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This thesis strives to present and explore an assortment of themes from the perspectives of individuals, cultures, and communities, while using a variety of poetic techniques. The motivation of the thesis is the establishment of a community, including its idiosyncrasies and paradigms, and the exploration of how the characters within deal with uncertain futures, unsteady circumstances, and unrelenting pasts. In creating this world and these characters, it has become abundantly clear that the places in which we develop often inform and define the places we create.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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Why

Field Recordings (Ethnographic Notes)

Back when Nathan lived on Blue Bird,
and there was that gang of kids
who roamed the trailer park,
I would sit on the cinder block
steps and watch them as they huffed
gas, always looking for a ride
to the store.

Once I brought tapes for the boom-
box to record their conversations;
preserve them for the ages,
like a white trash Alan Lomax,
collecting the songs of a people,
who were always looking for a ride
to the store.

Ethnomusicologist, Lomax's title:
I looked it up once, but it doesn't say
if you're suppose to judge, somewhere deep
inside where no one can know,
just that it's a science, nothing
about notes on smells or landlords,
nothing about the times Nathan stared
at that girl's chest in the car
on our way to the store.

Where

Brown Corduroy

At a quarter 'til 1, I'm not supposed to be leaving;
I don't have a doctor's appointment today,
but we're at the hospital by 2.
In the parking lot, I see your 76, extended cab,
big white pickup, and I want to play with the CB,
while riding down the mountain on a cool Monday morning,
and listening to your bluegrass tapes.
I never really understood what they were saying.
I could never quite understand what you were talking about,
but I listened, because you made me laugh.

They said you were in the well house working on the February pipes.
There was nothing they could do for you at Northern,
so they brought you to Galax.
I want to be sitting with you on those stumps
in the front yard, next to the circle drive,
watching you whittle with your pocketknife.
That skin of yours like a baseball mitt,
your hair slicked back with pomade,
without a doubt the toughest looking man I ever knew.

Tough enough to call your own ambulance,
met them at the door with your coat on.
You were chewing gum
'cause they told you to quit smoking.
They said there was nothing
they could do.
I had said I loved you before,
But at three, I touched your feet,
and they were cold, and I pulled
the covers over them.
I wouldn't say, "Goodbye," if you were asleep
and could not hear me.

Granny Lockie's

Marlboro reds,
Texas Pete on eggs,
Haystack Road,
and a dust cloud
hiding a one-lane bridge.

A whittled pine limb,
Christmas name drawing,
snuff runnin' down
the side of a Dixie cup.

Mindin' and behavin',
old time foot washin',
Lowgap low class,
running corn liquor
down Thunder Road.

The wood-stove room,
and years written
on canned beans
telling us good from bad.

Seven Hours of Freedom

Those drops of rain became the shards of ice
that stung my face as I walked down the road,
towards the house, from where the bus left me.

Those afternoons, that die so fast, gray
becoming black by six, frost beginning to stick
to bits of gravel on our private drive,
are set off by a song that begins to play
on the radio.

The dogs meet me half way, and I see
their barks, but hear a Ricky Nelson tune
about a lonesome town where people go
to cry their days away, to buy a dream or two.

And when we reach the porch, I turn
the Walkman off and pull the headphones
down around my neck. I am at the steps
when the door opens, and it all rushes back.

Participating Cleaner World Locations

The Salvation Army gave Jason a coat.
His mom and dad took him to pick it up.
Somebody's mother got tired of seeing
that old acid-washed black denim jacket
take up space in her son's closet.
She dropped it off when she picked up her dress,
the navy one she wore to funerals.

Jason hated that jacket because it was not
an oversized Charlotte Hornets Starter,
like the ones the other kids wore on the first
day back from Christmas break.
He hated the name Jimmy Gwyn written
with a felt maker on the inside label.
He hated the tag and the jacket,
because another mother had bought it
and claimed it first for her child.

Archilochos Fragment 28 (As it Applies to Childhood Accidents)

Dripping blood from a gash
just below the knee, I sit quietly
when I realize there is no one to help
us boys, thrown from our bikes, in the late
afternoon, before mom gets home from work.

Standing Water

We are tearing down the old sun deck,
first the railing, then the frame.
My father uses a crow bar. To some effect,
I'm using my boots to do the same.

First the rails, and then the frame,
He rips each nail from its board.
I am using my boots to do the same
in this land of Chevys and Fords.

