1. New Colossus 4:24
2. Heavenly Track 3:00
3. Canyonland 4:06
4. (Power! Power! Power!) 0:41
5. La Misère 1:01
(Arrangement and additional lyrics by Kaia Kater/SOCAN)
6. Meridian Ground 3:27
7. Starry Day 4:34
8. (Death of a Dream) 0:47
9. Grenades 4:29
10. Hydrants 2:17
11. Everly 4:43
12. The Right One 3:38
13. (Off the Plane) 0:50
14. Poets Be Buried 4:39

All tracks by Kaia Kater/SOCAN unless otherwise indicated.
Tracks 4, 8, and 13 — narrative interludes by Deno Hurst
INTRODUCTION

*Grenades* is the lore of lives recounted. It is my grandmother Myra’s glory, it is my father Deno’s struggle, it is my march from the past into the present. Concentric circles of song spin around, lurching the listener backward into the cargo bed of a pick-up truck in the mountainous rainforests of Grenada on the 13th of March 1979. They pull you by the ear and plant you in the middle of helicopter gunfire during two months of terror in 1983. The easterly wind sweeps you and settles you gently in the back row of a Boeing 737 at the exact moment when a young man decides to walk off a plane into the frozen Canadian winter. You sit cross-legged on the floor and listen to the words he speaks to me, his daughter, a quarter of a century later.

This album has two homes and two seasons. The first is a winter spent in my small, sunny room in a mid-century apartment in Toronto, Canada; the second, a spring spent in an upper-level house in the hilly neighborhoods of St George’s, Grenada. I wrote these refrains through the fog of a search for identity and belonging. The songs, carved in the liminal space between North and South, tread the rope between them.

My father’s story of immigration was omnipresent in my childhood, in his teachings and counsel. He was quiet but firm in insisting that I had a warm and vibrant home and a plethora of family far from Canada’s wintry grasp. Yet like many people, I have felt alone and out of place for most of my life, stumbling forward blind and rootless. I wrote *Grenades* to trace the life line from my palm and find my way home.

“Meridian Ground” proffers images of Grenada painted into personal history: my herculean uncle Dwight who, as a boy, used to swim out under mammoth cruise ships and tread water beside their metal anchors. It also mentions my great-great-aunt Tiny, who was found deceased in her bed one morning in 1996 with a smile so broad it was as if she had welcomed death as an old friend in the night. The song runs through the hilltop green with my little cousins, whose screams of delight bubble over when the wind picks up their kites and floats them into
the clouds. The song eulogizes my grandfather Baka, a wharfman and steel pan player. Lastly, it grounds me in the power of collective memory.

Three narrative interludes act as movements in Grenades, telling an abbreviated story of my father Deno’s experience of Maurice Bishop’s 1979 socialist revolution in Grenada, followed by Ronald Reagan’s 1983 invasion of the island. The last interlude concludes with my father’s tale of his Sisyphean migration to Canada, alone, at the age of fourteen. The interludes were taken from a longer interview I conducted with him in the basement of his home in Canada over the last, dark, snowy days of 2017. Much of what he told me, we had not spoken in depth about before.

“La Misère” was a nameless melody in the Emory Cook collection of the Smithsonian, to which I added lyrics. Cook collected songs from The Bocas region of Grenada, which is a town very near my father’s birthplace. The song has a half-singing, half-shouting schoolyard call and response. I chose to include the song in order to reflect the richness of this tropical country, my country—to unearth some of its bones for you to look at.

This album is a migration of my mind on a course that extends miles beyond what the heart can see. It is a self-portrait of an artist exploring her past, present, and future. There are visions of pain, of war, and of resentment and anger. But there are also visions of life, of youth, and of plucking oneself out of the muck to look up at the sky.

In the words of author Zadie Smith: “You cannot escape your history any more than you can evade your own shadow.” These songs are guides in the confusion of the new world, of family, of the paradoxical loneliness and joy of adult life. It is a collection I am most proud of, released in partnership with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings—a group concerned with the rich and complex expressions of humanity.

