



*Didn't Feel
the Convulsions*

a 1999 chapbook

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True Happiness in the New Millennium

*"I ain't never found peace upon the breast of a girl
I ain't never found peace with the religions of the world
I ain't never found peace at the bottom of a glass*

*Sometimes it seems the more I ask for the less I receive
Sometimes it seems the more I ask for the less I receive
The only true freedom is freedom from the heart's desires
And the only true happiness this way lies"*

- Matt Johnson

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
I'm the new savior the savior of science
the savior of strength the savior of survival
survival of the fittest survival of the best
and I'm here to tell you we're starting anew
so fasten your seat belts hang on to your hats
place your seat trays in their upright and locked position
for it's a bumpy ride, and I'll tell you why

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
the millennium of reason and logic and strength
and I don't want to hear about your self-destruction
I don't want to hear your whining, psychosis,
your depression, suicide, alcohol and drugs
and just what made you think that playing with needles
and escape would make things better somehow
God, I've always hated needles anyway
what is it with you people

well, you need a leader and I'm stepping up to the plate
you keep asking for a big brother and I'm here to set you straight
you want someone to wipe your noses for you
well, pick up the damn tissue and do it yourself
because when you give up your rights, you take away mine

and we're not having any of that

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
and you say to me you need crystal meth
so you can stay awake through work
and you say to me that you don't need to drink,
that you just like the taste
and you say to me that with all your escapism
you still don't feel any better
and you say to me that sometimes suicide
is the only answer

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
I'm here to usher in a whole new generation
so stop asking for things and start working for things
because X is for ecstasy as long as it's fast
and X is for extra but there's always a cost
and ecstasy doesn't come without extra work
no matter how many corners you cut
and you know, X is for X-Ray and I see right through that

they say that Eve ate from the tree from knowledge
but you know, she shouldn't have stopped just then
cause the loggers are raping the trees of knowledge
the loggers are raping the forests of talent
the forests of ability the forests of reason
of skill of logic preserverance and life
we're letting them rape the forests of excellence
and you know it's now time to take it all back
because I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
and I'm here to tell you how it's going to be done

you're looking for peace in all the wrong places
you're asking your leaders to save you from yourself
but your leaders are losers and they're worse off than you

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
where it's time to take charge and it's time fess up
only you can deliver you from your own sins
but first you must know what sin really is

it's time to make choices and it's time to lay claim
to everything we've been blindly giving away
because I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
take charge of yourself, and I'll take charge of me
I'm my leader, not yours, so wipe your own noses

take it in to your hands, people, mold your own tools
this is the new millennium, and this is your chance
because no one should be showing us how to fail
people mastered that feat a millennia ago
so set your own rules and do something fast
cause it's time to take charge and it's time to be alive

I'm here to usher in a whole new millennium
And I'm waiting for you to usher in yours
Because true happiness this way lies, my friend
and I won't wait long if you lag behind
cause I'm setting my rules so step out of my way

I'm here to tell you there's a new sensation
and I'm here to tell you there's a new salvation
and that true happiness this way lies

weren't even married

you jumped from an airplane once
and you promised that you'd force me to go with you
the next time
you were always jumping out of airplanes,
weren't you

the ring i'm wearing
is on my right hand, not my left
and it's on my middle finger, not my ring finger
and it seems appropriate
you didn't even buy me that ring
and we weren't even married

i bought the ring at a street fair
on belmont avenue in chicago
on the day of our first date
where we watched pulp fiction at your apartment
and i asked you to sit closer
to me
and you kissed me

the ring isn't a complete circle
there are two stones that don't quite meet
and there's a void in the middle
and that was appropriate
cause you didn't even buy it for me
and we weren't even married

i've missed you, you know
i can't even pass the apartment building you lived in any more

i remember when you told me
that someone was shot in that building once
and that maybe it was haunted

but they were shot for money
they were robbed

and this time you just slipped away in your sleep
and this time i was robbed

when one of the stones fell out of my ring
i was sad
but i think you were more sad
you wanted to replace the shiny purple stone
but i said no

and now i still wear the ring
and a stone is still missing
and isn't it appropriate
and we weren't even married

i've missed you, you know
and with your absence the bad memories vanish
where you were someone else once
where you were someone once
where you were alive once
i forget that there was so much about you i hated
because you're not here to remind me

so with this ring, i remember
because now nothing is complete anymore
and everything is missing now
and isn't it appropriate
that there's no next time for us