Ripping the nails from the boards,
tearing down this water-treated memory.
In this land of Chevys and Fords,
replacing the splintered with a new symmetry,

tearing down this water treated memory
as if it were a Thompson's sealed family tree;
replacing the familiar with better symmetry.
With force I set the rusty nail free

from deep within our Thompson's sealed tree.
My father uses a crow bar for the same effect,
with force he sets the rusty nails free,
and I am helping him tear down my sun deck.

Middle School

You spoke to me, for the first
time, on my super birthday
(I turned 13 on the 13th).
We were at Mitchell's,
blasting "Black Dog"
on his parent's CD system.

In that big house
with the sunroom where
they kept the tree, already brown,
two weeks before Christmas,
you wore your hair back.

When Mitchell showed us the train
tracks where he flattened
spoons and the bridge, next
to C.F. Jones, where the homeless
Mexican slept,
your nails were painted red.

On the way back to the house,
Andy and his friends tried to run
us over with that Geo Storm, so
we threw our milkshakes on his hood.
I stared into your clear lip gloss,
as we hid in the woods, and I saw the future:

you would marry right out of college,
move to Juarez and teach English.
Mitchell would run a successful
porn site, develop a coke habit,
divorce at an early age.
I would sell Flood Insurance,
drive an S-10, collect shot glasses
from all the towns I'd visit.

We would barely speak after that day.

Transitional Economy

A Gomer Pyle of Hillbilly clichés
nestled in a quant ham biscuit hamlet.
The mills are gone, but the Bubbas stay;
work retail and get their Associates.

Punkish, pointy haired, children
walk the streets looking for escape,
but skateboards and Meth can't hide those necks.
No Deliverance, banjos, or rapes.

Just whistlin' Dixie, with a mouth full of dip,
taking in stride what we deserve.
Here comes a bus tour, bumpkin it up.
Live in a pigeonhole or join and serve;
Podunk scapegoats for a nation's history,
who were once grateful slaves of menial industry.

Face Paint

As I prepare for the middle class masquerade ball,
I coach myself through the finer points of middle
class conversation:

It is perfectly acceptable to discuss the private
tennis lessons you received as a boy. However,
at no time should you discuss hunting or fishing.

It is perfectly normal to discuss other wedding receptions,
but don't mention Kathy's recent divorce, or the fact
that James hit her, or how you and your cousin
went to their house and almost killed him; domestic
violence does not make for pleasant conversation.

Your parent's ranch style house is something worth
talking about, but your brother's trailer, the hole
in its hallway, and the fact you can see through
to the underpinning is something you should keep to yourself.

The time you drank too much wine after college graduation
is somewhat acceptable, but do not discuss, those nights
you spent stoned in Melissa's driveway.

Never forget who you are and never allow others to know.

An Exercise in Mental Topography

From here I can see
the things Griffith missed:
a place where the portable CD players
are connected to tape decks,
a trailer, next to a dealer,
with stolen pills in mint tins,
a church I grew up in,
but would never attend,
the black letters
on the bottle of 151,
a yellow box filled
with cheap powdered cheese,
the vegetarian who
made me chicken,
her book-bag
covered with safety pins,
the nights we spent stoned
in driveways,
all the words wrapped in cellophane,
all the snapshots affixed to magnetic tape,
and an iguana lost in your mom's fourth divorce;
things I will one day put into syndication.

What

Electric Sign From 6 Feet Above

The Holiness always left
a door unlocked,
but never the same one,
so the problem was finding it
before anyone spotted us.

Once inside, we threw down
our bags, drank and ate whatever
we had lifted from the gas station,
turned on a few lights
in the rooms without windows,
searched for the switch plate labeled Sign.

On a Sunday night, after evening
services, the marquee had been changed.
What have you done for HIM lately?
had been replaced by Jesus is the answer.

We sat by the window waiting
for headlights to come over the hill.
Timing it just right, the sign would light
up a few feet in front of the driver
and go dim in their rearview.

If we caught their eye,
and that moment had changed
things, we would forever
own someone's faith.

Debra's (Still Life)

I watch the Goth queen in her knee-highs down Red Stripes
as an out-of-work programmer kneads her inner thigh.

A woman with hair-metal bangs sells X from an Aspirin bottle;
her twelve year-old does his Social Studies homework.

Lavardo, from Kingston, and Billy, from Lowgap, sing
"One Love," as if auditioning for a Benetton ad.

