

11. DOWN, BOY

Jason is clamoring for me to come up to Nashville. It's still a week or so before we head out on the road. The band has inked a major deal. Since I put out the album on my own, we still control a lot of the details of the contract. But it is going to be great for us. I wonder if I am still indebted to the mob.

I call my cousin, "It was never that sort of thing. Just make sure that you pay that loan before the year's up. With interest."

With our present sales, I feel that I am going to cover the loan. Since the first album is done, we're not looking for an advance. And I want to keep costs down on the second album. Jason is going to help with that.

The offer for Coachella is pretty well in stone. We have a couple of slots at South by Southwest. Jason is also playing there.

Everything is a blur until the end of April. I don't know how we can stay sane. It doesn't stop. I just want to get off the road. When Coachella comes along, I tell myself that I am going to do it right. Coachella Music Festival takes place in the Spring in Indio, California near Palm Springs.

I set myself in a nice hotel in Palm. We've got a deal with the festival organizers. I'm asleep. I'm waiting for a wake up call. The guys are already at the site. I need to wake up. I need a ride over there.

I share the taxi with a promoter from Australia. I am late. I should have gotten my own car. Tomorrow, come hell or high water, I will have my own car. If I don't hurry, I am going to miss the set. We have a road manager making sure that everything is right. I've been doing so much work with the label.

I tell Bert, "I want my boys to come to Australia. I already had to cancel a trip to the UK. Bert tells me, "Have them play the spring. That's the best time."

It is so early in the day. I spent all last night shmoozing with industry people. I have to make sure that everything goes OK with the second record. At the party, everyone is talking about the Sun Runners. Things were a little slow at South by Southwest. But there still was a decent buzz. Since that time, a few shows on the West coast, and Cam is the hottest thing in America. All these models are after his hot little ass. But he's holding out for something real. That is his joke.

The band are almost ready to go on.

Jimmy asks, "Who was giving you head?"

"The maid," I answer. "I know that I am acting like a dick. I just don't want to get a reputation.

The set starts slow. An acoustic number. But it's perfect for the heat. It's terrible to play so early in the day. I keep repeating that.

As the sweat drips down his brow, Cam comes alive. BOOM! Here they come!

Jimmy plays this part high on the neck of the bass. Steve blasts in with this hook of a beat. Cam is shaking his guitar all around. Now it is their show.

Young girls have his picture by their bed. Now he's dancing around for them. This guy is real. Not just some cheap teen idol. He suffers. But he is not maudlin. Each step is

something real.

Cam knows that everyone suffers from sing-along song lyrics. He works to sculpt his lyrics. His inflections are clear. There is no doubt about his seriousness.

He introduces a new song. But he saves the shit, “This is new song. We don’t know it that well.” That is bull shit for amateurs. If they can’t step up, they should just go home now.

“The desert winds won’t reply. There’s no difference between a secret and a lie. What gets you out here, just won’t quit. The romantic illusions of the hypocrite.” He builds the trap for self and audience alike. “I’m not one to suffer on my own. I’ll lead you on to the gallows’ home.”

They are all ready to surrender to their executioner. “Give me your hand, in courting sweet, married to the kiss, headed for deceit, married to the kiss, headed for deceit.” He saves the clincher for the suburban girls who have bussed here in groups of five or ten, “I’ve done you wrong, fooled you again, with the deadly eyes of the holy man.”

After the song, Cam tells the audience, “Before you turn in tonight, take a second look at that friendly face in the sleeping bag next to you.”

Jimmy leans over, “You should talk. You’re staying in a four-star hotel.”

Cam speaks to the audience as if he is in song, “It ain’t cheap, when sin’s your game.”

Everyone laughs. They all want to think that they’re up to mischief. Cam is frustrated. He is hating his success.

A young model-in-waiting blows him a kiss from the front row. Cam doesn’t want to become like Passion. He doesn’t want to start to hate his fans. In a strange way, he is restrained by his crowd. He is afraid to push things too far. So he doesn’t take them far enough. He scratches the surface. It remains an entertainment.

Cam is worried that he has to do too much to stay real. At first, he could just show up with his music. But the idolatry has become more prominent than the music. He has to make a real effort to take the performance back. And he does all that he can.

The band finishes in style. For an early slot, they don’t give them that long too play. By tomorrow, shots of the show will appear on blogs across the country. They have already accomplished more than they could have hoped. The fans know that the Sun Runner are real. They are not hiding behind the hype.

