

ANARCHIVIST

magazine issue #2



no meditations this time, nervous
or otherwise.

foreword

This is probably the last Anarchivist. It might be the first of more.

I did the first issue in August 2013. I planned for the follow-up to arrive a couple of months later. The concept at the start was 'nervous meditation on buildings and music', which consisted of a couple of interviews with some people who were/are in bands that I liked, a cover disc with some tracks I'd recorded with my two bands at the time and a piece (accompanied by Nina's artwork) about the Monash Homemaker Centre (still awaiting demolition at time of writing).

I didn't do a follow up because my ambitions for the first were pretty high. It was made using a hybrid digital/physical cut-and-paste process that employed multi-generation photocopies of things I found in the dumpsters at Monash University. The process was intended to be an example of waste reuse and a tribute to the early methods of zine production.

I didn't do a follow up because I started to question my motivations. This is often a downward spiral. Whatever those spirit-dampening thought processes were, it made me feel like my intentions were selfish and disingenuous.

I didn't do a follow up because I put out a call for material and got a response or two but nothing further. I was too tired/disillusioned to follow it up. Blind optimism had been replaced with apathy. I realised that most of the interviews I was then going for were for my own benefit.

I've always had a problem with kowtowing to a particular social dynamic or aesthetic. I've desperately wanted to fit in, as long as I can remember, but have steadfastly required any kind of social intercourse to be exclusively on my terms (i.e. the institution bending to my desires and not the other way around). Not surprisingly, this leads to a lot of accusations of self-sabotage.

I thought I might give this one a last shot. No elaborate production process, no cover disc, no pretensions to hipster fashion save what's necessary to get this under the freebies table of Missing Link. Let's hope I have the energy to chuck some down there so I can lay this thing to rest.

The Anarchivist

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Download accompanying music at:

<http://theftaus.bandcamp.com/>

contents

Some of this content has been previously published online or in print. All photos were taken and pieces were written by the Anarchivist team except where noted. All artwork by Anarchivist.

Pg. no. – title *short descriptor*

- 4. – the hothouse *music rant*
 - 6. – *interview with Belu*
- 7. – apartment *teenage fiction fragment*
 - 9. – *interview from Lou Barlow from Sebadoh – reprinted*
- 12. – rollins *short personal essay*
 - 13. – something of value *poetry by Randall Stephens*
- 15. – specious ?????
 - 17. – started off busking and I can't explain myself ?????

the hothouse

The following is a facebook comment that turned into a 1500 word essay(rant) on my experiences in the Melbourne music scene, primarily with regards to my old punk/alt band. I then posted it up as my yearly blog update, and now it's here in print form, edited slightly for clarity. Originally published Nov 2014.

There are many [issues relevant to the current music scene] I can think of, but one in particular springs to mind. I think I saw an article written on the topic that would be great to see posted if anyone can remember what I'm talking about...

I think the biggest problem is getting people to shows. It's an issue that, funnily enough, is a by-product of the vibrant, dense and varied local music scene we have in Melbourne. With such a huge number of bands starting and doing the rounds attempting to organise shows, we get a significant degree of 'saturation' with respect to our relatively small (compared to say the US or UK) population, i.e. a great number of bands per capita. What happens is that punters are effectively spoiled for choice, and it becomes difficult for many new, completely green bands to thrive.

This issue becomes compounded if the bands are geographically removed from the inner city suburbs. If you're trying to bootstrap yourself into the scene and get people turning up at shows, you're going to find it an uphill climb unless you A.) Band together with other smaller acts on your early bills, typically on weeknights; B.) Try to organise a show with a fairly well-known headliner or C.) invite all your friends along and develop a little cheer squad that will loyally turn up to all your gigs. Here are a few issues I've found with these approaches:

A.) A line-up with smaller bands, unless linked by other networks such as friendships, won't be much of a drawcard. I remember a particular gig where we booked similar bands, all with about the same number of Facebook likes (that much maligned but oh-so-appealing metric) and ended up \$150 out of pocket because we drew a crowd of eight. The venue took the \$40 we could have used to subsidise our expenses because they didn't sell enough drinks that night. Part of this was because we had booked a Wednesday, but that was all we could get at the time. No venue we asked were willing to put a band as green as ours on a Fri/Sat bill.

B.) We attempted this a few times, and were even successful once. I kept asking the management of a certain popular local noise rock band to headline a show I was organising, and repeatedly got the 'Xxxxx Xxxxx are unavailable at this time'. I later realised that they were booking better and higher-drawing shows. This makes sense from the more established bands' perspective. They avoid shows that are likely to be duds and space out shows to maximise turnout. However, this doesn't make it any easier on the little bands who are constantly advised to 'get on the bill with a big headliner'. This is *the* common piece of advice I got when I wrote to a dozen local record labels seeking their wisdom. My old band also played with an established prog metal band at one gig, but this turned out to be an embarrassing experience. We learned that gigs requiring pre-sale of tickets (with sales in excess of 100 resulting in a free bottle of JD!) are not for us, especially for the reasons outlined in the next paragraph (we managed to sell 4). Though this headliner was big enough to support Slipknot at one point (we had very poorly defined stylistic tendencies at this juncture in our short career), this did not translate as it did in my youthful head to sales of our freshly recorded EP or even a single new like on Facebook.