In a corner, the best plumber in Cana plays "The Rose"
in Drop D.

I sit Indian style watching a Halloween special.

Allison cries over her stretch marks.

Limping Across a Stage

Screen doors dissolved by buckshot
fall like children who know they'll be caught
by fathers who prepare for their landings.

Billy Burcham does not feel the pellets
embed in his spinal column. Nor
does he feel his legs as they crumble
like boot-cut towers. But, he cushions
his baby's fall; in spite of physics,
she lands on his chest.

The mother tends to her daughter.
The ex-husband sits in the living room
floor, gun in lap; he rocks like a buoy.

Billy, the father, lies restless on the porch.
As moths flutter into the light,
he is waiting for what happens next.

The Sunday When I Realized I Wasn't There to Shop

Back when we liked flea markets,
and would drive hours for out-of-print videos,
there was a Sunday trip to Yadkinville
for some old horror film called Incubus,

and if any place would have a copy, it would be 421
where Movie Guy knew us by our flea market names,
and knew what to hold, what to push, what his film school
son might recommend: a Singapore bootleg
of Song of the South and Yojimbo (a good way
to get in to Kurosawa). Three for \$20,
and our purpose met, we roamed around the market
in search of characters and kitsch.

Bookman was always a favorite, with his tables
covered by books about Mustangs (the car and the horse),
biographies of Robert E. Lee, Gresham paperbacks,
and a collection of Lee Krasner's better work.

The other vendors, for whom we had made monikers,
offered something for our bi-weekly paychecks:
a lime green Sinatra fedora, a mechanic's coat
with a Pablo name patch, some old game cartridges,
novelty biker tees, and homemade rubber band guns.

With gas and a few burgers from Hardees, we smiled
despite the fact that we faced another week of bumming
smokes in the courtyard.

The Battle of Silo Hill

We walk for a half hour towards
the farm house, through abandoned
tobacco fields, trying to follow
Eric's muted bongos as they pierce
the pine tree line, battling the roar
of stock cars, just over the hill
on the dirt track.

When we found the breakers
and lit up the shack, we drank
Bud Ice on the crumbling porch
and killed moths with our free hands.

The smell of mold stinging our noses,
forcing us to squint into the darkness,
we played guitar until the wound Ds
cut valleys into the dead skin
of our fingertips. And after midnight,
as the stadium lights began to fade
and last lap was run, we played louder
finally hearing the noise we had been making.

An Orphaned Song

The string broke, and his hand stopped strumming,
but his body moved with the absent sounds.
As the room grew quiet, except for his singing,
we stayed calm as our heads began to pound.
Like throbbing lights tucked behind the blue hills,
lost to time and men with better vision,
his notes were ghosts that died inside mills,
like each word and its collision
of tongue and teeth, that clicking of his mouth,
and we knew this was not a solo song.
His eyes were closed, but ran north to south,
battling the lids; it would not be long
before he knew that we were no longer with him,
before he knew this world was dim.

You and Me at Jackie's Mom's

The kind you don't see these days,
durable to a fault,
that sofa was too tough:

a floral pattern,
rooted in 70's green,
with strong wooden arms,
and enduring matte finish;
our first time couch,
rigid, uncomfortable,
awkward and narrow,
a persistent bench.
inhospitable
and adverse to rest,
a functional time capsule,
perfect for us,

because it was up
and out by 4:00,
when your friend Jackie's
mom went to work.

Jackie would wake her boyfriend,
he would wake me, and I always left you
half awake with no blanket,
to dream of days when we could sleep
the whole night through.

Picture

I asked you for a photo,
to keep in my wallet
like some soldier-boy
in Saigon. Instead, you gave
me a Polaroid of people
I didn't know.

In the photo you gave
me, there is an old couple
sitting at a two-top table.
One, the woman, is definitely
a librarian. The other, her
husband, is probably the best
transmission man in town.
They are in the Pilot Mountain
Hardees sharing a senior drink
and an apple turnover, which probably
sat under the heat lamps all afternoon.
They could not look any happier.

And from their smiles, I think
they understand why you
are taking their picture.
But you must understand

I'll never work on transmissions,
and you'll never master
the Dewey Decimal System.

Photo Album

I.

I am standing in the Toys R' Us lot
watching you with that flock of geese,
your hands full of M&Ms;
people are beginning to stare,
and my stomach is turning.

II.

We are at the light in front of the Reeves Center,
two strands of your hair in delicate braids,
I snap a photo before light changes,
while you fain embarrassment.