For Cam the day offers an uncertain result. He is overjoyed with the performance. But he experiences so much self doubt on stage. He didn’t come here for that. He is starting to find the location so unreal.

“I thought that I was in a shrine when I first got here. But with the heat and the reaction, I feel like I’m in a pressure cooker. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do to make it right.”

I listen to Cam. I try to comfort him. But in some ways, he is right. I want the desert to mean more than confection for the suburban kids. This is supposed to be new music.

Line in Delphi play in the evening in one of the tents. The crowd has already been prepped by the earlier bands. Jason knows what to expect. Barry is particularly inspired by the other bands. He wants to prove that they are not an oddity to be here. Indeed, they are on the cutting edge.

There has been a debate of late in the music press about Line in Delphi. Jason refuses to give in to the speculation. But the writers are starting to see limits to the shelf life of the band.

“It’s not like we’re chewing gum or taco chips. We’re no different from when we started.”

Jason has never played the idol game. Their music has never been based on worship. And the songs are great. He is charting out a long career that shows development as an artist. The writers are often looking for the latest fad. If Jason doesn’t fit in as part of it, so be it.

They show the Coachella crowd why they will always be a band to be reckoned with. They’re not going to disappear due to mental exhaustion of one of its members.

Some of our guys have already gone back to the hotel. They have a gig tomorrow. I myself am getting tired. It’s going to be a long day tomorrow. Jimmy and I get a drink at the hotel bar

“Cam seems a little pissed,” Jimmy tells me.

“That’s how he is. He lives all the ups and downs of the band. It’s what keep him sane.”

Jimmy confesses, “I could see him just walking off stage one gig.”

“That’s why he’s magic. He’s giving himself out there.”

“I’m just not sure that he has that much to give. He’s going to have to hold back just for his sanity.”

I admit, “I suppose your right.”

Jimmy sees something all too well. There is nothing that he can do to change things. I myself am having trouble holding it all together. This is getting so much bigger than any of us have imagined. Sure I’ve seen all this with Passion. But I never imagine that I would be holding it together in my hands.

Maybe this is the right time to say something to Cam. I just feel at a loss for words.

Jimmy heads off to bed. I sit at the bar for another half hour or so.

It is the second day of the Coachella festival. I have a long list of new bands that I want to see. I leave the hotel early. The Sun Runners have a show in LA. I could have followed them. But I have some contacts to make in the VIP area.

I really love the short cut that takes me from the hotel to the festival site. I drive way beyond the commercial area of town to the residential neighborhoods. Today, I don’t want to turn off for the festival. The mountains are beckoning. I want to go fishing for the soul. I need to take some time off.

I keep driving until I arrive way outside of Indio. I am heading away from civilization. I am going off into the wilderness. I get to a point where the highway ends. There is just desert in front of me. I wonder if I leave the car here, will it be buried in sand when I come back. I have seen the winds blow here. They blow so hard that it is easy to lose yourself in a sandstorm. Lost never to return.

There is no music. No noise. Not even wind. I’ve driven by the turning wind mills. But I am way beyond that. There is a sense of suspense with the utter stillness.

I get my canteen and start to head into the desert. This will be my journey for today. I consider what I need to cast off so that I can discover the heart of the self. I continue deep into the soul.

How can I start this trip. What is the first landmark?

For years, those landmarks have seemed evident to me. It is the Passions, the Hatties, the Melissas. Blessed souls who hardly walked on the earth. I wanted to fuse with their spirits.

Though these wonders, we can taste eternity. I have given myself to this devotion. We all have.

If I am to follow my guide into the desert, I will have to abandon my faith. I still cling to the beloved. I kneel before them in adoration. I cannot admit how they have let me down. They have practically destroyed me.

This is my first meditation. I need to contemplate my rejection. I have been denied. And I still believe. I can taste Hattie's lips. This is a memory that I have to strip away. I need to forget that sweetness.

"Hattie, what have you been drinking?"

"The mead of the gods."

"Of course."

Is it absinthe? Or something with peppermint? I just want to taste the essence.

It is the desert. I am becoming parched. I take a sip of water. I have passed the first hurdle. I look back. I can no longer see the car. This is how I have wanted it.

I am now in search of the serpent. Look at these mountains. It is the ancient serpent trailing its way through the country. I can perceive these monsters wading in a pre-historic sea.

I am ready for the next challenge.

Once you get this deep into the dessert, you have to depend on your wits. That is just what I am doing. For those who have made it through an immense trauma, they discover the core of their self. This is what keeps them together through the most immense tragedy.

