

BIG HASSLE MEDIA



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SPIN

August 2008

NOISE IN MY ROOM

Juliana Hatfield

The alt-rock vet gives us a tour of her living room

1 GUITAR "You probably can't see, but the word *cunt* is carved into it. At the end of one leg of a tour, I told my lead guitar player I'd no longer be needing his services, because he was kind of a fuck-up. When I got home, I noticed it and deduced that it was probably this guy. I thought it made the guitar look more punk rock, so I wasn't really mad."

2 MURAL "I'm really nostalgic for my '70s childhood, and I remember these wall-covering photos being common back then. This company online makes them. I think it's New Hampshire in the autumn."

3 "A-ROD AS THE DEVIL" "It's not quite finished yet; I have a hard time finishing paintings. I don't really think A-Rod is the Devil—I painted this from a photo in the sports pages that had this eerie, headless shadow that made him look like the Devil."

4 FEUD: HATFIELDS, McCOYS, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN APPALACHIA 1860-1900 "This is the story of my people. Before my dad died, he was researching the genealogy of my family. He claimed that his side is linked to the West Virginia Hatfields. They were proud people; they fought for the family name."

5 BECKETT SHRINE "Samuel Beckett is my favorite writer; he's my soul mate. Not only is he the best writer, but he has the best face. 'I can't go on, I'll go on.' That's the story of my career. Everything he writes, it's like he's writing the contents of my mind."

6 PHOTO OF MOTHER "She was a cocktail waitress at the Playboy Club in New York, so she was a bunny, but she didn't pose nude."

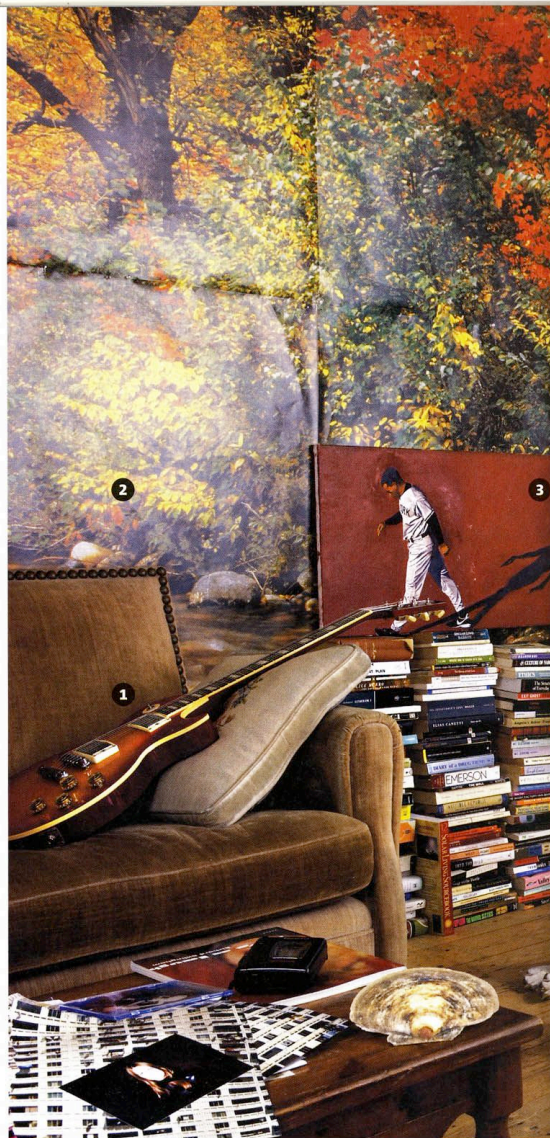
7 PIGGY BANK "When my father died, my brothers and I went to his house to box up his stuff. The only things I took were this piggy bank and a meat cleaver. I don't even eat meat, but it was a really badass knife, and everyone needs a piggy bank, don't they?"

8 NUDE "This was taken by my friend Jonathan Stark, who took the nudes before I knew him very well, which was kind of awkward. But even if it wasn't me, I'd think it was a great photo."