you jumped from an airplane once
and you promised that you'd force me to go with you
the next time

will be just fine

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there's a pot on my window sill
terra-cotta, i think
and it used to have a spider plant in it
once
now there's just a pile of dirt
shaped like a terra cotta pot
with a few dried stems
coming out of the top

i could never take care
of anything, you know

and i wonder what i've done
to you

could I find you again
hold you in my arms
rock you like a baby
stroke your hair
and tell you everything
will be just fine

almost the best part

isn't that moment of expectation
almost the best part of it

when you think everything is over
and then they come back
they walk across the living room
when everyone else is sleeping

and you think you shouldn't be doing this
that this can't be happening
and you let their skin touch yours
when you're laying on the floor
on the carpet in the living room

well, that moment
right before you're on the floor
in the living room
isn't that moment of expectation
almost the best part of it

being god

I'm tired of dying for your sins
over and over again and why is it that
I am the one that's doing the dying
when you are the one that's doing the sinning
I don't think you're learning your lesson

I'm tired of taking this knife to my hands
over and over again giving myself the stigmata
the blood gets all over my clothes
and I can never get the stains out
and for what, for you to see how I suffer

I'm tired of being humble when I'm
supposed to be the one with the power
over and over again I become your servant
and never are you bowing to me
I don't even get a thank you

I'm tired of preaching to the converted
when the converted aren't even really listening
they're snoring in the back rows while I
deliver my sermon and there's not even air
conditioning in here and I'm sweating

I'm tired of coming to you and healing the sick
taking away the problems, over and over again
giving you something to look forward to
and all I have is an eternity of waiting for
someone to take my place and tend to my wounds

I'm tired of giving the earth up to you
watching the devil's work be done, and you know,
he's just sitting down there looking at me
and laughing, over and over again because it's
so easy for him when he doesn't have to work

I'm tired of being your salvation

over and over again you turn to me
and I have no one to turn to but myself
it's a bitch, you know, being your own god
since no one can save me from me

I'm tired of being your teacher, handing you
what you need on a silver platter and waiting
for that damn collection plate and someone
is always stealing out of it from the back row
I know who you are, you who leave me nothing

I'm tired of wearing this crown of thorns
over and over again the needles prick my skin
and even gods bleed, at least this one does
and when I ask you to wipe the blood
out of my eyes, well, I can't see you anywhere

I'm tired of being something for everybody
when everyone is nothing for me
maybe the devil has the right idea, you know
maybe I'll sit back and wait for you miss me
as you wonder who's your messiah now

Burning Building

This is what you don't allow me to say.
These words I utter are a plea for help
and you tell me you want to be the hand
that pulls me from the burning building
and every time I try to be rescued
you turn your back and walk away

so I will rescue myself this time again
and I will wonder if I should stop trying
and allow myself to perish in the flames
now all I have to do is sit and wait
for another disaster to consume me
and sitting in silence is exactly what I'll do

Why do you tell me one thing and do another?
Why do you run away when I need you most?
I'm stepping over the wooden beams now,
and the flames are all around me. Here, look
at the blood dripping from my arms. Here,
smell my flesh burning. This is what you do.

I do not walk away unscathed. I never do.
But now that I wait for my next burning building
I know I will never allow myself to enter it.
Why can't it be easier to perish? I try and try,
and every time at the last minute, my figure
steps over the the charred remains and saves me.

If only there were no more burning buildings.
If only I didn't have to save myself all the time.
If only I could feel free, just this once.
If only I could feel safe with you, just this once.
If only your words weren't empty promises.
If only your words were not the burning building.

Carpet

The apartment needs to be dusted. I can see some cat hair, and the carpet doesn't soak it all in, even though it does a better job than those damn hardwood floors that I'm so used to. Everyone seems to want hardwood floors in their home, but why? They are loud and look dirty quickly. And dust doesn't settle on them, so the air always has things floating in it. But carpet, carpet muffles the loud noises, it keeps your feet warm when you step out of bed on a cold winter morning, it makes things more pleasant. You have to vacuum it, true, but you don't need a mop. You have to be more careful that you don't spill things. But you shouldn't be spilling things in the first place, right? Well, anyway, I have to remember to dust this apartment. It should be perfect. You can't see the dust here, the carpet doesn't let all the dust get into the air but you have to make sure that you clean it more often. Is it worth the effort? I think it is.