C.) Ah, the friendship card, which can be a significant point of contention. To the point, my old band discovered one thing: NONE OF OUR FRIENDS WERE INTERESTED IN SEEING LOCAL BANDS. We all practiced and grew up around the sunny outer suburb of Springvale and all of our high-school and work friends pretty much all lived within 10 km of the area. They'd come and see our first couple of gigs for the novelty, but then attendance very rapidly waned. They simply could not justify traveling out all the way to Collingwood to come and see us play. We'd do the regular promo - put up posters, make an FB event, stick flyers around, but these all failed to get people to our shows in anticipated number. The trendy sharehouse crowd tend to survive well in these waters, as they have a ready pool of youthful punters to draw on who are in close proximity to public transport and often without the restrictions placed on you by a dependent or overbearing family.

Our rather naive (and now very embarrassing, in retrospect) strategy to deal with this was to insert ourselves into a 'scene' with the subtlety and grace of a 10 pound hammer. We'd show up at shows and randomly start conversations with anyone vaguely 'muso-esque' to try and flog our band. We'd go online and beg our new contacts for tips on what we were doing wrong. We'd go to shows with music we felt was ridiculous and only on the fringe of what we were trying to do, only because they had a really tight-knit social dynamic that we desperately wanted to be a part of. This all thankfully fell apart in time and we realised that it's actually kind of creepy and morally quite devious to try and flog your band with social engineering.

So, that band broke apart when we could no longer afford to put on shows that were attended by no more than our driver and sound engineer. We did, however, learn some important facts about how to establish a band:

'Go to shows' - we used to do this with completely the wrong attitude. We used to go to shows as a kind of business venture or observational experiment. We didn't really care about a lot of the bands we were seeing, we just wanted to see how to put on a successful show. That where we learned that, more than anything, it was up to the people involved. You can promote as heavily as you want, but unless you appeal to actual human beings, you're not going to get anywhere.

I stopped playing shows and started going to them, just leisurely. It took a long time, about a year, but I finally realised how shows work, and the kind of people that go to them. I started to socialise out of love of the music being played, not to further our own musical prospects. Going to all those shows to 'network' did have a positive outcome - it introduced me to worlds of music I would not otherwise have listened to. Now I love going to shows for the heck of it and starting conversations about where these guys are coming from, not if they want to do a gig sometime.

Interest in a scene precipitates bands, not the other way around.

'Do it for the right reasons' - we were doing it for completely the wrong reasons. I wanted to play music, but also wanted to be loved and appreciated. When this latter reason becomes a greater driving force than the former, you've got a problem, ESPECIALLY if you are like we were and are not willing to compromise the way we perform or write.

'Do one thing, do it well' - we tried to be everything - pop/experimental/noise/country/industrial/hardcore punk/post-hardcore/4-track tape experiments/loops. It becomes damn near impossible to get anywhere, especially when your appeal is driving all over the place. It can come across as immature and confusing. If you have a lot of diverse musical interests, it might make sense to distil them into separate bands - we broke up into three different bands (from my perspective) and things have been much easier to manage since. A lot of the more experienced bands with a very diverse set of activities started off doing one kind of thing and getting very good at it before branching out.

It can be difficult to survive in scenes such as Melbourne's, where there's a plethora of great bands all vying for essentially the same crowd. Of course, there's an upside to this - it breeds innovation. To succeed is to distinguish yourself from the crowd and make best use of the resources available to you. I know a band very well (many?) who, despite not being the best musicians, are getting attention *quite* fast. This is because they fit a niche (helpful hint: being a pseudo-punk band from Springvale isn't a viable niche) and are incredibly adroit when it comes to marketing it.

So to survive, I suppose, spend some time (I'd recommend a year) going to gigs, finding out what kinds of music you like, seeing how things work and then start a band in a niche where you'll be comfortable whether or not success comes your way. I don't think Melbourne's scene is likely to die out anytime soon. In fact, I'm looking forward to seeing what the hothouse grows. Whether we can brave the heat remains to be seen.

Download:

<https://isiym.bandcamp.com/album/pineapple-head-2>

belu

Belu is a music producer from Sydney and, according to the dozen or so blogs his first release was reviewed on, is my age (23). I heard his single 'Twenty-Something' on 3RRR one night and was instantly inspired to discover how he makes his magic.

*One of the few pieces in this issue exclusively intended for it is the following interview with **Belu**. Usually when I've interviewed someone in the past, I get a chain of partial-textspeak Facebook messages that I edit into a coherent discussion. When I got my questionnaire back from **Belu**, however, I received this exquisitely formatted and carefully written document, reprinted exactly as received (aside from this preamble and title).*

1. When did you start making music? Was it something you've always wanted to do?
I started learning to play guitar when I was about 13 or 14, since then I've always had an interest in making music. Turning an idea into a finished product and the intricacies involved in that process has always excited me.

2. Who influenced your musical development? Do you feel there was an obvious progression in your listening habits over time? If so, how have your choices in what to listen to changed?