9 SONY DISCMAN "I don't have a stereo, and I only downloaded my first songs from iTunes a week ago. I bought 'What's a Girl to Do?' by Bat for Lashes and 'Love Like This' by Natasha Bedingfield."

10 LABRADOR RETRIEVER "Betty is the love of my life. She's been my constant companion for 12 years. She's been through a lot. She had throat surgery and can't bark anymore, and last year, she had a tumor and lost her spleen. I did a weird summer festival with a reunited Flock of Seagulls, and Betty wandered out onstage. I think they were kind of annoyed."

BY TOM KIELTY
PHOTOGRAPH BY TINA TYRELL





MORE ABOUT HATFIELD

Raised in the Boston suburb of Duxbury before graduating from the Berklee College of Music, singer/songwriter Hatfield, 41, was a key player in the Blake Babies and the Lemonheads and later embarked on a prolific solo career. Her new album, *How to Walk Away*, is out this month on her own Ye Olde Records label, and her first book, *When I Grow Up*, a memoir, will be published in September. "It was originally a true diary," she says, "with the working title *If I Lived Here I'd Fucking Kill Myself*!"

Photographed for *Spin* in Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 6, 2008

The New York Times

September 3, 2008

Rocker Feels Her Way Beyond the Spotlight

By WINTER MILLER

Back in the mid-1990s, while on a short college tour, the singer-songwriter Juliana Hatfield found herself looking for windows to jump from if her depression became too much to bear. She didn't want to kill herself but to "not feel anything anymore," she said.

"To lie unconscious in a hospital bed," Ms. Hatfield continued, "until I could feel better."

In her memoir, "When I Grow Up," to be published by John Wiley & Sons on Sept. 22, Ms. Hatfield reveals the troubled person behind the skinny rocker who came across as aloof, scowling and mysterious. She had been

Juliana Hatfield considers what happens after 'your dream comes true.'

suffering from anorexia and extreme bouts of anxiety and depression since her late teens, which led to a downward spiral just as her career was really taking off.

On an August afternoon, the day before her latest album, "How to Walk Away" (Ye Olde Records), was being released, Ms. Hatfield sat in a leather booth at an upscale Italian restaurant on the Bowery in Manhattan, wondering if, at 41, it was time to quit the music business.

"You find yourself approaching middle age, playing another scuzzy rock club, trying to hold onto your dignity, but the toilet is overflowing, and the place stinks of stale beer," she said with a laugh. "I still have all the faith and love for my music and yet I'm still playing places for kids."

Ms. Hatfield lives in Cambridge, not far from Duxbury, Mass., where she grew up. In 1986, while at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Ms. Hatfield, along with Freda Boner and John Strohm, formed Blake Babies, a post-punk band popular on the local music scene. When Blake Babies broke up in 1991, she started the Juliana Hatfield Three, which released "Hey Babe" in 1992 on

Mammoth Records.

Around that time Danny Goldberg, the president of Atlantic Records, bought a half-interest in Mammoth, chiefly, he said in a phone interview, because of Ms. Hatfield. Atlantic released her second album, "Become What You Are," in 1993; the song "Spin the Bottle" was on the soundtrack of the film "Reality Bites," and another track, "My Sister," enjoyed support from radio and MTV.

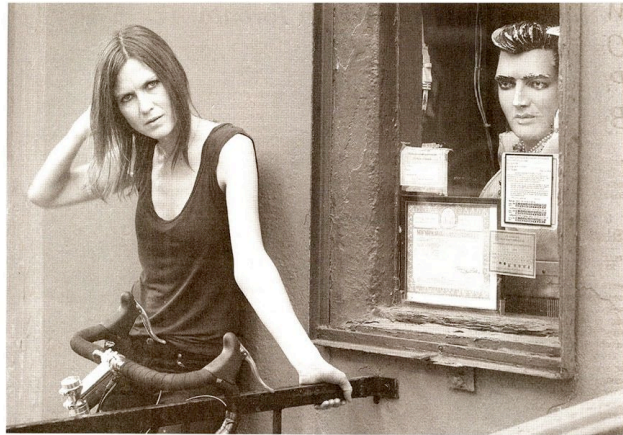
But it was all too much for the shy Ms. Hatfield to handle. She'd binge on ice cream and sweets, then starve herself on a handful of nuts and a granola bar for days; standing 5 foot 7 inches tall, she weighed 100 pounds at her lowest. She had few friends and told Interview magazine that she was still a virgin in her mid-20s, which only fueled her reputation as a loner. (For the record, she now wants to make it clear that she's no longer a virgin.)