holding my hand

when we're walking in stride together down
the street and our feet pump out the same rhythm
and our shoulders are almost touching and our
hands brush up against each other for one brief
moment and he reaches over and takes my hand

when he slides his fingers around mine
and I feel him move along the palm of my hand
well, no one knows what it feels like
when his fingers curl and hold me tight
well, it feels like pop rocks

it feels like when that candy is sliding
down my throat after I let it explode
on my tongue and it's still tingling and no
one knows I'm eating this and no one knows
the feeling and this is my little secret

and I feel this feeling like never before
and it makes me want to laugh and cry
because I look around the room and no one
else is eating those pop rocks and no one
knows the feeling when he's holding my hand

Isn't it Amazing

Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. It's amazing to see people throw away their lives day after day like a bag of trash taken to the corner for someone else to carry away. You can forget about the trash when someone gets rid of it for you. Now all you have to do is bring it to the corner and then wait for them to do their work.

Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. Isn't it amazing. Isn't it amazing how willing we are to give up our chances at happiness. Isn't it amazing how afraid we are of life. Isn't it funny how we don't want to embarrass ourselves. Quick. Take out the trash. Hopefully no one will see you in your bathrobe as you make your way to the end of your driveway. All you have to do is turn around and leave it there. Someone else will clean up the mess. Someone else will pick up the pieces. This is what we do, in America. This is how we avoid hurt. This is how we stay ahead. Now look who has egg on their face.

Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. Once you've made that decision, once you know that you're going to be the one holding the aces, you can watch the rest of the world squirm. If only those fools knew better, you think. If only they knew what you know. It's emotion that gets them in trouble. Just don't cross that line. Isn't it amazing how much easier it is to destroy something than to fight for it. It seems the obvious choice. Isn't it amazing.

Let the War Begin

My silence is my only choice. My silence
is my weapon. As it is with you. As it is
with all of us.

To go against all instinct and not fight.
This is my weapon. To keep us alive and
bury the truth.

This is the way I keep our sanity, but
lose mine. Isn't this the way it always goes.
Me giving in first.

You say this isn't what you want but
your actions speak novels to me. I've read
this book before.

Nothing is pure when you destroy purity.
Nothing is sacred when there is no God
and no hope.

I've lost my battles and now I need new
defenses. I've thrown down the gauntlet.
Let the war begin.

looking for a worthy adversary

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
someone I can lock horns with
because although my life makes more sense when I'm alone
it's not nearly as interesting

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
someone I can battle to the death with
because it can't be about love, you see
love can't exist on the terms I demand
it's never that pure

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
and so I slither up to you like a snake
as you sit there at the corner
of the bar drinking your gin and tonics
and I tempt you with a golden apple

but all I was offering you
was fruit from the tree of knowledge

I didn't know how willing you were
to take from that tree
I'm not used to that, you know

Did you know you'd need to come back for more?
Did you know what you were getting into?

well, I didn't know you'd have
a thing or two to each me too

and did I know I'd need to come back for more?
Did I know what I was getting into?

because as I've been looking for a worthy adversary
all this time I've been playing a part

an actress on a stage, spouting the lines on cue
and that role was getting tiresome
but those stage lights still came on night after night
and I still had to play my part

until on my night off I saw your performance
at the theatre down the street
and you know, your protagonist
was doing what I was doing
right down to faking it with people who don't matter
right down to going home and still feeling empty

and you know, I liked to see
that boiling emotion underneath
that no one else could see
because only I had the knowledge to know
what that emotion really means

and you know, I'm beginning to wonder
if we can get together
and write our own play

it would be a masterful performance, you know
and as that curtain would close we'd hold each other's hands
and walk off the stage
and the audience would know that there is a happy ending

and now when I walk out on to the set
and there you stand, in front, stage left
I wait for my cue to make my move
none of the rest of the scene matters to me, you know

maybe they'd like our little play, maybe they wouldn't
who really cares

because even though I came to you
and tempted you
you now tempt me and tease me and torment me
and tell me everything I was too afraid to believe
and show me the knowledge that always escaped me

and when you talk you reach your hand into my brain
and pull out my thoughts and shove them into your mouth
and spit them back at me

and instead of filling me with terror
it fills me with joy

I've been looking for a worthy adversary
and maybe you are much more than that

I've heard the words you say to me before
I've said them to myself many times
but why do they sound so much better
coming from you?