Here’s to swimming in your own shadow. Listen, groove, and get down.
1. NEW COLOSSUS

Kaia Kater, acoustic guitar, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, lap steel; Andrew Ryan, upright bass; Brad Kilpatrick, drums; Lydia Persaud, Meg Contini, Jill Harris, backing vocals

New Colossus teaches us the sacred math
Stalks the limits of my living room and cuts me clean in half
O time time, the minute hand spins you round the plane
Spins the big machine as it descends again

Every tortured day a praying mantis green
Every hiss from you a glimpse into the creep
My limbs would split the wind to fractions of its shape
Split the big machine and leave you there to wait

Chorus
Speculator in the New Age town
Spoils the milk and boils the poppy down
Speculator do you crave a sign
When New Colossus comes for you
When New Colossus comes for you

Out the window trees bend down to kiss my thigh
I multiply and now the earth divides
You spurn me like a dog but now I double back
Dragging big machines and steady for attack

When I strike you, I’ll hit goddamn everyone
Like a queen with every hound and every son
Like girls who hike their skirts up high for greedy eyes
I’m the big machine that runs your acreage dry

Give it to me good
Backwards for me good
I’ll make a way from no way good

Speculator in the New Age town
Spoils the milk and boils the poppy down
Speculator do you long to see

When New Colossus comes for you, when New Colossus comes for me
When New Colossus comes for you, when New Colossus comes for me
When New Colossus comes for you, when New Colossus comes for me
When New Colossus comes for you, when New Colossus comes for me
2. HEAVENLY TRACK

Kaia Kater, banjo, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, electric guitar, lap steel; Andrew Ryan, upright bass; Erin Costelo, organ; Lydia Persaud, Meg Contini, Jill Harris, backing vocals

You got saved at the hair parlor
Washed in suds and lye
Broke bread at the halfway house
Laid out to the side

I know ya, I know ya, ain’t I seen you before?
I’ve felt you on the ceiling and I’ve felt you on the floor

Chorus

You know me, You know me, ain’t you seen me before?
I’m the comfort of the stranger
In the writings on the stall, on the stall

Chorus

You shake the trees and feel the bodies tumble down
You paint your clothes and hang them on the line
They beat the city red with bloody siren sounds
And you’re on the ground, you’re on the ground

Chorus

This land is bare as
the palm of your hand
Its fingers at the collars
And the coattails of the damned
3. CANYONLAND

Kaia Kater, banjo, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, electric guitar, lap steel; Brad Kilpatrick, drums; Andrew Ryan, upright bass; Lydia Persaud, backing vocals

There was a time when all I knew was all I wanted
When every crop was set ablaze
Like the bird I have turned and pulled you into me
whistling all the themes to your resentment

In a freeway trailer the horses flash golden manes
you puff the vapor and blow it off the window pane
My heavy braids fall like ropes pulling softly at you
urging you to look in my direction

Steady baby, steady on the hazard lights
The lizard crosses on the road
My broken oath is hanging from the dashboard face
and you are waiting to reload

The dark-haired dusk flaunts her coral lips at sunset
you are fussing with the tape deck
I am teetering, pacing at the edge of you
mining for a breach in your inflection

Chorus

I see you breaking
Baby what for?
Maybe for me

I see you breaking
Baby what for?
Maybe for me

Chorus

In the Canyonland of rock
where the twitching jackal hides
and the woman takes her time
takes her time
In the Canyonland of stone
you can size me up and run
Come on, cleave me from your rib
I'll be gone

4. (POWER! POWER! POWER!)