After the release of her third album, "Only Everything," in 1995, she made a decision that might well have saved her life but probably damaged her career. On a tour of New England colleges, she found herself sobbing uncontrollably and fantasizing about hurting herself. She called off at her tour, and her manager drove her to Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge. Doctors admitted her to a day program and prescribed the antidepressant Zoloft; after two weeks she was out of that treatment and in therapy.

A year later she was in much better shape and turned in the album "God's Foot" to Atlantic. But by then, Mr. Goldberg had left for Warner Brothers, leaving Ms. Hatfield without a champion at the label. Atlantic dropped her, then shelved the record.

"Had I stayed, I'm sure I would have put out the next record, but her last one wasn't so successful that it was a no-brainer that any executive would say, 'We have to put this out,'" said Mr. Goldberg, now president of the management company Gold Village Entertainment.

Ms. Hatfield was devastated, but she started over. That same year she wrote new songs for the EP "Please Do Not Disturb" (Bar/None Records) and over the next decade she released six solo albums, as well as two with



Juliana Hatfield, above last month on the Bowery and, left, during a 1998 concert in Colorado, has written a memoir, "When I Grow Up," that examines her travails both on and off the stage.

her trio Some Girls and one with a temporarily reunited Blake Babies.

Slowly and determinedly, Ms. Hatfield was moving in a positive direction; her lyrics on 2004's "In Exile Deo" (Zoe/Rounder) reflected growing self-awareness and optimism: "I've been sleeping through my life/Now I'm waking up/And I want to stand in the sunshine." Jon Pareles, the

chief pop critic of The New York Times, named the album one of the 10 best of the year and called her "a songwriter and producer who puts every tool of mainstream rock to smart, emotionally telling use."

Mr. Goldberg said: "She's very different today than when I first met her — she's much more savvy and confident. She has a sophistication today of how to ap-

proach her career."

Even so, Ms. Hatfield has been contemplating life after rock: "What happens when your dream comes true — when the spotlight is on and then it moves away?" she asked at lunch. She began examining that question through her book in 2001, and things began to fall into place when she took a class in memoir writing. Asked to read a chapter for a fund-raising event, she impressed a literary agent who knew nothing of her music. They wrote a book proposal for what was essentially a yearlong tour diary, which he then shopped around.

An editor at Wiley, Eric Nelson, had been a fan of Ms. Hatfield since her Blake Babies days, but was initially skeptical that a musician could hammer out 90,000 words of good prose. Reading her proposal, he found her storytelling to be specific yet profoundly universal.



NATHAN BILLOW/ASSOCIATED PRESS

“How do you keep going through a stage of your life that’s probably over?” he said. He sug-

gested she weave in details beyond the tour, about her struggles in life and music.

“She took a year off from making music and wrote a book about what you do when you’re not a rock star anymore,” Mr. Nelson added. “The irony is she then recorded probably the best album of her career.”

For her part, Ms. Hatfield wants her book to reach other troubled young women. “I hope some shy, insecure, anorexic girls out there see they’re not freaks,” she said.

As the owner and sole employee of her own label, Ye Olde Records, Ms. Hatfield handles every step of releasing her music, from choosing album art to mailing out the CDs. “I don’t have anything to prove anymore,” she said. “I don’t have a record deal, no one has any expectations, I’m in a position of freedom. I don’t need anyone’s approval.”

“After this book and this record I have no plan,” she added. “It’s kind of scary but it feels good.”