The admiration for the other is now replaced by a self-love. No challenge is too great. The intent is to expose the nerve that makes the soul quiver. I am not the first to have braved the desert. Others have looked at the appealing mountainous crevices as the perfect climb for the daring adventurer. The hills look much closer from far away. But the walk shows the traveler how incredible is the distance.

The self is resilient. It will not give in to the heat. At this point, there is nary a memory that can sustain the pilgrim. He keeps walking. He digs deep into the self. He will find the courage to continue on.

I am exposing that core. None of my associations will help me out here. It doesn't matter if I manage the Sun Runners. I will have to make my way on my own. I need to find the strength in me. I don't even want to climb the mountain.

I could always turn back now. It would be so simple. I do not. I have made it down to the raw marrow of the self. I will not turn back.

What is the self about? This refusal to give in. I can't concentrate on anything except my commitment to keep walking. I take another sip of water. My clothes are sticking to me. I will not stop.

Once the self has reached this point, it takes pleasure in its stand. It could easily surrender at a point like this. It pushes just beyond itself to sustain the process. I will not give in.

The sand gathers around my shoes. I try to keep my balance. It is not as if I have any clear destination. I fail only if I turn back. It is not enough to keep on. I must find a will beneath it all. I could return another day and reach just this far. I have not given up. I will never let myself down.

If I give up now, no one will know what has motivated me to come this far. I will not be

able to bear witness to the incredible effort that has been expended to get me this far along. I keep moving .

As I plunge deeper into the desert, I need something to sustain me. An image. Anything. In classic sacred literature, the mystic focuses on a miracle of a saint. Or perhaps the inevitable suffering endured in a martyrdom. I need to be more immediate than that. For me, I am more soothed by a smut shot. Perhaps a spread of Hustler. Or a naked butt.

I wonder if I am even worthy for such a spiritual journey. I am hardly the saint. I give in to my carnal desires. I want to embrace the flesh. There is only rock and sand everywhere around me.

My fantasy seems to be draining too much of my energy. But I let the image burn deeper on my brain. I want more and more and more. If my wish would only allow me to kiss the lips. All my perversity will be forgiven.

I have a vision for my life. I have done everything that I can to sell it to the rest of the world. So is that sensation that is the Sun Runners. They have realized my dream. And now I have abandoned that hope.

What happens when there are no witnesses? No one who can understand why I have extended so much of myself for so little. This is the essence of sacrifice. The Sun Runners will only become more triumphant through my loss.

I believe that Cam set off on just this sort of quest. He says as much in his songs. There comes a time in everyone's life where he has to do more than listen to songs. That is why I have come here. The scenario has been there for me all along. And now I am following its course.

I am here so the serpent might come alive, here so that it might reveal all that matters. It sounds silly. It all sounds silly.

I know that this is what Ryan wanted when he got his tattoo. He lives in his world that is imbued with desire. But he is too removed from the satisfaction. A kiss, an embrace, a night of love. All of it is only partial. It only inspires more desire. Then there is satisfaction itself. It is beyond his grasp. Except in pain. Except in the designs of ink. He wants the needle to penetrate his skin with the secret. Just something to tell him that he is whole.

That is the addiction. Once that taste helps you glimpse the whole, one taste will not do. The desert is so vast. I am ready to embrace it all.

So I need to cast off another veil of the self. And now I approach the desert outside of the desert. How can I touch that immensity. Only from within. There is a story here. It is Sherry's story. The kid trying to get close to Passion. It is built on humiliation. The leader takes the disciple into the morass. The student gives in, because he relishes submission. So this is no longer about the sacrifice of self. The sacrifice gratifies a perversity that extends throughout the personality. That is the desert. Not a place of revelation, but a place of torture. This is where I hide my mistakes.

If I have been trying to deny that violent side of my personality, the desert reminds me that I am driven by something vile. I am the gang member who threatened me if I returned to my uncle's place. This is the killer who waits outside the car window. He has found an easy victim. Someone disturbing his peace. The perfect candidate. I am turned on by this power.

I have learned to hide behind my comfort. Let the serpents do the talking for me. They slither in the sand just as I make my to my destination. Of course, there is no destination. I head

out until I face the self.

Someone seems to be taunting me in my isolation.

I imagine Brenda naked. She wraps her supple body around mine. I kiss. I pull her close so that we merge. I want to taste her. My kisses slide down her smooth legs. She opens herself up for me. She is so limber. I never thought of her as that athletic. But she is healthy. She watches what she eats. She exercises and rides that damn bike.