III.

Every bit of snow has been pushed into one
corner of the Goodwill parking lot.
You are standing atop the pile
arms raised in victory.

IV.

We are at your mom's trailer,
I hide my eyes behind a Kanga hat,
your head is buried in my chest,
neither of us are listening to your father.

V.

You are picking daisies in the rain
at Veteran's park. Water got inside
the lens and forever distorted this memory.
In my mind you will always be blurry.

The Sophomore Curse

I was at the Holly Springs Exxon,
in the Saturn, writing about you,
and when I thought I was finished,
I turned the radio back up to drive
but the shadows of single engine
Ceasnas, flying low overhead, nearly
caused me to wreck as I tried to watch
them through my windows.

On the radio, our song begins to play,
a Weezer single from a commercial flop,
critically panned, sophomore album.
Pinkerton, the one that sent Rivers to Harvard,
to grow a beard and try to forget. The one
people now call their best and ahead of its time;
I hope you can see where I'm going,
and how it applies to us.

The Week I Kept a Dream Journal

We are sitting in the Subaru, so this is before
the Great Trade-In of 2000. I've had 6
No Doze and 1 blue Valium; I'm feeling
kinda normal. We are both smoking,
in the days when I smoked slower
and inhaled less. Some song from Antichrist
Superstar is playing, and we are enthralled
by a Marilyn Manson metaphor for coming down.

In the Latter Day lot, we are basking
in what we think is irony.
You are wearing your one and only skirt,
so that means it's a Sunday afternoon.

I can see all of the details, but I'm grasping
for the symbolism, searching every inch
of the car's interior for the meaning, or at the least,
something that assures me of the difference
between a memory and a dream.

Outside

She pushes the front yard in her gray sports bra;
a neighbors calls to see if we want to hire someone.

I'm try to start the weed eater, but I've forgotten
to prime it.

She wears pants in the middle of June,
because she hates her ankles.
I wear my shirt,
because I hate my love handles.

We finish around 4:30, and she showers first.
When we're ready, we head towards town
in the 89 Lincoln.

At the "Italian" place downtown,
she orders the vegetarian pocket; I get the chicken tenders.
The waitress doesn't care much for facial piercing:
how does she eat with that thing?

After dinner, we wander around next door
looking for some books on tape to send
her father; he's driving cross-country next month.

Eventually, we get home and fall asleep
watching something about monkeys on Animal Planet.

Around 3, I wake up, check her pulse (like always),
kiss her forehead and turn the TV off.

And Suddenly You Are My Trinity

Three-for-one
discount love-life
her curls
her scars
her mercy

With your amalgamated voice
you ask me
if there is a difference
between light blue and dark blue
if it's all the same sky

I give it some thought
enough that we coast down
from 100 to 60
and I ask your permission
to be vague
and you say

No
that's the problem
to begin with
the sky's too vague

Road Poem

The backseat an overturned dumpster,
the radio too low to hear,
you are sleeping, and I hate to watch you sleep.

I consider swerving to hit that bump
in the road; I would have someone to talk
to, which doesn't make me a bad
person; it makes me tired, bitter, and weak.

All my life I have searched for this sun-
drenched highway, the one that started
the cliché, and now that I have found it,
I'll be damned if I'm gonna drive it alone.

Stolen

Daniel's septum is all but gone,
and the weight he put on,
that's gone too.

Sabrina had the kid; it's ok,
but they were scared
they'd messed it up.

She's back at Wendy's,
and Daniel stays at home
with the baby.

His mom tried to get him on
at the grocery store, but
he failed the piss test.

The two of them come to the store
and shoplift, because they know
I won't say a word.

Recurring

I'm wearing
a suit
in a parking lot
someone has died

You're smoking
a joint
in the front yard
something is missing

We are lying
in bed watching
an artsy movie
someone in the other room

You are packing
gifts into
a storage unit
someone is smiling

I am parked on
an overpass
with my lights off
someone's real home

You are sleeping
in the backseat
someone from Barstow

I kiss you in the yard
We give up in a parking lot
something is buried

Ballad of a Clean Apartment

Our eyes are filled with paint, but red
is all we see; this day
will rip, like clocks on walls of thread
or knives through pounds of clay,

our world in two on its way down.
And when it sets on us,
and we must watch as our light drowns,
the night will make us less

than one but more than we can carry.
And in unison we'll say,
Should we take another look,
or just turn in the keys?