Deno Hurst, narrative interlude
5. LA MISÈRE

Kaia Kater, lead vocals; Lydia Persaud, Meg Contini, Jill Harris, backing vocals

Comment joue le violon (la misère)
Avec la voix émue (la misère)
I know I know you (la misère)
And I know you know me (la misère)

Je dis pauvre moi ca y'est!
Oh comme elle est grave la misère
Je dis pauvre moi ca y'est!
Oh comme elle est grave la misère

Avec le pied cassé (la misère)
Avec la main levée (la misère)
I know I know you (la misère)
And I know you know me (la misère)

Je dis pauvre moi ca y'est!
Oh comme elle est grave la misère
Je dis pauvre moi ca y'est!
Oh comme elle est grave la misère

Comment joue le violon (la misère)
Avec la voix émue (la misère)
I know I know you (la misère)
And I know you know me (la misère)
6. MERIDIAN GROUND

Kaia Kater, banjo, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, electric guitar, lap steel; Brad Kilpatrick, drums; Anna Ruddick, electric bass; Lydia Persaud, Meg Contini, Jill Harris, backing vocals

Away to the east of the isle where the median swells and they gut the fish
The wharfmen sing, and beat the water
Beat the water so

We watch them shift from the timeworn dance to the heated clash
Our sisters pray to raise us for better men

Chorus
On meridian ground
The half-breeds and the kids in bloom
Drain the water from the room
Fill it up again
On meridian ground
The half-breeds and the kids in bloom
Drain the water from the room
Again, again, again

Like the hemlock blade that bathes in the boiling tea
What a fool, what a fool can I be

Chorus
Midway through the hour
We send our blighted tongues to rest
Twin babies sick and dispossessed

Chorus
On meridian ground
The half-breeds and the kids in bloom
Drain the water from the room
Fill it up again
On meridian ground
The half-breeds and the kids in bloom
Drain the water from the room
Again, again, again

My auntie died in a one-room house on the top road
With the candles cold, and a smile upon her face
We run inside and place our kites by her bedframe
She surges higher, the hills and the gullies fall
We swim out under the ships and flirt with pain like a mistress
7. STARRY DAY

Kaia Kater, banjo, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, electric guitar, lap steel; Anna Ruddick, electric bass; Brad Kilpatrick, drums; Erin Costelo, organ, percussion; Lydia Persaud, backing vocals

And now the final curtain
Turn your eyes up to the light
She with venom tongue, moves oceans
Pulls you out into the fight

And here you lie with belly open
With the lions round the flame
Who, with tender jaw unbroken
Drag you out into the plains

Chorus
On that Starry Day
On that Starry Day

Iron melted into ivy
Take your body to the land
Pile the small upon the mighty
Bring the moon down where you stand

Chorus (2x)

8. (DEATH OF A DREAM)

Deno Hurst, narrative interlude
9. GRENADERS

Kaia Kater, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, electric guitar, lap steel; Anna Ruddick, electric bass; Erin Costelo, organ, percussion; Brad Kilpatrick, drums; Lydia Persaud, Meg Contini, Jill harris, backing vocals

Surf the wave now, taste the metal on your tongue
March the dogs of war into the sun
Heave and cry out! Lo! The planes, they duck and punch
Melt the candy clouds and parchment lungs

Chorus
Two seasons invade
Tremor and sway
With hands on grenades
Drive the light from the shade
Like an orange blockade—
we always seem to get played
See the men on parade, see the men on parade

She splits the atom in the night, feel her as she churns
Sing to her trumpet trees and watch them burn
Heave and cry out! Call the priestess to the sound
Pluck the tyrant from the brim and watch him drown

Chorus
Rain heavy like carpet bombs, sweetgrass and lemonade
Fold the memory into your arms and whisper it away

Chorus
You can shout at the mountain but they've already crowned him
With his crowds of ten thousand, yeah they've already crowned him
You can shout and surround him but they've already crowned him
With his crowds of ten thousand, yeah they've already crowned him
You can shout at the mountain but they've already crowned him
With his crowds of ten thousand
10. HYDRANTS

Kaia Kater, vocals

Between the hydrant and the house fire
Above the gardens and cement
We cede the fight, we call a draw
And lean ourselves against the fence

Loving is easy, loving is easy
In a car to the coast
But tremors come quickly
To level the streets
And us, with the end of the world at our feet

We lie in a twin bed, like two small sardines
And I whisper all of my feverish thoughts
Then you double over and kiss me with ease
And we float on like cosmonauts