I never imagined that she could be so enticing. I am passing through layer after layer. With each step, she is becoming more desirable. I can barely contain the excitement. I no longer notice where I am. I am so involved with her body. I bury myself inside her. I gorge myself on her flesh. To swallow it all in. I want to all. I want to taker her whole inside me.

I pull her legs close to me. I slide inside her. We rock together. The sweat only makes me want her more. We swim together. I can feel myself pulled in a current. I give myself totally.

My words in her words. My flesh in hers. Her skin is electric. She becomes more aggressive. I can hardly hold back. I kiss her deep until my tongue tickles her insides. I flow without flowing out. She returns to me. I float with her.

My imagination is bringing her to life. I go over these thoughts again and again. Can you see her? Can my words bring her back? There she is right before me now. She vanishes and then recomposes before me. There she is—outside of me—in the distance—up close—near me and far!

Why am I resolving on this image? All this mystical journey is turning into sexual desire. I never thought of Brenda as the completion of my quest.

“That is what I always hated about you. We had so much between us. But you wanted this other thing.”

I listen to Brenda’s words. They are too much to bear. I try to shut her out. But the image of her body is again omnipresent. I do not want to give in to the heat. I want to ride it as desire. I resist the desert. I embrace her sweet lips.

“See what you are doing? You are using me again. You kept me so close. Like a CD playing. But you didn’t want to hear the singer. You weren’t listening for the voice. It was all tones for you.”

I ask her, “What should I do now? We’re having fun. That’s what you always wanted.”

This is what Jimmy has told me to do. I realize his mistake. I still feel nothing more for her. Now she has caught me. I just play the bad guy.

She repeats herself, “You wanted this other thing.”

“What other thing?”

“The mystical thing?”

“What thing?” I ask her as if to shake her whole body.

“The mystical fuck. The thing that Hattie promised you. You only used me to reassure yourself that you still had appeal. Hattie fucked you over. And you wanted someone to act it out with.”

“So how come we never had sex until now?”

She takes me down to size, “That was your out. You could say that you were a good guy. Not like Jimmy. I know what you were up to.”

“So why did you want to have sex with Jimmy?” I try to pin her down.

She is angry, “He was a clean fuck. I could get away with all that shitty baggage. He wouldn’t make me feel dirty about myself.”

“You did fuck him?” I ask.

“I’m not saying that. Don’t put words in my mouth,” she says

If I’m going to have a sexual fantasy in the desert, I might as well think about Hattie. So Hattie it is.

Hattie tells me, “You’re not going to get off the hook that easily.”

“Hattie, it’s hot in the desert. Why are you wearing all those clothes?”

Hattie answers, “I’m not going to get naked for you out here.”

“Out here. There’s no one else around.”

Hattie has her reasons, “I don’t want the sun shining down on my white skin. It dries out a complexion.”

I tell her, “It’s the dessert!”

“All the worse. There’s nothing to absorb the heat. No moisture to make the skin feel fresh.”

I note, “If there was humidity out here, I’d have fainted long ago.”

She taunts me, “It is about time that you fainted. Do you really think that you can have visions and not be unconsciousness.”

“It’s not a vision. You really are here.” I reach for her smooth hand. She pulls it away.

“It’s not as if I’m going to give you anything out here.”

“Why?” I ask.

“It should be obvious to you, because you want it so badly.”

And I do want it badly. That is her trick. For a while she wanted my thin young body inside her. But then I became an impediment to her future happiness. So she cut me loose. She’s not going to give in to me right now.

Just to imagine her body sends me in to fits. My mind sails off into oblivion. This is hardly the physical pleasure offered by Brenda. Brenda is right. I almost feel repulsion to the physical. With Hattie, it becomes so much more. We float on and on together. This is forever.

If Hattie is my goal, why did I come to the desert? Memphis is a lot closer than Palm Springs. It’s not just the band. I want something.

For the time being, Hattie continues to preoccupy me.

“You must think that I’m crazy if you expect me to hang around here with you.”

“It’s beautiful out here.”

She always has an answer, “I know all kind of successful boys in Memphis. Why would I want to stay here with you?”

“I’m on a roll. The Sun Runners are becoming famous.”

She won’t give in, “It’s not even your band. They could up and fire you. Who are you? It’s just not the sensible thing to be with you.”

“You were always giving in to the sensible thing.”