Newsweek

September 15, 2008

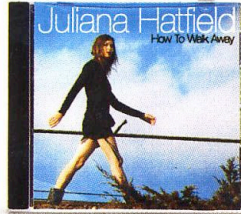
Checklist

Our top picks for the week

Hear “How to Walk Away”
by Juliana Hatfield. After 20 years, the songstress still packs a wallop on her 10th album, featuring edgy tales of heartbreak sung with that classic sweetness.



August 2008



If you have only...4 minutes, 23 seconds: Listen to Juliana Hatfield's winning take on a failed relationship, "My Baby..." from her shimmering new CD, *How to Walk Away* (Ye Olde Records); *He used to want to make me breakfast / but more and more he's sleeping in.*

DETAILS

September 2008

[THE REVIEWS]

JULIANA HATFIELD
HOW TO WALK AWAY (*Ye Olde Records*)

On her ninth solo effort, the alt-rock goddess sheds her insecurities and turns out her most searing lyrics to date on tracks like "Shining On" and "Just Lust," in which she swears off drunken one-nighters. It's as if she wrote this over drinks with Liz Phair and PJ Harvey.

marie claire

August 2008

JULIANA HATFIELD *How to Walk
Away* (Ye Olde Records)

Hatfield's achy pop once lent late-teen laments a poignancy beyond dorm-room bathos; now she gives a youthful blush to romantic resignation. These are songs that understand heart-ache: Relationships end, but they don't end you. **Download Now:** "Shining On" —*Scott Frampton*



Boston Sunday Globe

August 24, 2008

WITH NEW CD, MEMOIR, AND OUTLOOK, JULIANA HATFIELD CHARTS PROGRESS

By Joan Anderman

GLOBE STAFF

Pop music is a young person's game. Graph the typical trajectory, creative or commercial, of a musician, and you'll see a handful of slow burners and a boatload of downward spirals.

And then there's Juliana Hatfield, whose 20-year career arc is as messy — and fruitful — as her mental state. Hatfield has been, in chronological order: a college radio darling (with the Blake Babies), major-label ingenue, "Spin" magazine cover girl, almost-rock star, short-lived nostalgia act (the Blake Babies reunion), indie supergroup band member (Some Girls), and an alternately raw and ruminative cult artist.

Her sales clout peaked in 1993, with "Become What You Are," which sold roughly 400,000 copies; Hatfield will be happy if "How to Walk Away," which she released last week on her own Ye Olde Records label, reaches 20,000 people.

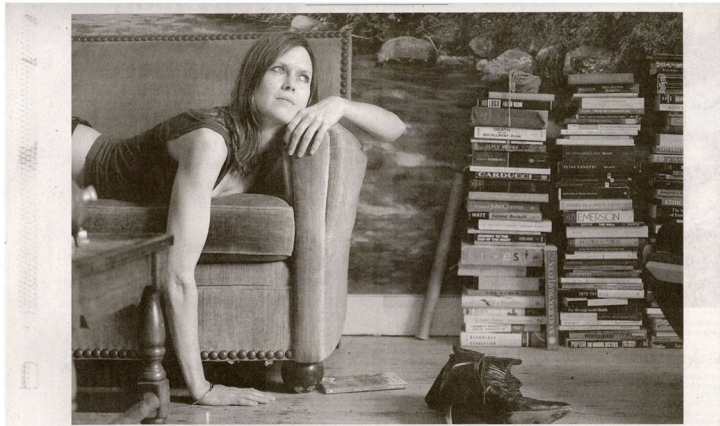
As a cultural artifact, Hatfield hovers in the celebrity purgatory reserved for artists who aren't hot commodities but still matter. You don't hear

HATFIELD, Page N4



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Boston Sunday Globe



She's learned how to walk away, and more

HATFIELD

Continued from Page N1

her songs on the radio anymore, even though they keep getting better. Hatfield can't get a record deal, but she'll be on Leno tomorrow night, and newspapers from coast to coast noted her 41st birthday last month.

But as a singer, a songwriter, and a human being, Hatfield is just getting started.

"I'm on the edge of something, and it would be so much easier to explain if I had overcome heroin addiction or had some other radical change in my life," Hatfield says over tea at the Four Seasons. "My growth as an artist and a person has been so slow and gradual it's hard to make a story out of it."