I had been looking for a worth adversary
someone I could lock horns with
but now I'm no longer locking horns

now it seems I don't have to fight the battle alone
now it seems that there's no battle to fight
we know what all the lines from our play really mean
and now we're performing for no one
now we're just ourselves
and now there's just understanding
I don't even have to speak

and now every day is Valentine's Day
and now it's like candy and flowers and springtime
and hearts and cupids and sunshine
and you know it's scary
these cliches are actually beginning to make sense

I guess that's what the tree of knowledge does to you

so this is what has been going on in my mind
and now I've just spilled my guts
and now I'm just a puddle on the floor

but now my performance of a lifetime is made
I stand here like a statue

and wait for my applause

and as I wait for the reviews
on the performance I was made for
I know what they're all going to say
and none of that matters anymore

because I know what you are going to say
because it's everything that I want to say

because now it's time
for you to take my thoughts again
and shove them into your mouth again
and spit them back at me again

and now I wait for you to come on stage again
for our next wonderful performance
where we have our happy ending
where you tell me what I already know

Mixing Metaphors

a heart is supposed to mean romance
but the deep dark red suggests lust

the cupid suggests true love anew
but a child knows only dependency

love hits you like a ton of bricks
and you only hurt the ones you love

I keep hearing of all these conflicts
and I'm trying to make sense of it all

and I'm mixing my metaphors now
I'm mixing my cocktails on a saturday night

throw love in with vodka and lime
and a little cointreau and you have

an absolutely perfect martini, well
that's what I hear so I keep drinking

and mixing and drinking and trying
you know, I've heard that for an added kick,

keep in the love but add just a splash of lust
the way that deep red heart of romance

suggests so much more than candy and flowers
because really, when it comes down

to it, when you get all those metaphors
together even though they seem to mean

so many different things, well,
when you get the right martini recipe,

well, every ingredient is so necessary

lust and love and all that other good-

tasting stuff that goes down so easy
well, every ingredient is necessary

in that perfect drink because everything
seems to come together so well

and everything suddenly means
so much even if it's only a drink and

even if it's only a cheesy metaphor
and suddenly that's okay

Panther

I've been waiting here

the hunter
who has always caught their prey

now I am the hunted
my gun is gone
my blade is gone
my defenses are gone

the blindfold
presses my eyes
into my skull

I hear you in the darkness
the panther
I just sense your presence

the fear is exciting
waiting for the moment
when you pounce and consume

it's all I can think of

all I can do
is wait for you to strike

my eyes are closed
but I can almost see you

and I'm waiting

present and past

In such a short time
I have lost both my past and my future.
Familiar memories that one looks back on and smiles from
have vanished like the rolling waves of burning heat from death.
And hope, hope is something one can have
only when there is a chance for happiness.
This is not me.
Now I sit here, at this table,
look at the plant with leaves dry and crumbling
look at the dust settled
and think: this is all there is.
The present. Study the dying. Study the dust.
And after this moment, tackle the next.

what women want

do you want to know the secret to understanding what women want
because I can tell it to you, it's simple, really

all women want is for their lover to know what they need
without them have to ask, and without them having to tell

oh, and yes, for you to do it, too, that's the other part of it
they want men to know what to them seems obvious

but you men, you can't do what they want even when they tell
you what they need, point blank, and there's no guessing game

which, you know, when they tell you, you've lost half the battle
but the least you could do is make it up in the second half

it's the least you could do to tell them you love them
and hold them and be their knight in shining armor

they know you're not riding up on a white horse coming
to sweep them off their feet and ride off into the sunset

but throw them this bone every once in a while, give them
the scraps from your plate under the table, just a little something

they're yelping under the table hoping you understand their pleas
they're shivering in the dog house when they should be by your side

because they're starving over here, and it seems that only you
can give them what they need, much less what they want

it's simple, really: they need attention, they desperately need it
and they're tired of asking, because they shouldn't have to ask

this is the key to understanding what women want, so please
do something with this knowledge and save the one you love

you won't miss her

there is no
myself anymore
I had to kill her
because you see, she
wanted too much
more than anyone
could ever give
and I got tired
of seeing her
writhing on the floor
and I got tired
of seeing the blood
from everyone
scratching at her
and I got tired
of seeing the
bruises
from when she
was constantly
kicked
while she was
down
and I got tired
of trying to
clean her up
over and over
and I got tired
of wiping the tears
from her face
well my
handkerchief
is soaked with
tears now
and my shirt is
soaked with
her blood
and neither one

of us
was feeling
any better

she was begging,
you know
for the pain to stop
and so I did
what I had to
you won't miss her



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