Hattie touches the brim of her hat and hold her head in the air. I want her even more.

She looks me in the eyes. It’s hard to stare with the haze in the air.

Hattie is cruel, “You only want me because you can’t have me.”

“But I do want you all the same.”

“I’m a little more like Brenda than you think. I just want a clean fuck.”

I feel hurt, “You brought me all the way out to the desert to tell me this.”

“I’m not going to tell you that I love you.” She tosses her hand in the air.

“At least give me a kiss.”

She informs me, “If we kiss, then we revert to our true natures.”

“What does that mean?” I ask.

“If you’re really a frog, then you go back to being a frog.” Hattie laughs.

We kiss and she disappears. There goes my frog.

The heat has become more intense in the intervening time. I am surprised that I have not passed out. Maybe I am already out and I do not realize it. I started this trek with the idea that I was already part of something. Now I feel less and less like that is so.

Brenda has her own take on things, “Not much different than sitting in the sun and getting a sun tan.”

“What do you mean?” I ask.

“If you had have stayed at the pool in Palm Springs and just lay out on a lawn chair, it wouldn’t have been much desert than coming out in the desert like this.”

“You’re not here. How can you judge the relative worth of both projects?”

She argues further, “I’m just saying that there’s not much difference between what you’re doing and what some bikini-clad girl is doing working on her tan by the pool. You just want to attribute this enormous purpose to your life, when there’s none there.”

“Just like you’re not here, “ I say to my shadow. Or is she here? Has she always been here? This is just a family vacation, and we’ve brought along the kids. I try to concentrate on that version of things. It helps erase the pain of the journey.

I consider that if I’ve walked this far out, I’ve got to make it the same distance back. I don’t have much water left.

I am starting to prefer my hallucinations. They seem much more lively than my everyday experience. This is better than acid. There’s only one problem. There may only be one trip per person, and mine is almost done.

I follow. Ahead of me pushes on my guide. The heat is becoming greater. It penetrates deep into the skin. My guide does not want me to turn back. He considers it only sign of weakness. I am already dead. There may be something new to discover if I push on. I keep walking forward. That is what I imagine.

I need to postpone my satisfaction. I embrace the discipline. I am a willing student. I submit. I am on my knees. Be a god for me! Who are you?

No food! No water! No company!

Will I be rescued if I collapse out here? Who even knows that I am here? Perhaps there is someone on the road who has discovered my car. They will send help.

It is too late. It is too late to turn back. I would never make it back to the car. Not now. If I press on, I may find an oasis. I am closer to the mountain. The sun beats down on me. Perhaps I can find a cave. I will be stronger in the morning.

I hate Brenda for leaving me like this. One word from her and I would have stayed with her forever. I just pushed her until there was nothing that she could do but push me away.

I know that I am not being honest about Brenda. I never wanted her. I just wanted to return to Memphis and pretend that everything would be all right. Hattie embarrassed me terribly. She showed me something beautiful about herself. Something all powerful. Then she shit on me!

I have tried to be systematic about my journey. It has become so random. There is nothing holding together my life. Just look down at me, and have pity on me. I have seen the vultures circle. Really I have. Out there, deep out there. I want to stay sane. I need to stay awake.

Wonderful sleep. Beautiful sleep. Come to me. Let me close my eyes. The sweat has made my eyes so heavy. They have succeeded in destroying me. All of them. I know what Lee felt like. I just want the power running through my veins. Give me, give me the power. I am so dry. I am so parched. Give me the word. Let it flow inside me. Touch me, Lord! I will submit.

I have pushed out too far without a purpose. Cam is an artist. He knows how to manage this place. I cannot. I am at a loss to explain it all.

My last angel comes for me. It is Passion. "You should have done away with yourself when you were in England. You had the chance."

I tell him, "Passion, I'm not a hopeless believer like you. I want something real that I can touch."

"Touch me. Touch my wounds. Taste them. There's still enough there for you. Just suck harder."

"Passion, I will not submit."

He admonishes. I am the pupil, "Down, boy."

His body is strewn on the sand. I am next. I am being tossed by the tides.

I hear a voice say, "There she blows."

I correct him, "It's not there she blows. It's who she blows."

I remember Passion's words, "The blow blows for you."

Any last words.

"I want to get blown up, before I come down."

I feel swollen all over. The journey has only just begin.

How does it start? It starts with the hard stuff, and then you come down with the soft stuff. If you progress on to the harder stuff, then you are really fucked.