My musical development has always been influenced by my peers, music has been the central topic of conversation amongst friends for as long as I can remember. Friendly competition would push me to try and master the most technical guitar part or find a new band or artist that my friends hadn't heard of before. I feel that eagerness to push myself to fill my music library with a diverse and undiscovered range of artists really shaped my listening habits.

Today I really try and focus on finding local artists that are producing music that I like, and not just electronic music either. Establishing what it sounds like to be an artist from Sydney or Australia is becoming increasingly important to me too- not so much intentionally trying to sound like those around me, but rather being influenced by the culture and music that is being created within my scope.

3. What tools do you use to produce your music? Do you have a preference for sampling, hardware-produced sounds or working purely in the software domain?

Coming from a background of playing in bands, I love the imperfections of recording the live performance of a particular part and the character that comes with that, I try and implement these types of ideas as much as possible with my guitar, synth and drum parts.

At the same time I really enjoy sampling where I think it can add something to a track, and I also like to add field recordings that I capture on my travels, it really helps open up a track and adds a unique atmosphere that is otherwise hard to achieve. I also love the endless possibilities of working in the box, I think that's what drew me to electronic music, if you can hear the idea in your head you can almost definitely communicate one way or another using your software.

3. What do you think is the best way for new and emerging artists to promote their music so it finds a wider audience? How have you promoted your How It Is EP?

I think it's important to make sure people are able to find your music as easily as possible, that involves ensuring that you are active on as many social media platforms as possible. If someone hears about your music on the radio or is told about your music by a friend, it's so important that you can be found easily online.

I've been lucky enough to get a positive response from some great online music blogs and have had my songs played on Triple J and community radio stations around the country, these avenues have been a great way to get my music to the right people.

4. Do you intend to play live or do you envision yourself as a studio-only performer?

Yeah, I'm definitely planning on playing live. I'm in the process of organising the live set at the moment, that currently involves the search for a drummer and bassist to accompany me on stage to perform the songs. I've always played in bands so the idea of applying those principles and playing electronic music with a band is something I'm really looking forward to.

*You can download (or better, purchase then download) **Belu's** excellent EP How Is It from <https://belumusic.bandcamp.com/>*

apartment

I found this short vignette on a floppy disk I had sitting in my drawer for about 8 years. I must have written it when I was about 15-16 on the Apple Macintosh SE/30 computer that I kept on my desk until it died of hard disk failure. So, probably 2007-2008. Edited slightly. The garbage characters have been mostly preserved.

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7 It was around three in the afternoon, and the late rays of the June afternoon streamed into a room through its blinds. Some kid lay sleeping inside on a grimy couch. The country music playing on the stereo in the corner stirred him slightly. It was supposed to have grunge coming from its speakers, but someone had sneaked in earlier and popped in an Aimee Mann CD.

The room was pretty dim. The sunlight was the lone illumination, bouncing off the countless motes in the air that made the room look dirty. Randall's room was dirty. It smelled of dank air, of uncleaned air conditioner and of forgotten industrial equipment strewn on the floor. Coke and Dr Pepper cans were littered around the floor, as well as chip packets and chocolate bar wrappers. Papers with all manner of notes scrawled on them were roughly arranged into piles on and off the side of a glass coffee table. The table had a grey laptop computer, a couple of beer cans and half empty wine glasses, an ashtray and a pile of 7" records set upon it. Randa77

7ll grumbled. He sniffed at the stale air. He rose, slowly, coming to his senses, and pulled a cigarette butt from behind his ear. He flicked it into his ashtray, about half a meter away. Slipping back into the couch, Randall swore, and then grumbled some more. He stumbled over to the corroded rack-mount stereo built into the shelf and ejected the CD. He replaced it with a Brad CD that had been precariously balanced on the windowsill. He opened the blinds a little bit more. Hmm, he thought. It's pretty out there. I wonder where Desiree went. She was here, wasn't she? Almost tripping over a Small Television set, he spied a joint from the previous night. Slumping on the couch, he sniffed at it. Nice party, wasn't it he said to himself. He lit it up using a stray orange lighter and pulled a drag. He remembered that the spliff probably belonged to his friend Melanie, and that he would owe her for it next time she was over. The room filled with a small cloud of smoke. He turned the Small Television on, and MT77

7V was playing through the Foxtel box. Many of his friends could only stand the place as long as the Foxtel box was on. He changed the channel. Powderfinger playing on Recovery. A hairy man speaking in greek. A computer commercial. Sterling Silver earrings for \$19.99. Hey Arnold!. The Simpsons. Another cartoon he hadn't seen before.

He thought he heard the door open, but he thought about it before dusting the crumbs from his flannel shirt. In his stoner daze, he couldn't get everything straight. The doorbell rang. Or did it ring before he heard the door open? He couldn't remember.

"Hey Randall." chorused a small group of kids. Three of them walked into the living room. Two pulled up beanbags that were covered in Twistie debris. "Oh man, he's stoned." one said. He knew them. This was Melanie, Chloe and Tom. They sometimes came to his house in the afternoon for tea, or to watch television, or to talk about angsty, pretentious but wholly funny issues.

"Kenneth's in the car. He brought his guitar because his amp 77—————{broke, and he wants to use yours. He'll be up. This place stinks." Chloe said.

"I'll clean it on Monday. Just...I need some help. Can you come over?" Slurred Randall.