But she has. On Sept. 29, Wiley and Sons will publish Hatfield's memoir, "When I Grow Up." The book is a far cry from the sex-and-drugs tell-alls that litter the marketplace.

Originally conceived as a tour diary of a month on the road with her band Some Girls, "When I Grow Up" expanded into a broad and often brutal portrait of Hatfield's musical and personal odyssey so far. Scabs are picked, wounds reopened, hidden scars revealed. Names and some dates and sev-

eral locations have been changed to protect the innocent (bad boyfriends, callous record company executives), but conveniently, there's only one guilty party: the late-blooming author.

"I'm not trying to settle any scores. My intention wasn't to hurt or expose anyone but just tell the truth about my life," says Hatfield, who plays at the Brattle Theatre on Sept. 14. "I blame myself for everything."

And therein lies the essence of Hatfield's brand of tormented artist — the self-inflicted sort. Hatfield began life as an affluent, outgoing Duxbury girl.

She believes that something went wrong, really wrong, when she hit puberty. The self-described leader of the pack grew dark and quiet, and 25 years later she hasn't quite snapped out of it.

Bountifully musical and pathologically shy, scathingly honest and averse to judgment, Hatfield is a one-woman war zone: the part of her compelled to make music locked in mortal battle with the part of her that's utterly ill-equipped to deal with life in the public eye. She glares at cameras; photographs bring out the harshness in Hatfield, who's softer and prettier in person. She has worn



skinny jeans, a loose black top, and a delicate silver necklace to the Bristol Lounge. One fingernail is painted red. Hatfield smiles, but only halfway. She wonders out loud if she's mildly autistic.

Since the mid-'90s, when she was thrown off the rails by a debilitating depression, Hatfield has tried everything she could think of to get better: medication, therapy, puppies, health food, exercise. "Everything's been a struggle for me," she says. "Everything but the writing, and that's why I kept doing it. It's the only time I ever felt sane, like a whole person who was useful, who had any power, who was in control. When I was at BU right after high school, I had these horrible panicky nights where I thought if I didn't find a band I was going to kill myself. The two choices were find a band or die. That's how it felt."

The following year, in 1986, Hatfield enrolled at Berklee College of Music. Withdrawn to the point where she wouldn't eat in the cafeteria even though her parents had paid for a meal plan, Hatfield managed to meet Freda Love and John Strohm, and the threesome formed the Blake Babies.

"She wore the same thing every day: a leather biker jacket, jeans and a white T-shirt, and clunky shoes, with her hair in a ponytail," says Love. "Juliana didn't look like anyone else at Berklee. There was an aura about her, and I was drawn to her air of mystery. We were 18, but we didn't wait until we were ready. We just jumped in."

The Blake Babies ruled the college-rock roost with their punchy guitar pop for five years, and almost immediately after the band split Hatfield's solo career began to take off. "Hey Babe," her 1992 debut, was a surprise MTV hit and landed Hatfield a deal with Atlantic Records. "Become What You Are," released the following year and widely expected to be Hat-

field's mainstream breakthrough, produced the singles "Spin the Bottle" and "My Sister." But by the time "Only Everything" came out in 1995, alt-rock's popularity was dimming, the album quickly slipped down the charts, and Hatfield — who had slipped into a depression — canceled her European promotional tour.

"While Juliana seems very fragile in many ways, she's really not," says Hatfield's then-manager, Gary Smith. "She's a tough broad, attitudinal in a big way, and I don't think she was really willing to do things that one needs to do. Those things are stay on point, mostly. She made some unfortunate decisions, which she would say were circumstances — for instance, to cancel a tour right when she needed to be doing it. Maybe I was a [bad] manager in that I didn't make her do it. On my business card for years it just said 'enabler.' I wanted to be an artist's advocate, but I now kind of wish I'd gotten things done."

Hatfield's third album for Atlantic, "God's Foot," was shelved. She writes in her book that the label had a new female face to attend to, the far more marketable Jewel, and that Atlantic eventually agreed to release her from her contract. During our interview, though, Hatfield says that Atlantic dropped her, and "I couldn't blame them."