A rattler circles me. He is ready to strike. I cannot resist.

"Mother Mary, come to me."

It is Brenda again. "I don't want you inside me. I don't feel that way about you."

I tell her, "Just wait, you will."

I fall to the sand. This is a strategic move. I am just avoiding my enemies. I am at the heart of the heart, the marrow of the marrow. This is where I bleed. I bleed so I can feel what you feel. I want to be Cam. I want a career sharing my shit with you.

I am starting to realize that I have ventured out too far. I didn't mean to get caught like this. This was not meant in any suicidal way. Sure I wanted to test myself. But I never thought that it would end this way.

I fall all the way to the sand. I am lying down in the afternoon sun. I can sense that this is the end.

When I wake, I feel that the angels have come to get me. I accept my rendering. I am no longer in the desert. I am in a bed. How have I possibly been rescued? This is clearly death and resurrection. An explanation is in order.

She looks at me, “We saw your car. We couldn’t believe that anyone would come out here on his own. You have to be crazy or something.”

Her name is Angela. My mouth is too parched to say anything.

“Were you trying to die?” she asks.

I keep thinking that I was going to make it back on my own. But I wouldn’t stop. It seemed as if I was being led on. Something told me to go out into the wilderness.

The next day I am back at the hotel. I feel as if I have broken down completely. I don’t want to deal with business. I just want to get myself together. Maybe I drank too much the night before. That only made me more dehydrated during the day. But I only had a few drinks with Jack.

I never found a way out. I never really found any core to help me escape. I faced the chasm, my emptiness. I am lucky to be back here. I try to remember something about the people that rescued me. Even that seems an illusion.

I hastily improvise a story about making it to the caves. That seems to make more sense. I got my bearings. But if that was so, I would have had to walk back to the car. That doesn’t make sense. In another scenario, I feel that I am still out there wandering in the sand.

Now, I feel so dehydrated. There is no way that I am going to make my flight. I call to reschedule. I need another day here to recover.

Monday evening has none of the drama of the weekend. Most of the festival goers have long cleared out. There are a few golfers here for the week. Everything has changed.

I go back to the room. I’m not going to miss my flight tomorrow. I have been living through the band for almost a year. Their rise has been meteoric. I wish that I could head straight to Nashville. But I know that Jason is on the road. And our guys are out there too.

When they start work on the second album, things will really change. They have a reputation to support. It is an ugly thing how things have changed. I really grasp Cam’s discomfort.

Somehow I have lost myself. This is no longer about me. I have destroyed anything that could have been real, the thing with Brenda. For what? I am feeling old beyond my years. I am not meant to be in these hotels.

When I get home to Atlanta, things are weird. My mother has collected more press on the band. They are even on the cover of *Spin*. This is all based on the first album. She can see my exhaustion. But she can only understand the success. She would expect me to be pursued by hosts of girls. I am feeling more and more alone.

I go to my room and close the door. I usually would pop on a CD. I lie there in silence.

The next day I call Jason. He is just coming off of sound check. He is hardly phased by the Coachella experience. It has been just another gig for him.

I tell him what happened to me. He asks, “Do you even know how you got out of there?”

“At this point, I’m not even sure that I was there. Even Coachella seems like a dream.”

“Rest assured,” he tells me, “you were there.”

I get up to use the bathroom. I barely know the face that is staring back at me. I am

starting to question the life that I am living. There is a woman in the other room who claims to be my mother. This can't be my life. Not in the least.

I look at the copy of *Spin*. I wish that I could know those guys. Hey, they're from Atlanta. It would have been cool to have seen them at Coachella. They talk about playing the gig at some point in the future. That may have been my inspiration. My mom is trying to keep me sane. Jason is just playing along with her so that he doesn't hurt my feelings. He knows better than she does that I am far gone.

I think that I used to have a life. I collected vintage albums and hard to find CD's. I communicated my passions with other kids on the internet. I went to shows.

But the fantasy has got out of hand. I have spent my mother's money just trying to hold my head above water. I've got to go back to working as a stock boy at the grocery store. I need some meaning in my life.

One thread has been pulled and the fabric has come apart again. I just want to pull the covers over my head. I just want to be someone else.

The Sun Runners are on the road. I can't get through to them. The road manager doesn't answer my calls. Something really strange is going on. My mother is playing their CD in the other room. I still haven't played any music since I have been back. I am sure that I can make sense of it in the morning. I just need to sleep. I'm sure anyone else would feel as I do if they were in my situation.