Loving is easy, loving is easy
On your way to the earth
Comets come softly
To fracture the vale
And us, with the end of the world at our tail

Six months together and three months apart
Our cell phones, like two cups, a string and two hearts
Our voices are shaking, and we muddle the words
I listen outside for the birds

Loving is easy, loving is easy
On the porches in June
But winter comes quickly
To cover the green
And us, with the end of the world at our feet

In the fortresses of solitude
I call to you from depths unmined
You hold me and we get in line
To drink another day like wine
You hold me and we get in line
To drink another day like wine
11. EVERLY

Kaia Kater, guitar, lead vocals, backing vocals;
Christine Bougie, electric guitar, lap steel;
Andrew Ryan, upright bass; Lydia Persaud, Erin Costelo, backing vocals

Everly don’t you mock what you feed on
Take the wings of the morning and fly
Everly I’m a tiny bough broken
and drowning up in the sky

Lately I seem to roll on these boulevards
Sinking into the night
Rolling on through the iron and ivy
’Til time out of mind

Chorus
Everly bear me neon fruit
Let it shine and shine and shine
The kingdom is flooding and I am too
Keep me close on the vine
Keep me close on the vine

I did dream we were pharaoh and bride
With the bounty laid at our feet
Everly dream the mango in summer
And the nightingale down in the deep
12. THE RIGHT ONE

Kaia Kater, banjo, lead vocals; Andrew Ryan, upright bass, vocals

Come to me like you come to the sea
With bated breath on bended knee
On that bayou I’ll rise above you
And see the world as you do

Chorus
Let the right one in, Let the right one in
Take a step back home and breathe in

Take me out with gilded crown
Tell them all I’m sainted now
Look me up, look me down
Run your mouth about me now

Chorus

In the bright and sunny east
I will be released
I will be released
I will be released
I will be released
I will be released
I will be released
Released

13. (OFF THE PLANE)

Deno Hurst, narrative interlude

You’re sweet to me, You’re sweet and empty
Oh the quickening feet of mercy
Come and tell of the violent swell
And the little ones who raise hell

Chorus
14. POETS BE BURIED

Kaia Kater, banjo, lead vocals; Christine Bougie, electric guitar, baritone electric guitar; Andrew Ryan, upright bass; Andrew Jackson, trombone; David Parker, French horn

Chorus
Poets be buried in tender marching feet
Buried as seeds and watered in the street
Chained to the fates of strangers facing all defeat
Poets be buried in tender marching feet

I had a daughter and I taught her all I knew
Fight in the gutter and love the work you do
How for to warn her of hatred hiding in the blue
I had a daughter and I taught her all I knew

I asked my father if this is all there is
A home that won’t claim you, a country that rescinds
You are your own saint, a center to hold, a life to live
I asked my father if this is all there is

They built my city on funerary ground
Raised a parade and marched it through the town
What is the mind but the sickness of time, it goes round and round
They built my city on funerary ground
CREDITS

All songs written by Kaia Kater except “La Misère,” lyrics by Kaia Kater/traditional melody
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Thank You: To everyone who helped these songs come alive;
to my parents;
to you who are listening and reading.
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution, the national museum of the United States. Our mission is to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In this way, we continue the legacy of Moses Asch, who founded Folkways Records in 1948. The Smithsonian acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987, and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings has continued the Folkways tradition by supporting the work of traditional artists and expressing a commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding among peoples through the production, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of sound.

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Nous remercions le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L’an dernier, le Conseil a investi 153 millions de dollars pour mettre de l’art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.
A creative force in her own right, Kaia Kater rises to bold new heights of imagination and creative expression on her third album *Grenades*. With abundant poise and poetry, Kater composes an odyssey about personal identity, memory, and discovery in the wake of her father’s journey as a young political refugee. She draws upon her diverse musical influences in Quebec, the Caribbean, and Appalachia, and her bicultural experience as a second-generation Grenadian-Canadian, to envision a new path for herself and her songs.

42 minutes, 20-page booklet with lyrics.