Three albums for the Rounder Records-affiliated Zoe label followed, and in 2005 the artist struck out on her own, founding Ye Olde Records in her Cambridge apartment.

There's a secret meaning to the title of Hatfield's new album, an atmospheric collection of pop tunes organized around a theme of leaving. "How to Walk Away" refers to another possible departure. Hatfield — who makes her living from music and financed the recording with an unexpected-

ly big royalty check from song placements in various films and television shows — has been flirting for years with the idea of retiring. She went into the studio last year thinking that this album, the 10th of her solo career, might well be her swan song — a state of mind that thrilled her producer, Andy Chase.

"I blame her for feeling at the end of her rope," says Chase, a member of the band Ivy and a massive Hatfield fan, who courted her (as a collaborator) for half a decade before Hatfield said yes. "She's been playing to the same audience year after year, and when sales are going down rather than up, you're wondering why you're even doing it. Who's going to buy this? Does anybody really care? I told her, 'If you make a record that's a leap, you may have a chance to reinvigorate your career. Or let's go out with a bang.' My agenda was to do something much more refined, something groovy and evocative, and bring out what I thought was a beautiful textured voice, which had been buried in a rock guitar pastiche or because Juliana wouldn't sing out."

Hatfield always hated her thin, girlish voice, at least until recently. But Chase put her songs into lower keys, and Hatfield discovered that she has a deeper, silky range. Ironically, she's so pleased (as she should be) with how the album turned out, Hatfield is reconsidering her decision to walk away from music. It doesn't seem to faze her that every major and independent label that Hatfield sent the album to passed on it.

"The rejection doesn't make me second-guess myself anymore. I know it's a good album, and I got really good feedback, and I realize that the music industry is sort of falling apart, so I was able to not take it so personally," says Hatfield. But she admits that her diminished stature continues to

haunt her.

"I say I've made peace, but it's like I don't want to admit that there's still a part of me that still doesn't understand why I don't get much notice," Hatfield says. "I don't want to seem like I'm complaining. Up until now I thought, 'I'm cool with everything. I'm an artist, man. I don't care if people buy my records.' But I wonder why I don't get much recognition."

Hatfield craves acknowledgement, but not at the expense of her integrity. She's never fit in, nor has she given in to anyone's idea of how her music or life should unfold. Hatfield jokes that she'll probably get married when she's 60 and have it all together when she's 70.

"I'm trying to break through with my music," she says. "It's just taking a while. Maybe I'll be peaking in September, maybe in 10 years. That's why I haven't quit, because I don't feel like I'm there yet. But I'm closer than I ever was."

Joan Anderman can be reached at anderman@globe.com. For more on music, go to www.boston.com/a/music/blog.

THE PHOENIX

September 19, 2008



HATFIELD HANGS ON

In her brutally honest memoir,
the Boston rocker details
her battle with depression

by Juliana Hatfield | p 20

PLUS Interview by James Parker | p 23

THE PHOENIX

September 19, 2008



WINDOWS

IN HER MEMOIR, *WHEN I GROW UP*, BOSTON ICON AND INDIE ROCKER JULIANA HATFIELD COMES CLEAN ABOUT HER DEPRESSION, AND WHY WAL-MART WOULD HAVE BEEN BLAMED FOR HER SUICIDE BY JULIANA HATFIELD

I was living in New York in the mid 1990s, gearing up for a short tour of mostly college venues in New England, to warm up for a series of European dates promoting my *Only Everything* album, after which there would be still more shows in North America. In the weeks leading up to the start of the college tour, I fell into one of my depressions, and with it some strange and disconcerting new sensations presented themselves: I would wake up every morning at 4 am — regardless of when I had gone to bed the night before — suddenly wide awake, unable to sleep anymore. Once out of bed, facing the day, a pervasive inner agitation — like tiny wheels in my brain were moving way too fast — made it impossible for me to concentrate, on anything. Not on my writing, not on any book or even a magazine, not on any one continuous thought, not even on the most mindless TV show. So I had no way to distract myself from the awful, oppressive gloom I felt. At the



Excerpted from *When I Grow Up* by Juliana Hatfield (335 pages, \$24.95). Copyright © 2008 by Juliana Hatfield. Reprinted by arrangement with John Wiley and Sons.

same time, I had no physical energy. I felt weighted down and slow, and the air, inside and out, seemed thicker than normal, like a dense fog. My movements, my reactions, and even my speech were leaden.

