



Live

"Insomnia and the
Hole in the Universe"

Secret Samadhi

02/1997

Radioactive

Vignettes and Musings While Contemplating *Throwing Copper, Secret Samadhi, and The Distance to Here*, by Live

Kolleen Carney-Hoepfner

Let's go hang out in a bar

It's not too far

We'll take my car...

The rack is full and so are we

Of Laughing gas

And ennui

I have known Brian since I was thirteen years old—twenty-three years this year—and I am fairly certain he is the only other Live fan in existence, or who will at least admit it. Last week, at the bar, we usurped the jukebox and played ten songs in a row, our knees pressed together as we sang along, our friends groaning.

No one in this town appreciates good music.

Where have you been?

Are you with us?

Can you hear us?

Got the megaphone pointed at you.

Eighth grade and Live came to me and filled the void left in Kurt Cobain's absence, that widening gyre of suicide and teenage years and being unable to pinpoint what I needed, why. Their lyrics were vaguely religious and sort of about the working class and a bit apocalyptic, and it was the perfect combination of chaos and easy-to-learn guitar riffs I needed at that time of my life.

Before he shaved his head, Ed had long hair and sang "Hey, we won't be raped / hey, we won't be scarred like that" and my mother overheard and was troubled by the fact that the word "rape" was in a song that had substantial radio play. Later, my mom would decide she really liked "Lightning Crashes", so really, what did she know? Placenta is falling on the floor in that song.

Oh Hitler in your robe of truth

My emptiness has built your altar

Wait, what?

"Did you ever notice," I say to Brian, "that one Live song mentions Hitler? What was that all about? Did anyone ever...point that out? Was Ed a white supremacist and I didn't know it?"

Brian scoffs a bit and says, "At least I know who Hitler is. Who the hell is the bagel lady?"

*Angel don't you
Have some bagels in my oven
Lady, don't you
Know a man when you see one?*

There is something to be said about the masculinity running through even the most incomprehensible of Live lyrics. Teenage me loved lyrics like this, lyrics that presented a woman with a challenge: look on my dick, ye mighty, and worship it. Ed does this a lot, this vague sort of threatening sexuality. See also: "I like the way my hand looked on your head / In the presence of my knuckles." It sounds like he wants to hit you, but he wants you to be glad he did.

*We don't bother anyone
We keep to ourselves
The mailman visits each of us in time*

A man I do not know—the editor of an indie vanity press!—finds my Instagram account and mocks my Live shirt, telling me they suck. He is sorely mistaken if he thinks this is a comment I was looking for. I tell him I don't give a shit, and he calls me a dumb cunt on his own account. Maybe I am a dumb cunt, but I don't run a vanity press so I feel pretty ok about the experience.

*And I want you here
By my heart and my head
I can't stop 'til I'm dead*

Brian's favorite Live song is Pillar of Davidson—a song that, while fairly straightforward lyrically, is named after the two biggest industries in Live's hometown: Caterpillar and Harley Davidson. I wish I didn't know this, but I do know it, and even though I love the song too, I can't help but groan every time I think about the fact that they chose to name such a good song after such a dumb thing.

*Yeah I found god
And he was absolutely nothing like me*

Two things:

Ed is in Fight Club. You know that scene after Ed Norton realizes he is actually Tyler Durden and he brings Marla to that diner? The waiter is Ed. "Sir, anything you'd like today is free of charge, sir." How did he get this role? I do not understand it. Is he friends with David Fincher? Ed Norton? I need to know the logistics of this. It has been bothering me for years.

One of the best songs Live ever did, "Lift Me Up", was never released, but was in *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*. The scene where Zack and Miri finally have sex, and it's all mind-blowing and beautiful for them, but really boring for everyone else. I tweet at Ed that he should release this song officially, but he never responds.

*Run to the water
And find me there
Burnt to the core but not broken
Rest easy baby
Rest easy*

The Distance to Here is a pretty normal album, considering the abstraction of *Throwing Copper* and the drugged out sexually ambiguous *Secret Samadhi*. *Distance* is ultimately just an album about how love will make everything ok. It's sweet, in its own way.

I do not listen to any albums after this one.

*I try to think of something deep to say
But my well is dipping dry today*

Brian and I go to see Live in Anaheim in July because we both know no one will want to see them besides us, but you know, there's a sizable crowd and they sound pretty great.

For some reason, we are both in fits of hysterical laughter throughout the entire concert—the opening band is terrible, and we are cracking jokes to the point where everyone around us is laughing too.

I am glad we are here, together, at this concert, on this hot July day. Sometimes when I am with Brian I feel like I am eighteen again. He is my best friend and the only person who will not only join me in signing along to *I, Alone*, but who will sing it louder than anyone else. And thus, this small collection of thoughts is for him.