



THOUGHTS OF DISCORD

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supplementary material 001



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the never-ending pain

Your life can't be planned. You can sit there and make plans for things you would like to achieve, but ultimately everything else is out of your control. The world is made up of individuals who have in many ways control over other individuals. Nothing is set in stone. We are all fragile creatures and we can be broken.

Thoughts of Discord covers a period of three years, and although I started writing the book at the start of 2006, a year after the main brunt of the book's content had happened, life prevented me from finding an adequate end point. The story continued whilst I was writing about its past. The aim was to cover solely the recording of my band **The Red Devil Incident**'s album *Self Degraded Suicide*, showing my fall into the pits of Hell and the crawl back to sobriety, but as fate would have it, little more than a month later I was back in the gutter I'd tried so hard to escape. Life has a way of doing that. So i gave up on writing it early in 2007.

When I returned to the project three years later, I was a different person. Life had continued beyond the scope of the book and once again I was crumbling. Falling apart for the same reason: Love, or rather the loss of love. Only this time, the relationship I had escaped had damaged me beyond repair, twice. I remember clearly the moment I chose to return to the project. i was sat alone in my flat in Camden Town, London, covered completely in a stress rash. I felt shit, the worst I have ever felt. After years of abuse my body had finally given up, it had had enough. I turned my head to my bookcase and saw the notebook. It called out to me. I walked over, picked it up along with the associated diaries. I felt my heart sink. The writing in them mirrored identically what was inside my head. Nothing about me had changed. I was as lost as I had ever been. The next day I went to the doctors and thus began the next journey of my life. The journey through mental health.

From this point, the meaning of *Thoughts of Discord* changed. It became much more than a memoir. It became a way to try and understand who I actually was. It was clear that I hadn't learnt from anything. I still made the same mistakes. I learnt that my life is governed by one simple thing. Love. The quest to find love, to be loved. A journey that had led me from one unfulfilled relationship to another. It was the reason I was so broken. For two years I had been following a heart that had been trapped in a mentally abusive relationship. I had allowed myself to be put down, made to feel worthless by the one person who I believed would make me feel the most worthwhile person in the world. Some people spend their lives trying to make money, to have a career, I am not wired that way. I am pitifully governed by love.

This search for both love and an attempt to find my own individual place in this world feature heavily in all of my books. The love of a person sits at the core of both *The Mushroom Diaries* and *Ink Spills and Five Notes of Suicide*. My love/hate relationship with narcotics also features in both of those as well as sitting at the heart of most of my body of work, including, of course, *Thoughts of Discord*. Both have helped me become who I am now, and both still play an important role in my life. I couldn't exist without either.

Thoughts of Discord was the opening of a new chapter of my life. Identified by the loss of the single most important person ever to have graced my life, and the returned love of substances. A painful situation to be in for anyone, more so when you consider what I now know in hindsight. I wasn't a normal person. I am someone apparently riddled with mental health disorders, some of which have controlled my life from early childhood. Looking back now i can see all the pitiful errors I made, all the things that had I known back then, I could maybe have avoided, been protected from. As I said, life doesn't work that way. Life is a bitch. I was meant to get to this point. I was meant to experience all this pain, this never-ending pain. Unfortunately it is part of who I am.

I'm not going to sit here and write my entire drug history, as it certainly surpasses any romantic association I've had with anyone. Drugs are my longest relationship. They are my longest lover. So in a way the end of *The Mushroom Diaries* was a predictable ending. The only difference was that as I sat on that train, trying in vain to hold back tears as I walked away from Sam, I had no grasp on the sheer importance that he would have on the rest of my life. I had lost my soul mate, my best friend. The only person who would feature in some way in almost all of my creative writing output.

I think the hardest thing about any break up is the fact that they are no longer there. They continue to exist without you and you have no idea of what they are thinking. You cut yourself up over stupid thoughts of 'are they thinking about me? Do they care? Do they miss me?' When you wake up in the morning to find no one next to you, do they feel that same emptiness you do? Your soul is screaming out for another and you have no way to comfort it by telling it that its other half is crying out for it too. You can't lie because you have no truth upon which to base it. Nothing you say can be believed, so the pain and hollowness is filled with drugs and meaningless sex with people you really couldn't give two fucks about. You exist solely for yourself, and when you hate yourself, that is never a good position to be in. Self destruction is the only salvation.