I would sit on my couch looking out the window at the sky, grinding my teeth, too frozen in mute, silent terror to cry or even to move, really, and completely saturated with dread, worrying — *believing* — that the sun might not come up the next morning or that it would drop out of the sky and leave the world dark and cold and dead, like my spirit.

As usual, I didn't know where these feelings had come from and I didn't know how to make them go away. I was alone in New York. I had failed to make any real friends in the year I'd been living there. (I only ever left my apartment to buy food or to work out at my health club a few blocks away.) I didn't have any kind of therapist, nor was I in the habit of confiding in anyone in my family, which was scattered around the country. I had no one to talk

to, really, and what was happening to me was worse and more frightening than any depression I had ever experienced before.

It felt like this time, unlike all the others, the cloud wasn't going to dissipate. This infernal woe had spread its poison all through my brain and body, as well as the city and sky, and I couldn't see any way out. And I had to go on tour. It was all planned and scheduled and arranged. I guessed going on the road would be no worse than sitting in my apartment waiting for the end of the world, alone.

It's so difficult to describe a bad depression. Even if one could capture it in all its blank, dead horror, she would know that there was not really any point in telling anyone else. Talking about how one's blood has run cold, or dry, or black, doesn't bring any relief. It's as tedious for the sufferer as for the listener. Telling someone is only burdening him with a big problem that doesn't appear to have

Continued on p 23

THE PHOENIX

September 19, 2008

Continued from p 20

any solution: It hurts to be awake. The morbidly depressed person's only hope is for unconsciousness; for the gift of sleep to free her for the requisite seven or eight hours each night. Even then, disrupted or stunted sleep is often part of the problem.

So I set out on tour promoting *Only Everything*, lugging my sluggish body from campus to campus, from stage to stage, from hotel to hotel, and so on, while consumed every waking second with the utter, definitive hopelessness and worthlessness of everything; of the future, of today, of the past. The ubiquitous, homely Wal-Mart and McDonalds and Taco Bells and Best Buys and Staples sprouting up out of every roadside like poisonous, monster weeds seemed, in my funk, justifiable enough reason for anyone to shoot himself in the head.

The suicide note might read: "I did it because of all the Wal-Marts."

TRAGIC BROCCOLI AND BEER

At the northeastern colleges I was visiting, I saw the inevitable death in every student's clean-scrubbed, innocent, smiling face. At NYU, the refreshments the student concert committee had set up for me and my band and crew—a bag of tortilla chips; a jar of salsa; a Saran-wrapped plastic supermarket deli platter of dried-out, precut broccoli florets, baby carrots, celery, et cetera, arranged in sections in cubbies around a centrally located foil-covered container of "dip," a bunch of Budweiser bottles that had been showed upright into the ice in a plastic tub to chill them—was the most tragic thing I had ever seen.

The way some of the curtains in some of the campus classrooms hung, powerlessly, like on the gallows, resigned to their eternal hanging fate, broke my heart. And the fluorescent lighting throughout many of the public rooms seemed to bring into harsh, stark relief all the sadness and ugliness and barbarism and pain that had been, in the millions of years of the history of civilization,

I would hold myself together during soundcheck, and then afterward I would saunter off to some quiet, relatively hidden space—behind one of the tall, thick, floor-skimming industrial curtains shading the big glass windows behind the stage in the auditorium at Brandeis, for example, or lying down under the table in the small classroom being used as a dressing room at Amherst—and just sob. Chest-heaving, face-drenching, hour-long uncontrollable epic bawlfests. I would wait until my guys were off exploring the campus or going to find dinner so I could do my crying in private in the dressing room. Or if I happened to be in the auditorium, I would make sure, before I cried, that no ticket holders had been let in yet and couldn't catch me in the act, with spotty cheeks and snot dripping off my chin.