"Yep. Here he is." said Chloe, her hand on her hip. She was a redhead, with wide hips like Melanie and a smile covered in lipstick. Today, she wore a white and red windcheater with REV written on it.

"Hey Clo, could you grab me some milk?" asked Randall, meekly.

"You have none, I just looked in your fridge, and you're clean out except for a pair of sneakers and a quarter bottle of Coke."

Randall paused for a moment. "Are you lactating?"

"No." Chloe took a moment to make the connection. "You sick boy." She smirked.

lou barlow

Lou's releasing a new Solo Album under his own name entitled 'Brace The Wave', out 5/9/15 on Joyful Noise Records. To honour the impending release, we might dust off this old chestnut – in my first year of Uni, I had the pleasure of interviewing Lou for Lot's Wife (with whom I was Music Editor at the time) when he was here with Sebadoh. Since then, Sebadoh have released their first LP in 13 (?) years and Lou got divorced and remarried. Sorry this is a little late...

This hasn't been re-edited much. It was originally published late 2011.

Regular readers of this year's Lot's Wife may have noticed that I have a thing for Lou Barlow. I'll admit that he's something of an idol for me. For those not aware of him, Lou's a pretty prolific songwriter and member of bands such as The Folk Implosion, Sebadoh and (most famously) Dinosaur Jr. He got booted out of that last band sometime last century, but has been playing with the reformed version since earlier this century. Inspired by his vast body of work, his lo-fi approach to his early music and just his all-round coolness, I sought out an interview with him when Sebadoh came to town this September (see elsewhere for the gig review). Amazingly, I managed to hunt him down during soundcheck.

On touring Australia for the first time in fifteen (or so) years, Lou's opinion of our sunburnt country was pretty favourable. Partly out of fascination and partly out of nervousness, I asked him what he thought of the country. "I like Australia. To be completely general, it's kind of like a cross between U.K. and California. Anything crossed with California is a really good thing, 'cause that's where I live." A Massachusetts resident for many years, he now extolls the virtues of L.A. I remind him of the gig in Missing Link records gig last year; "You do look familiar, actually!" he laughs, reminding me of my fanboyish fawning.

Pleasantries now aside. Sebadoh's albums *Bakesale* (1994) and *Harmacy* (1996) are arguably their best known. *Bakesale* saw a reissue earlier this year, prompting the aforementioned tour. I asked about the making of those albums. "*Bakesale* was very 'off the cuff' and we did it very quickly... there were no particular expectations. Eric Gaffney had just quit the band. Unfortunately, dealing with Eric up to that point he made everything extremely difficult... very talented guy, very cool ideas but he really has a hard time letting go of things and getting on with it, the business of making music. When he left, he sort of took his little black cloud with him and the sun came out. We made this record really quickly and we included the four songs that we did with Eric before he left the band. [It was] just this very quick, kind of cathartic process."

And onto the oft-cited difficulties making *Harmacy*; "[*Bakesale*] was pretty successful and I had some success with the Folk Implosion, so when we started doing *Harmacy*, there were a lot of expectations. We also ran into the limitation of having our good friend Bob Fay play drums. One of the main reasons that Bob was in the band was because he was fun to hang out with. He wasn't a particularly dynamic drummer. We were faced with this expectation of going into the studio and they're saying that these songs are good, but could be so much better if you had someone who could really play drums. So we were faced with that dilemma immediately - of course we didn't fire our friend, and we made a record that then effectively bankrupted the record label that put it out. I don't think we were solely responsible for that! Bad decisions... Anyway, we were sort of blamed for ruining the label because the record didn't sell a million copies. It was all sort of heartbreaking."

Bakesale and *Harmacy* might seem rough-sounding by today's standards, but they are the most polished in the Sebadoh catalogue. Earlier releases by Gaffney and Barlow were recorded on 4-track tape or even on boomboxes. Their songs were dubbed down onto 'RadioShack low-noise cassettes', replete with noise and audio collages. After a couple of albums, they had begun to flirt with more refined studio recordings. Barlow wonders how it would be if they'd continued the 4-track tack: "I was writing some pretty good songs back then. Looking back on it, if we'd approached it like Guided By Voices and did the whole thing on a four track it would probably be a classic record. People would go 'Whoa, incredible!'. But we sort of found ourselves caught up in the game of going into studios and working with people with opinions. We may have been better off left with our own opinions and could have made a record that was more... we could have made a noisier, more lo-fi record and that probably would have had a bit more charm to it, I think. But we didn't do that."

I was given a four-track Yamaha MT-120 recorder years ago, but it's not since discovering Lou's work that I've regained my interest in the recordings I made when I was fifteen. I asked him what he thought about using tape when you can easily buy a digital audio setup for a couple of hundred bucks...

"Sure, I think anyone can make music on anything right now." Was it financially motivated back in the day? It must have been the least expensive gear you could get your hands on... "It seemed expensive back then, I tell you my friend. My first four track was \$500 and I felt it was really expensive. But no, the other thing with recording yourself is that you have control. When you go into situations where you are using people who can afford to have this fantastic equipment that make legitimate records, you also have to contend with their opinions. I felt that recording on something like a four track was definitely not financial – first and foremost I really liked the way it sounded. But also, it was the only way I could be by myself and record without having to filter my ideas through other people."

