

Videotape

Radiohead

When I'm at the pearly gates
This will be on my videotape, my videotape
Mephistopheles¹ is just beneath
And he's reaching up to grab me

5 This is one for the good days
And I have it all here
In red, blue, green²
In red, blue, green

And you are my center
10 When I spin away
Out of control on videotape, on videotape

This is my way of saying goodbye
Because I can't do it face to face
So I'm talking to you before—
15 No matter what happens now
You shouldn't be afraid
Because I know today has been the most perfect day I've ever seen

Questions for Discussion and Writing

1. Discuss the meaning of the title—based on the lyrics, what does it apparently refer to?
2. From what point of view is the song written? Who is the speaker, and what can be inferred about the person he or she is addressing?
3. What message(s) is the speaker trying to communicate? Discuss details of the lyrics that express this message and reveal his or her emotional state and attitude toward the situation.
4. Discuss the ways in which the arrangement and style of the song contribute to its meaning and emotional effect. What might the repetitive drum loop be intended to represent—what does it sound like? What about the sustained chord at the end that continues after the vocals and rhythm instruments have dropped out?

¹ [Mephistopheles](#) is a demon in German folklore.

² Red, blue, and green are the colors used in the [RGB color model](#), which is used in some video formats. It may also be a reference to a line in William Blake's poem "[Holy Thursday](#)."

Lyrics and Discussion Questions for "Videotape"

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