

# Rock star crushes I have had

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**The bassist for the Breeders** She was just plain hot, and it helped that she was in a fun band. I later found out that she was gay, and I was immensely disappointed—the band is called *The Breeders*, darn it. This is some kinda false advertising.

**Lisa Germano** I saw her at a Neil Finn concert, where she was playing the violin. It was a great concert, and the violin was of course excellent. [Eddie Vedder, who has done a Finn family cover or two, showed up later, but refused to reveal his mohawk.]

She's done a lot of her own work, on 4AD, but had also done frequent studio violin work where she's just listed somewhere in the credits so you don't know it's her unless you do the research. Now that you can buy music on iTunes or Amazon and other places that don't give you liner notes at all, you'll never find this stuff out again.

From what I've read, she goes in and out of doing music and being disappointed by the industry and working elsewhere. E.g., somebody told me that during one of her not-music phases she was working at Book Soup on Sunset Boulevard, and one day when I was in the neighborhood I actually went and asked one of the employees for Lisa. Employee told me Lisa works Tuesdays, but I never went back. It's not like I had any real plan of what to do from there.

If I had to identify Ms Germano in a line-up, I don't think I'd be able to. She's literally a blur to me. When I saw her at the Finn concert, I didn't have on contact lenses. As she got older and no longer passed for sixteen, her cover photos got increasingly fuzzy. We can't have female performers with visible wrinkles, now can we.

I've mentioned before the class of music I call *girlfriend music*, which is built around the singer telling the listener that she'll be happy to be your best friend forever, and will cuddle up to you and keep you warm all night. [There is of course boyfriend music as well.] Ms Germano has done a few tracks like that, but most of her songs are about how fucked up the singer is, such as the one about how how "I want cancer of everything," ["This is a happy song."], or the little girl princess song that taunts the fundamentals of all the other girlfriend music.

**Björk Guðmundsdóttir** had led a charmed life. Cute little pipsqueak child star, jazz trio, goth band, front for the Sugar Cubes (when she got that snowflake tattoo that only adds to her hotness), the long list of solo albums, and that one time she, on a lark, did a movie and won the best actress award at Cannes.

If you don't have a crush on her yet, watch this filler from a Sugar Cubes video compilation<sup>1</sup> wherein Björk waxes profound about her television.

But then she started recording a lot of techno stuff, and that *Medulla* album really only had one good song.

I know what she looks like, because she goes out of her way to wear eccentric and oft-photographed attire, the most famous being that one swan dress, which I thought was kinda nifty. For the most part, that eccentricity doesn't really come through in the music; when people say that it does, I wonder how much they're looking at the outfits and how much they're thinking about the instrumentation itself, which isn't anything particularly odd for all but *Medulla*. [Except that she doesn't really use guitars for much of anything; I hope that's not all it takes to count as eccentric.]

The point of this discussion here, of course, is not to talk about these various pop stars *per se*, but how one goes about constructing a personality given limited information. I avoid interviews with pop stars, because—no surprise at all—they invariably sound dumber and more pushy in their own words than in their carefully chosen lyrics. I know that the photographic images are best-case scenarios, and then we're left to wonder the odds that Björk is wearing anything more elaborate than sweatpants around the house.

I'm not sure how one goes about constructing a rock star crush. Are you inserting yourself into that video where you're both floating in space? Making out in the green room? Filling out your tax forms together?

**Neko Case** I got her *Fox Confessor* CD on a recommendation from a pal who was vehement that I'd like it. Played it once, put it on the bottom shelf. A few months later I put it on again, and barely listened to anything else for a month.

She's a little bit country, a little bit something else. She does her share of girlfriend music too, the real standout being *Challengers* by The New Pornographers and Neko, but most of her stuff is also pretty cynically oriented. Like *Furnace Room Lullabye*'s "I just couldn't breathe with your throne on my chest" or that 'Man-eater' song which seems explicitly designed to get the listener to dislike her. Or that one song that's allegedly entirely honest and not-fictional, "I leave the party at 3AM/ alone, thank God./ With a Valium from the bride...". We were on paddleboats in the Tidal Basin, during the Cherry Blossom Festival, when we heard a band on the shore playing a cover of this song to the gathered tourists and their kids. That brought me joy.

The people who manufacture her image have to walk the line between photos of her in a cowboy hat and photos of her looking all alty, covered in audio cables and butterflies. She seems to wind up at a certain taxidermy chic that I'm not really into. I read this several-page NY Times article about Neko<sup>2</sup>, which cemented my conclusion that we wouldn't really get along.

I still have her songs on heavy rotation, even though in my mind we've broken up.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75WFTHpOw8Y>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/magazine/15neko-t.html>