All this talk of filtering ideas gets me thinking about being in a band. I've always wanted to be in a band, and I've been in a few. At least in my experience, it's difficult to get your ideas going in a group without everyone on board – animosity is a more powerful binder than enthusiasm. Being in so many bands, what does Lou think?

"[Easy,] I'm not in bands with people other than... I mean J Mascis has no opinions at all. It's a little hard to motivate those guys to do anything, the Dinosaur Jr. guys, 'cause their not very creatively motivated. There's a very workmanlike, dispassionate way that Dinosaur Jr. goes about their business. If I'm in the right place and have the right amount of energy, I can totally roll through it and it can be awesome. And Sebadoh certainly, I mean, the band was set up like... one of the basic ideas was 'If you think it's good, we're behind you buddy!' If Jason brings up a song, it's 'Great. I'm here for it.' I don't pick, I don't critique his work, I do my best to help him realise his ideas when we make records. But, it's been ages since we've done that."

And with that, my Sebadoh-sense starts tingling. Their last record was released in 1999. Since then, Lou's been chiefly occupied with the Dinosaur Jr. touring noise machine. He's also put out two solo records, continuing the spirit of his long-established solo project Sentridoh. The burning question is, however, will this reunion tour of sorts result in an all-new piece of Sebadoh? After a lot of confusing semantics regarding the words 'ruling' and 'rolling', Lou shed some light on the subject; "We would like to do another [Sebadoh record]. That would be good, and I think it would be smart." The main issue is mainly geographical – Jason Lowenstein and Lou live in different parts of the States. No reason they couldn't email each other tracks, Byrne and Eno style...

And now, all the important stuff that a flailing/budding songwriter wants to extract from his idol – how does he write his songs? Thankfully my questions weren't quite that general. For instance, I asked where he gets his inspiration from <sigh>. A lot of his songs are rather touchy-feely...so, maybe he invents his tales of confusion and yearning?

"I'm really bad at inventing scenarios. I wish I could. The times that I do invent, I think I'm inventing scenarios, I finish the song and realise it's exactly about something and think 'Oh God!' Being clever is really not my thing... To me it feels really arrogant. It's not that I necessarily dislike it when other people do it, 'cause I don't. I like a lot of music that takes artistic licence and weaves tales about other people. For myself, I don't have that sort of imagination, or, if I do, when I kick into it I just feel so full of shit <laughs> I can't stand it. I feel like I really have to start singing about something that's really bothering me or something that's on the top of my head. Plus, I find it really difficult to remember the words if I'm not writing about myself."

What about writing about the less happy things in life?

"Of course not!"

Here's the question that's been keeping me from writing my own songs; do you ever worry that what you write about in your songs might... affect your actual life?

“Oh, *that* stuff. I have to say I did that for a long time. I actually wrote a song, didn’t think twice about it, but then had a friend who, during the course of an acid trip, divulged to me that he thought pretty much every song that I wrote was about him. That was just awful. Then, when I sort of got successful and people started wondering what I was writing about, it created a really weird energy. I felt like I couldn’t really be honest without it directly affecting my life. It affected people *around* me, so that really affected me. But now, the cool thing is that nobody really listens to my music! <laughs> No one close to me really listens to my music – my wife doesn’t care, she just like ‘Whatever it takes –if you’ve got to write a harsh song, you know, whatever.’ It doesn’t matter. Even that becomes a part of my music; she understands... the philosophy, I guess, behind music. It’s hard to be honest in songs then actually meet the people you’re writing about!”

Lou plays bass and guitar on Sebadoh records. I was curious to find out which one he preferred. Turns out, he’s a fence sitter; “I think I prefer to play a guitar with four strings on it. A fair amount of Sebadoh songs are written on a four string... There’s something about bass that I really do... I guess because I spent the last six years playing bass with Dinosaur. I do love the bass, but I’m not a very good bass player and I’m not very good at guitar. I think I have a style though.”

Just having perused his August newsletter online, the attached video came to mind. In case you haven’t seen it, it’s a bizarre home video featuring his attempts at destroying a small electronic circuit and boredom-inspired bricolage. I’d like to live like that someday...

“What, coming home from tour with money that you can shower on a stuffed animal? That was our tiny apartment in Boston. I was spending most of my time on tour during that period. I would come home, and my girlfriend/wife worked a job. She’d leave the house at seven or eight o’clock in the morning and she’d come back home at six, so I’d have the apartment to myself all day, doing whatever I felt like <laughs>. The video was just little snapshots of my life at that time. It did involve a lot of marijuana and alcohol.”

Which makes me wonder, what’s his favourite drink? Some kind of exotic cocktail?

“Right now I like sauvignon blanc, from either South America or New Zealand. Australia as well, they make a really nice sauvignon blanc. That’s my old-guy thing. I have it with ice, so I can hydrate. I mean, I went through periods where I drank a lot of whiskey and things, but that was detrimental to my health, so I had to stop.”

Finally, and rather bewildered, I ask him for his advice to young people.



“You need to ask me a specific question”

Err... how about... love?