How it Applies to Us

Restless hinge, within we go,
the whole way down we feign.
Heist my love's worried arms,
and I in my head again.

after "Western Wind"

Stayed with the House

When the door closes, the wind bites,
struggling to spring us from our nest.
And as you step down into the night,

the moon is muted, the dogs are quiet,
all our things are laid to rest;
the door closes, and only the wind bites.

While the neighbors sleep, as if out of spite,
you have decided to leave our mess.
And as you step down into the night,

the car's interior, your only light,
on a new road, inherited in jest,
remember: doors close, and wind often bites.

And though I want to stop you, to put up a fight,
the steps creak No, and I trust that they know best,
because as you step further into the night's

deep bruised sky, onto its ground of blight,
the house knows what I can only guess:
when doors close, and wind bites,
you must to step down into the night.

After

Letter: Awkward Interaction with Former Classmate

Remember Tracy from Honors English?
Short, ... elfish, the bigot,
dated that guy from Virginia.

I saw her at the gas station last night.
It's kinda strange talking to your first
girlfriend through bullet proof glass.

She remembered this time I kissed her,
when we were ten. I said, "How things change,"
and she asked if I was still with "What's her name?"
I said "No," but, to be honest, I wasn't sure,
so I switched the subject by looking for change.

I was short a dime, and she helped me out,
but by the time I slid my money under the glass,
I was thinking of something else and forgot
to say Thank You.

Dear Nathan,

Everyone is getting married
or on an Army bus bound for basic,
but I'm still reading "The Things They Carried,"
and saving money for my eye surgery.

My parents are still picking up the tab,
but things could be worse: I could be Neal Speas;
the dumb fucker that went AWOL from Fort Bragg
that they're looking for him around here, who

is hiding in Texas with that girl we can't stand.
What is her name? Anyway, she's pregnant,
and when the baby is born, Neil will get caught.

And every other day that recruiter calls;
they got Neal, John, Mark, Tony, Chris,
and they won't give up on getting me.

Relapse

In these smoke filled clothes,
I smell my 13 year-old hiding place:
the woods were I pined for teenage riots
and wrote stories set in Seattle.

In my ten yellowing nails,
I see crescent scars
burned into window seals
and tattered Tom Petty tablature
from the May issue of Guitar World.

In these hacking coughs,
I taste Canadian soda from All-American
truck stops and love stories turned to ash.

Turned Over (Colors Fade and They Grow Brittle)

Your hemline hiked by child within,
I stare at the bags beneath your eyes.
As words escape your crooked teeth,
I swallow them like tacks.

Your face is softer, grown round
and full, but your lips are cracked
like the hard Ks from the first trimester.

And before I sleep, I hang bouquets:
one for you and one for it.
Like frail reminders of the fall,
off-color roses and rigid breath,
they hang together bound and nailed,
blood rushing to their heads.

On the Cookie Aisle

I saw Jackie at Food Lion,
her complexion has changed;
no longer olive, she's
gray and covered
with scars, from bumps
I don't remember her having.

We talk about welfare
and Section-8,
how she can't afford
to get a job. How she's hoping
they'll get back together,
if he stops dealin'.

I try talking about their baby,
but that leads to a story
about the Health Department
and meth freaks wandering
through halls, nurses stumbling
over children, inoculations,
condom jars, and something
about a bilingual sign.

Then it's my turn,
what I've been doing:
college, mountains, girlfriends,
a lot of good days, petty gripes,
and words that mean nothing
to her.

What Dogs Think About When They Think About Wuv

psychotic apes that shave

corrugate the bed sheets

place mints between the ridges

we are leaving this hotel

primates with pensions

crease the slacks

they must be pleated

if I am ever to complete

my apocalyptic novel

chimps with debit cards

starch the collars

write the lipstick wrongs

we are moving to Sandusky

My Psychic Bound with The Great American Scream Machine

When I was a kid, we grew corn in one row of the garden,
as part of a plan the farmer drew-up on a clipboard.
And for a while we had fresh greens to be canned and kept,
but the peace we had forged, my family and I, with that red
soil was broken on the day I lost my pinky. When the Earth
decided what it wanted, it sang to me, in its familiar falsetto,
Give me your body, and let the plow help.

That gash went to the bone, sand filled the cut,
and I passed out from pain, but I dreamed. I dreamed
of the devil limping though a dance under moonlight.
And somewhere, feeling these words as they escape my mind,
Henry Rollins is laughing.

