## **Mp3 Jonathan Coulton - Thing A Week Three**



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Well-crafted geek pop from the incredible Thing a Week series. Unspoiled, piping hot goodness, fresh from the muse. 13 MP3 Songs POP: Quirky, POP: Folky Pop Details: Springtime is Coultontime: sweater weather, and robins eggs; wine coolers in the park on the patchy, muddy grass struggling back to life, and of course, database software. You will recall that the last time I spoke of Coulton, he had just begun work at a little software shoppe on 22nd Street called Cluen. Though the money was flowing in Silicon Alley, Cluen was an old fashioned affairno big bonuses or stock options, just hard work and at Christmastime, maybe a Fresca. Coulton worked endless hours at his scriveners desk, guilling out recruiting database software under the eagle-eye of old Mr. Cluen, always watching from beneath the brim of his old stovepipe hat hed made from the skins of child pickpockets. Coulton was diligent, a dreamer, a prodigy. Those of you who appreciate the gimcrack love of technology that infects his songs will not be surprised that he always knew how to make the computers go. But I was still working in the Olde Media district, pasting books together as a literary agent. Lets just say, I didnt get it. I had dial-up. I still wore a tinfoil suit every time I powered up my computer. And I didnt know that after Coulton slaved away at the visual basic, hed then go home and make a theremin out of twine and pipe cleaners and use it to write a song about it all. Code Monkey was discovering a new sound. It was at an open mic night at a sweaty little whiskey bar called McGoverns that he first made his splash. This was a time when downtown pulsed with the sound of young songwriters looking to become contributing troubadours of national magazines. Neither of us even owned a foil suit back then, and wed hang over by the pinball machine listening to the punks take their shot on the little carpeted stage, shooting for the big time with their odes to mens magazines and 8000 word Harpers think pieces. I still remember that super skinny dude with the snare drum scat singing a little tune he called Yahoo Internet Life. Hey, youre hot on the theremin, Id say to

Coulton as hed hit the multiball once again. You could destroy these guys. A magazine would pay literally thousands of dollars for your songs. But he just nodded sadly no. He was singing about smart drugs and artificial wombs and a guy who fears his own robot butler. Im writing about science, he said. What magazine is ever going to care about that?" Then hed go up and sing a ballad about DNA that just brought a tear to every eye, while Id be doing shooters in the back with the Yahoo Internet Life guy. This dudes the future! I yelled to Jonathan as we walked out. Shows you what I know. But Coulton kept on honing his eccentric, illuminating melodies about cyborgs and feelings. It was at a bar called, appropriately enough, Galapagos where Coulton took the next step, performing a song about the Mandlebrot Set before a gigantic projected image of same to a room full of head-exploded new fans: code monkey evolve. He worked the futurist conference circuit, where a few editors at Popular Science heard his robot-like crooning and invited him to join their masthead on the single condition that he a) relocate to the moon; and b) write one song about jets a day. He agreed. Flash forward to today. McGoverns is closed now, as is the internet. Old Mr. Cluen was kidnapped by Christmastime ghosts. And while not all of these songs are about technology (most, including and especially that old McGoverns standby Madaleine, are about money and presidents and Tom Cruise and feelings), Coultons guitar was now firmly planted in the lunar soil, claiming this new territory for him alone, and pointing to the stars, and the future. A future that would include Summertime. But that is another story.

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