“I thought my advice about love would be ‘do what you’re told’, but I don’t know if that’s true or not. In any relationship, I really try to personally understand what someone is feeling. Whenever my first reaction is ‘How can somebody do that!?’ I think ‘Well, stop right there, *why* would somebody do that.’ Think about where they came from. Why they would say that. Maybe you caused them to say that... just have an honest examination of how you might feel about being wrong. Consider it, you don’t necessarily have to say you’re wrong, just apologise. Just ‘I understand...’ My wife and I have been through this a lot, I mean, in general it’s just ‘I understand what you’re feeling, I’m sorry you feel that way... I don’t know. It’s a lifelong struggle.”

Thus concludes my interview with Lou. He assures my girlfriend and I that there are T-shirts on sale. Jason greets us and shakes our hands on the way out. Nice guys.

rollins

Written not long ago for reasons unclear - 2015.

I first encountered Henry Rollins when the video for 'Liar' by Rollins Band was played on Rage. I forget which guest programmed that particular video. I was struck by the scenes in which he wears glasses. There was something intriguing about the contrast with his powerful physique, as well as the progressive dirtying of his face as the clip progresses. When scouring the internet for information later, I discovered that, in the early 1980s, he was the vocalist (I dare not say 'singer') for a band called Black Flag.

Black Flag were important to me as a teenager not because I'd ever listened to their music, but because they came to me by a chance encounter. My sister and I accompanied my dad on walks around Notting Hill and its surrounding suburbs from the time he moved in to the place until the time he moved out, back to the motherland. The most epic of these walks was to get groceries at the nearest shopping centre, Brandon Park. We'd walk down Risdon Drive, turn down Hunsford, which was a short walk to Pemberley, from which the decrepit shopping strip was visible. After walking down Westerfield, we'd turn right onto Ferntree Gully Road.



Just beneath the bridge carrying the freeway, sitting in the gutter, I found a beat up cassette tape, ostensibly tossed from someone's car. It was black, a Type IV 'Metal' cassette with 'BLACK FLAG – DAMAGED' written on it in White-Out pen. I took it home because I'd never seen a Type IV cassette in real life before. I think I played it once because I wanted to assess the sound quality. I turned it off soon after because I thought it sounded evil. I thought that the cassette belonged to someone evil.

So it sat in the bottom of my cassette drawer for another year or two.

At the end of Year 12 I was trying to distribute some angst upon as many shoulders as possible, so I tried starting a band with a school friend. Over the year we'd lapsed out of regular communication as I was busy with my own little two-person clique. He was listening to a lot of what might be described as modern metalcore. Escape The Fate featured very heavily in this. One band he had turned up though that caught my ear was Fugazi. He played 'Waiting Room' on YouTube and, once again, I was intrigued.

From this point, combined with my obsession with Sebadoh, my efforts of discovery turned to punk. I extracted the crumbling Black Flag cassette and played it on repeat, forcing myself to like it. It clicked after a dozen or so listens. It wasn't just *Damaged* though. Part of it was taped from a 1991 PBS broadcast, with some incidental music I could never determine the origin of. It also included *My War* and the *Jealous Again* EP.

randall stephens

Randall Stephens is a poet based in Melbourne. He regularly delves into themes of illness, social issues, eroticism and cycling. A prolific author, he has released spoken word albums (available at <https://randallstephens.bandcamp.com/>), anthologies (also available on bandcamp) and has also completed a 6000 km ride around Australia to raise money for haemophilia charities, writing about his experiences on the road. The following is a personal pick of his from his recent anthology 'One For the Road', available now.

SOMETHING OF VALUE

If you are going to be lonely
find the biggest sky you can
as far from home as possible
to do it under

lift the weight off old skylines
finding new light looking up
lose old aching gravity
overarching star-ful
as the pinpricks wink you
across this impossible distance

where a couch can't contain you
let that distance stretch you
-out so much further
than spread eagle across beds
throw yourself into this

scatter life down a highway
like you're a string of wreckage
let the hurt spur you on
paving the lines on your face
with a road map's direction
and own your alone

if lonely hunts you
amongst people
in places already known
you better run sucker, run
hide inside a pocket of velocity
an envelope of anonymity
a blanket of trajectory
jumping the void
left by burnt bridges
across the still waters
running too deep
for any shallow swimmers
to have followed
you
insist that loneliness
is going to work for its prey

if you are going to be lonely
 be strange
stubborn as leg cramps
let your skin carpet your flaws
be so funny that your punch lines
...can leave black eyes
be so far gone
that your trail
will itself be a tale
bread-crumbed to become
the stuff nourishing a legend

if all your photos of you
are taken arms length
then reach out further
than you ever believed you could
and picture yourself
as beautiful

and in reaching around
to sunscreen your own back
develop a new flexibility
plans remain in your hands
no splitting this difference
where decisions comes from within
that same sunscreen grease
will suddenly smell like freedom
and release

if caught in a conversational drought
then find your minds own inner dialogue
and talk yourself up a storm

get your years covered in mud
get them buckled and blistered
warped from water-log
snow stained with sand grains
stuck in them 'til you stink
of a long-story's old nostalgia

if you are going to be lonely
at all, do it all out there
where not a single friendly-fire
word-exchange can steal your flame

pursue and imbue
illuminate the solitude
with something of value
a suffering brilliance
finding gains hidden in the pain
on nights alone
that need no account
lose count and let go
of letting go

hold on
to those nights' silences
feel them congeal around you
so thick and hard
you can actually grab hold of it
climb the silence
use it as a boost-up
to get over the wall
that keeps following behind you
into every new situation

and up on that silent line
look out on a horizon
curving so back far
that the straight and the lame
will never catch you again

under the biggest sky you can find
and even if standing there all alone
it will remain one hell of a view
even if it is only

just for you

specious

You're all flogs with nothing that you need to hide behind. You wear your weaknesses on your sleeves as if you are really that stupid.