The post-Sam self destruction resulted in me taking speed as a base every day. It would be the first thing I did when I woke up, even going so far as preparing the morning's line in advance so that when I woke to turn off the alarm it would be the next step in the movement. Roll, switch off noise, take line, roll back. It became habit to the point that the memory of taking it soon began to never lock in my mind. Snorting lines of speed was as forgettable as smoking a cigarette. It would get me through the day, allow me to get out of bed and face the goddamn world with all its shit. It made the loneliness more bearable. The other problem in my life: I crave to feel needed, wanted, but am always by myself for

its majority. I could be dead for weeks before anyone would notice, if they even did at all. Living like a ghost, seen by only a select few. Such a lonely existence and when mixed with my own lack of self worth, it dragged me down further into the pit of despair. The drugs never leave me. They know me better than anyone else. They keep me safe.

The one thing drugs do not provide is intimacy. Well, they do, but on a completely different level. Here I'm talking about the intimacy of a person, you know, that one person who knows so much about you, who chooses to share so much of their existence with you, who loves you as much as you love them. That is the one thing I craved throughout my life at this time. It was a craving brought about through fear, the fear of being alone, of experiencing life alone, of dying alone. Being alone is my greatest fear, and whilst drugs muted it somewhat, that desire always remained. Whilst recording *Self Degraded Suicide*, I locked myself away from everyone and everything. I chose to be alone because I believed that I could do it. Instead I burnt myself to dust and then when the promise of a relationship finally rose its head, I grabbed onto it without thinking. I jumped straight into it, only to find that it wasn't what I wanted. It could never have been. It rotted, crumbled and died within months. What I wanted was the ideal of love. The love I had experienced when I had been with Sam, but when I couldn't find it in another, I simply gave up. I returned to what I knew. Drugs.

When you look back through your life, you sometimes see a constant desire. Something that you are always searching to obtain. I want adventure. Someone to share my life with on an equal level. After Sam, I went through relationship after relationship, dumbing down myself in an attempt to hold onto something that never fully fulfilled me. As a result I know that I let one person slip through my fingers that I shouldn't have. Choosing above him someone who I thought would ground me. Shake me free from this desire. He didn't. Within months I grew bored of him. I moved on emotionally and eventually cheated on him, having an affair with my boss

at the time. From the ashes of this relationship, the affair became the next journey. Affair became commitment and life continued. I lost myself in the new relationship. So much so that I lost sight of who I am. I became a ghost. The one thing that I promised I would never do happened. I changed. I was drug free, I was in 'love'. I was wrong. I understand now why this happened. I gave up. I had someone who could protect my broken frame from the world. Within this relationship I wouldn't need to fight to achieve an impossible goal. I could just exist. I could be forgettable. It lasted for a year, until one day I met someone who made me realise all that I had sacrificed of myself just for an easy life. From that moment, indeed the very next day, the relationship was over and I began to slap myself back into being true to what I am. What I believe I am. I'm not designed for the happy life. I'm not designed for a quiet monotonous existence. My life is chaos. I am surrounded by it constantly. Always have been, always will. I am guided by forces that have the control over my life. Maybe they needed me to have that period of calm, but once it was over, I was ready to struggle on one again.

Struggle is what I did. More pain, more people cast to the wayside, more drugs. A snowball growing bigger and bigger until it once again became too much. I broke again. Life broke me again. Only this time it broke me too much, and this is where this essay ends. I washed up broken and bruised on the shores of the mental health system. The next, and most hardest journey of my tattered existence was about to begin.

Everyone who has been involved in my life has moved on. Grown up and become, in differing ways, different people. I have remained a constant. I haven't truly evolved, and deep down inside me I know that this will never change. I am one of the mad ones Jack Kerouac describes in his book *On the Road*. I burn and burn until there is nothing left. Once my candle has burnt to a stump, I replace it with a new one. I live, I burn, I die. Constant repetition until the day that my final mortal candle is extinguished. Everyone who has

known me will have their memories. I will continue to create memories for others as I go on living. In a way, I guess that despite the never-ending pain that is the soundtrack to my life, I am lucky. Lucky for one reason: No one ever truly forgets me. Good or bad.