

Breaking Out

The Protomen

This city doesn't know what's coming
She doesn't feel the heat
This city won't know what hit her
What knocked her out into the streets
This city's thinking that it's over
And she's already fast asleep

So I'm breaking out of here tonight
I am, I am, I am, I am ready!

We're given only what we need
Only the chance to survive
And even then, it's a coin toss
A roll of the dice
There's gotta be something better
Somewhere that feels more alive

So I'm breaking out of here tonight
I'm breaking out of here

You've gotta feel it girl
Feel the wind pick up
It feels like something's gonna change (Something's gotta change)
But there's no use putting it in drive
If all the wheels are stuck
There's something wrong here (Something's wrong here)
Like this whole city wants to scream
But no one makes a sound
But, you've got to feel it, baby (Something's wrong here)
So I'm gonna find out what it is
And I'm gonna tear it down

Joe turned to a girl who'd been ignoring him all night, leaned in, and whispered in her ear

The engine's running, baby
We don't have time for goodbyes
I know you can't come with me
I see that look in your eyes
So kiss me fast
Cause there's no time to lose
Leave the light on
I'll come back for you
When everything is said and done
I swear I'm gonna make it right

I'm breaking out of here tonight
I'm breaking out of here tonight
I'm breaking out of here tonight
I'm breaking out of here tonight

Joe leaned in and stole a quick kiss from the girl. She smiled and made a move to slap him but he was already out of reach. He kicked the door open and tore out into the dark streets. Fire in his blood. He didn't know exactly where he was going. Only that he was moving. And moving was something

The slight breeze against his forehead meant that something was changing. He

raised his voice, crying out against the quiet, constant hum of the city. From the windows high above the streets, a few concerned women called out to him to keep his voice down. For his own sake. For all their safety

I'm so tired of giving up
I am so tired of giving in
You wake up knowing things should change
Not knowing where to begin
This city won't say where she's going
She won't speak of where she's been

So I'm breaking out of here tonight...
Break out

Without noticing where he was heading, he'd reached his home - or his former home - his mother's house. She'd vanished three years ago. He hadn't been back since. His father had been gone now for nearly ten. Heading around back, he made a straight line for a small workshop, set apart from the house

His father's motorbike was there. A relic. A gas engine bolted to an iron frame. He kicked the engine a few times and the bike roared to life. As he turned onto the street and opened the throttle - the sound of combustion savaging the silence of the night air - he could almost make out the sound of the collective gasp let out by the neighborhood. He could almost imagine window after window opening above the street line. Frightened face after frightened face leaning out into the bright glow of the streetlamps. Timid voice after timid voice telling him, speaking in unison

A chorus of fear

And
Ooh, don't turn your back on the city
Ooh, don't turn your back on the city
Ooh, don't turn your back on the city
Ooh, don't turn your back on the city

Joe ignored the voices. He thought perhaps he was the only one who hadn't turned his back. He kicked the shifter

Say a prayer for all the children still sleeping (Ooh, don't turn your back on the city)

3rd gear

Say a prayer for all the fathers who still remember (Ooh, don't turn your back on the city)

4th

Say a prayer for all the girls who've learned to stand up (Ooh, don't turn your back on the city)

5th

Say a prayer for all the boys who won't surrender

Sometimes I just want to drive
Until the streets run out
I want to burn until there's
Nothing left to burn about
This city's waiting for a better day
When I get back there will be hell to pay
If I'm the only one left standing

I will not be afraid to fight

So I'm breaking out of here tonight

I feel a fever coming on me
Burning out of control
And I hear nothing but the static (Nothing but the static)
For years now there's been nothing
But the static on the radio
If you can hear my voice outside these walls (If you can hear me)
If you can hear me sending out this message tonight
Then break the silence, send a signal back (If you can hear me)
I'm coming, all I need is a little guiding light...

... if you can hear me
Don't turn your back on the city
If you can hear me
Don't turn your back on the city
Then break the silence, send a signal back
Don't turn your back on the city
Then break the silence, send a signal back
I'm coming, all I need is a little guiding light
Don't turn your back on the city
Don't turn your back on the city
I'm coming, all I need is a little guiding light
If you can hear me
If you can hear me
If you can hear me
Don't turn your back on the city

Store fronts gave way to warehouses
Warehouses to abandoned factories
Factories to the slums of the city

He'd followed the line of the electric rail for almost an hour. The outskirts. A place to which men now rarely ventured. The dark streets flickered under failing street lamps. Away from the machines. Away from the people trying to keep him silent. He should be feeling free. He wasn't. He was feeling something else. A wariness. A hesitation. Joe let off the throttle. As his father's bike slowed to a crawl, he understood that feeling he'd had ever since he'd decided to leave the city. That hesitation he'd felt was the knowledge that he was being watched. Watched when he kissed the girl at the bar goodbye. Watched when he left his mother's house. Watched even now... Miles from the heart of the city

A face in the shadows...

He stopped the bike in the middle of the street, silenced the engine, and lowered the kickstand. There was no traffic. No metal footsteps patrolling the streets. But the familiar sound of the telescreens reached even here. Joe stood watching the face on the screen. It babbled incessantly, but said nothing

Over the sound of the screen, Joe heard footsteps, slow and deliberate, echoing from the darkness of the alleyway. Kneeling down, Joe placed one hand on the street beside him, the other reached for the knife in his boot. He recalled the stories the children of the city loved to repeat about the red-eyed assassin. "Light's Monster," they called it. The footsteps emerged from the darkness of the alley and into the uneven glow of the flickering street lights. Joe stood, his hand loosening its grip on the knife

It was a gray-haired man

Joe was about to speak when the old man lifted a finger and pointed past him
, into the darkness. Joe turned to see a single red light pulsing from the depths of the alleyway behind him