I know we don't work as hard as you do but that's because we have problems and I know you have problems too but they don't seem to work.

For some reason I've never found people invested in the project as much as I am but maybe that's because you are.

I really want something to hide behind like money but all the good ones are sold out.

We're sorry we were born on the wrong side of the river and trapped ourselves in roles instead of jobs before the age of 25.

What are the odds of all 10 kids loving soul music and attending the same school at once?

If we take three of you and add one of me how many does that leave us with?

I think I was promised a bit of property or at least a flat somewhere but for some reason it's nowhere to be found.

Failure.

Failure.

Failure.

Failure.

Failure.

Transit.

Failure.

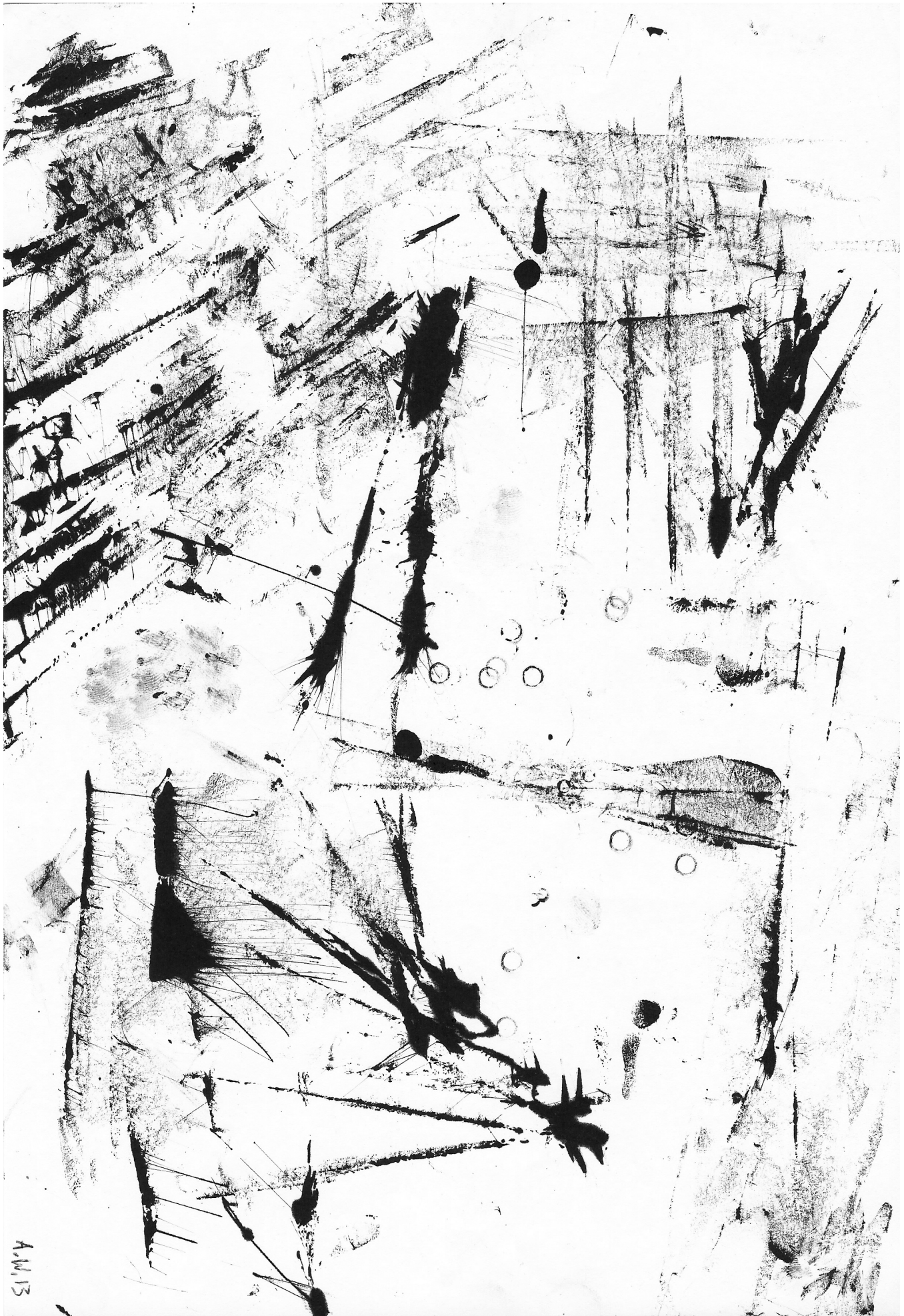
Maybe.

Some of us are scared that we might not make it.



