmas morning creaks?

Not sure what these two lines are alluding to, but my thought is this is now years in the future and the song is reminiscing in a way. The two have grown old together and have kids and a family. They're sitting up late at night on Christmas eve reminiscing about their relationship, and can hear their kids still awake upstairs, potentially an anniversary?

And I said I know it well
I know it well ...

He knew the truth about those deep life affirming bonds before, but his knowledge of them has only grown.
Just my take on it but I think that often the simplest interpretation is the best and often the most moving.

Flag asp1007 on December 30, 2009  Link
  ○ No Replies  Log in to reply
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My Opinion: has anyone noticed that the dominant theme of Blood Bank seems to be about babies? I feel like the baby idea is where it's going but that's just my opinion. It would kind of make sense in respect to the the whole album Flag thescientist204 on December 12, 2009  Link
  ○ No Replies  Log in to reply
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You said "see look that's yours!
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Even in their plastic little covers"

And I said I know it well

That secret that you knew
But don't know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that its good girl
'Cos its running you with red

Then the snow started falling
We were stuck out in your car
You were rubbing both of my hands
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You said "Ain't this just like the present
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As a moon waned to crescent
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General Comment: As much as I'm aware that many songs we analyze again and again were never written to harbour the messages we read into them, I'm convinced this song carries much more weight than is immediately apparent, whether that's intentional or accidental, I don't know...

But the way I see it, the song, and the secret, is about something bigger, something undefinable--something spiritual, maybe. Something we can feel but not explain. The human condition, perhaps, or humanity itself. I don't think brother was meant in the biological sense, I interpreted it as the brotherhood of man: each man's blood looks alike.

In the car, as the size of the moon shrinks, something begins to grow between him and the girl. Like energy, if it ceases to exist in one place, then it exists somewhere else--it's never lost, just in constant motion.

I still can't decide, though, if I think this song is about grappling with the secret, the questions--or the realization of it all... Flag t2mfc on December 04, 2009

No Replies Log in to reply
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**General Comment:** First of all, I can't listen to this song enough. And the lyrics play a part in that, basically what everyone else had said was what I got from the lyrics with the secret love between the two that's blossoming. My favorite part in the song being about the 'secret running her with red' which gives it away. Howeverrrr the part in the song that I took a different approach to is the verse about Christmas. I didn't really see it as a glimpse into the future altho, I quite like that idea, to me its more about Christmas acting as like a metaphor. Christmas morning...you think of little kids and their emotions, the excitement, the possibility, the unknown, but still the complete joy that comes with it regardless. And to me its like he comparing those feelings to this new relationship with the girl.

Flag pitselehhhon November 16, 2009  Link
  No Replies  Log in to reply

+1

**General Comment:** after thinking about this song for a while, my best guess is that this girl is his brother's women.

They love each other so much, but they know it's wrong, and it's really bothering both of them. (it fucks with your honor)

At the end... they just have to give in and he tells her that he doesn't even care, because "he's in love with [her] honor" and everything else about her.

"I know it well" is just him admitting to himself that he's absolutely sure that he's in love with her, and unfortunately, there's nothing he can do about it.

"That secret that "we" know" is the secret between them, that they have to keep for the sake of all three of them.

"But you know that it's good girl, because it's running you with red" is him reassuring her that even though what they're feeling is not "right" its filling her with passionate love (red) that, obviously, she's not feeling from her current relationship. Flag cattleon October 31, 2009  Link
  No Replies  Log in to reply

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**General Comment:** I dont know. It could be a fabrication to play into our hearts but if not pregnancy definitely a love affair.

Emma is Justin's ex right? and they had a hard breakup for some reason which is why he went away around the time he wrote For Emma, Forever Ago. maybe Emma cheated on him with his brother and maybe this is written from the point of view of his brother.
My Opinion: I had never really considered the pregnancy point of view, but it does kind of work. You all say, "No, no. Justin? Just...no!" But why would he have to be the father? I think it would be more of an "honor fuck" if the girl had an unplanned pregnancy with someone else who was just a one night stand before him, or if she had an affair. And yet, even through all of that, he loves EVERY thing about her, and he's saying they're going to get through it. I believe that "Christmas morning creaks" alludes to children. What kid doesn't get up early on Christmas morning and try to sneak downstairs to the presents to see what they got?

Godzuki made some really good points to think about, but my first reaction to the song is basically the same as that of RunningWithRed.

But then again, perhaps I'm just being overly analytical, and it's just talking about the secret of new love, and it's a secret he's met several times in his life and knows well.

General Comment: I absolutely love this song. Well first of all, they are on some sort of camping trip. Looking at the bags, finding them in the pile, he is quoting her, and responding "I know it well" a very general, loving response resembling the unspoken feelings between them two. "That secret that we know"- the secret of love, or at least feelings for one another. "We don't know how to tell"- how do you tell someone you absolutely adore them. Jon takes the things that stand out about the girl "I'm in love with your honor", "I'm in love with your cheeks". Nothing specific like "you're perfect!!" Repeating "I know it well" at the end, he knows the secret well, and so does she.

So cute!!

General Comment: I liked this song even if I couldn't understand it through the phone.
GENERAL COMMENT:

"And I said I know it well
That secret that you know
But don't know how to tell
It fucks with your honor
And it teases your head
But you know that it's good girl
'cause it's running you with red"

JUST THIS PART...wow. Those lyrics pulled me in. I think maybe the girl started to fall in love with the man who is singing after having a close unexpected friendship and she is scared to admit it (the secret she knows but doesn't know how to tell) but he can see right through her and he may feel the same about her, so he "knows it well." But she is in a relationship that is kinda going down hill but she wants it to work so badly but her falling in love with her friend is fucking with her honor and teasing her head. But he tells her that it's okay because she's happy and filled with love: "red."

"Then the snow started falling
We were stuck out in your car
You were rubbing both of my hands
Chewing on a candy bar
You said "ain't this just like the present
to be showing up like this"
As a moon waned to crescent
We started to kiss"

Then this part is about the two of them just hanging out and then they got stuck together and she thinks this is meant to be and says "ain't this just like the present to be showing up like this." Then nothing can stop them and they just kissed. So she cheated!

"That secret that we know
That we don't know how to tell
I'm in love with your honor
I'm in love with your cheeks
What's that noise up the stairs baby
Is that Christmas morning"

Now it's a secret that they both know, and they don't know how to just say it. But she knows she must so he's in love with her honor and then he throws it out that he loves her (cheeks)...but the Christmas throws me off AH! but I happened to get that out of this song from some personal experiences. I love this song dearly, and it's so touching and moving WOW it's just incredible.