Half naked, bare foot, watching some Bangkok sex show
with a Scottish bootlegger named Grant Robson,
Henry's chest waves like a Black Flag in a blue sky,
and he lays it all out, "That's who we are;"
slapping the bar, "who we are!"
Henry Rollins is laughing at my lost pinky finger.

And I wonder if his knowing makes it true,
takes our connection to the next level,
or by writing this have I spoiled our bond;

Is knowing the undoing
or can it survive a game
of Scrabble, a face to face,
the perfect breakfast
after a night of drinking,
the little bits of bacon strewn
about the Persian rug ?

Weekend Work

To burn trash in the morning:
drag garbage and brush to a ditch,
ignite, top off with lighter
fluid every few minutes,
and make sure it keeps
burning. Let the wind tell

you where to stand. If it tells
you it's too breezy this morning,
spray everything down, or it will keep
going until it escapes the ditch.
Keep water on it for a few minutes,
wait until the wind is a little lighter,

and try again. Use matches, not a lighter,
because you can never tell
what fire will do; it takes just a minute
for the flames to ruin your morning.
Stay as far back from the ditch
as possible, but close enough to keep

a constant eye on the fire. Always keep
an eye out for embers that could light
the grassy area surrounding the ditch.
Stay close enough that you can tell
where the fire begins and ends. Mornings
are good for burning, because of those minutes

where it is both dark and light; the minutes
when sun and moon keep
each other company and share the morning,
when it is like the night, but a little lighter,
and you can see the flames and tell
where the grass begins and the ditch

ends. You must keep a fire in a ditch,
if you want to see it burn. The minute
you turn your back, there is no telling
what might happen. If the flames keep
growing and the wind doesn't get lighter,
you could have a miserable morning.

Still, there are those morning, standing over a ditch,
light coming up from the ground, when minutes
seem to keep and fire has a story to tell.

Old Friend, New Pen Pal

Our mothers stroll
down grocery aisles
(is it “Holiday”
or “Hollandaise?”)
forgetting their eggs.

My father
(in the conference room)
tries to remember
the projected growth
for the Triad.

Your dad (kneeling
on the OSB)
struggles
to get his nails
under the chalk line.

I crawl (parallel
to the chair molding)
down the hall
towards the shoe box
(full of clippings
from French
magazines).

You walk in circles
(from the kitchen
to the bath)
failing to notice
a week’s worth
of mail
and the letters
I’ve sent you.

Crooked Stamp

There is always room in the bureau
for another religious tract or half-hearted
apology,

for a Christmas card -- months earlier
or years late. And when the address
changes, I assume the worst,

but I always know what you
have to say:

“I saw this.
I thought of you.”

To the Point

I can barely tell the difference
between what was once my voice
and what no longer belongs to me.

In an upstairs bedroom with unsteady
floors, we'll bloody our fingers
before we stop to look for picks.

Words bounce off the snare
giving my drawl a rattle that fits,
a labored sound that is deserved.

Behind me is a woman, and in her arms
is a baby, whose eyes I can feel. And Matt
says she cackles with every high note I hit.

One for Brick Apartments

Usually late in the afternoon,
before the sun had a chance to go down,
you would call the house and let me know
who was coming, what they would bring,
where the night might lead us -
to a case or to a bottle, from a pipe or some papers-,
whether to bring movies or a guitar.

In those days when you were working
and had money for a Friday night and a life
full of friends, we would cram into the living
room to tell stories and sing songs.

This was before the hairline fractures
in your back, before Sarah's brother moved in,
before the new apartment and the higher rent,
long before the baby and the new yellow house.

This was a time when you weren't so angry
and barely cursed the day, when you laughed
at jokes on television and loved to write riffs
in the tiny wood paneled rooms.

But now when you call, I can't hear voices
in the background, no well wishers
drunk in the living room; I can barely hear you
over the rumble of responsibility.

Listen free to Joe Satriani's "What Happens Next (Energy, Catbot and more). 12 tracks (51:18). Wiki: Satriani consciously went in a more simplistic direction than on his previous album, Shockwave Supernova - as opposed to an alien alter ego, this time he wrote songs about a human being, two feet on the ground, heart pumping, with emotions, dreams, and hopes. What is scrobbling? Scrobbling is when Last.fm tracks the music you listen to and automatically adds it to your music profile. [Learn more.](#)