In the mid-late 90's the "Hills Posse" were a local skateboard gang that spent their time loitering within the suburbs many parks. They could often be seen skateboarding at extreme speeds down the many steep hills within the suburb. Sunnybrook Dve was a favourite hill for skateboarders and number 68 was a house where the gang often congregated.

From Wikipedia 'Wheelers Hill, Victoria', accessed 21/5/15



A.W.13

started off busking and I can't explain myself

If I could make things the way I'd like
There wouldn't be any marijuana in your life
You wouldn't parade around and make me feel guilty for being locked inside
I'd be able to drink again and not have to

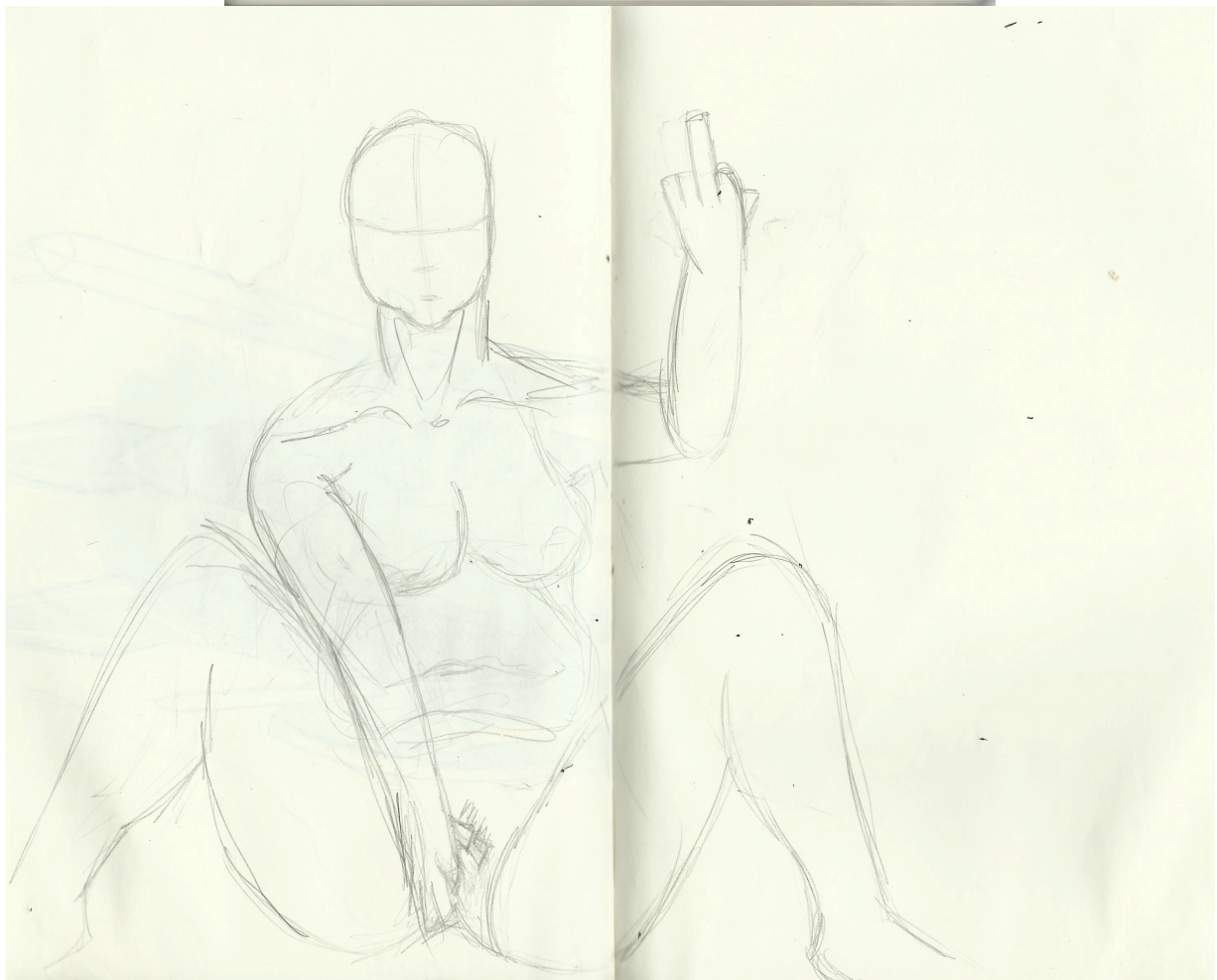
You wouldn't need to revel in your hopelessness
We could get along like people on TV
I wouldn't feel so bad about all the people I have inside
You wouldn't have moved out when you were 17 or whatever

I have to say I get upset when I hear your life
When you're gone before the light
I'm so jealous of everything



"I can't believe the kind of femmophobic bullshit I have to put up with every day, even from guys on the street"
"Really? That stuff never seems to happen to me"
"Hmm, maybe it's just a pretty girl thing then"

"Promiscuity is the embodiment of gender inequality. Women with multiple partners are regarded as sluts whereas men with many sexual encounters are heralded as studs"
"I think they're as bad as each other. I don't see how, if you're a man, sleeping with so many people is a good thing. I think it's fucking disgusting actually. I don't want to know about that kind of stuff."





inside out