Once in a while, one of my guys from the tour would find me and would rub my back for a minute or ask if I needed anything, and offer unspoken sympathy. I wanted to explain what I was going through, but I couldn't explain and I felt there was nothing anyone could do to help me, anyway. At Amherst, I went outside and had a walk around the campus after load-in. The air seemed heavy, pressing on me from all sides, like I was under deep ocean water. My mind kept repeating, "The world is a dark and lonely place. The world is a dark and lonely place." I found a wooden bench along a brick walkway among some bushes and under a tree. I sat down, looking out over a grassy hill that led down to a soccer field.

I felt as if I was made of very thin glass. I was afraid that the breeze rustling the leaves in the trees might knock me off my bench and send me falling to the bricks, shattering into a million tiny shards.

Continued on p 24

Baby fights the blues

DAMAGE, DEPRESSION, AND A DOWNGRADED CAREER—BUT JULIANA HATFIELD IS STILL STANDING. HOW A HOMETOWN GUITAR HERO DODGED THE BULLET, AND THEN WROTE A BOOK ABOUT IT. BY JAMES PARKER

Evening slants in over the spires of Harvard, and Juliana Hatfield is watching me across the table. Her eyes are blue—a wary and exposed blue. Buried after-chimes of "Feelin' Mas-sachusetts" begin to go off in my head. "Take me to the ocean and leave me there... Ping, ping. That bubble of simplicity in her voice. Suppliant spirits jostle around me like ghosts from fanboy Hades: Juliana, they hiss, *Julia-o-no*...

Will I be rendered idiotic in this woman's presence? She's dressed darkly chic-ly, like an existentialist. But I am a professional. "What is your relationship," I ask her sternly, "with heavy meta?" She is silent, poised over the cup of herbal tea. "Do you have a relationship with heavy metal?" "Not really," she says at last. "I mean, I like Black Sabbath..."

There's something in the character of the ex-celebrity that corresponds to Walker Percy's conception of the ex-suicide, and Hatfield—after her fashion—is both. "And you, an ex-suicide, lying on the beach," wrote Percy in *Lost in the Cosmos*. "In what way have you been freed by the serious entertainment of your hypothetical suicide? Are you not free for the first time in your life to consider the folly of man, the most absurd of all the species, and to contemplate the cosmic mystery of your own existence?" Snatched out of Boston and into stardom by the post-grunge boom, downgraded to cult status by its subsequent bust, dogged all the while by a depression that turned acute on tour in the mid-'90s and required treatment, Hatfield has come through.

And now she's contemplating the cosmic mystery of her own existence in a memoir. *When I Grow Up*, published this month by Wiley, The book records her progress from Duxbury teen to Berkeley student to indie apprentice (with the Blake Babies) to solo alterna-idol to the distinctive creature we know today: one of the last princesses of her musical generation. Lots of rock-and-roll in there: lots of stinky clubs, and vans in motion, but it's a mordant and detached piece of work, the product of a floating mind, closer to Steve Martin's *Storm Standing Up* than Lemmy's *White Line Fever*. Playing at the Middle East, she fucks up a guitar solo. "I felt brain-camaged... Was it the year on Zorlof? Was it too many Bloody Marys? Valium? Amphet? Was it the time, when I was two years old, that Dad threw me in the pool to see if I would swim, and I sank to the bottom? Was it lack of adequate nutrition? Not enough meat? Was it pesticide runoff in my drinking water? Lead paint? Was it the DDT in the bug spray? Too much masturbation? Aliens?"

She also has a new album, *How To Walk Away* (Ve Ode Records), out now. A book and a record? "Yup," she says. "Double the criticism!"

THE DARKNESS INSIDE

One hesitates to label *How To Walk Away* "mature," but it sort of is. The opener, "The Fact Remains," has a lovely, oblique, downward-winding melody like something from the first Smiths album, one of Morrissey's onanistic lullabies. "I stayed/Til The Star-Spangled Banner" played/And I couldn't keep my eyes open... I finally wised up, but the fact remains/I stayed too long." The lyrics are about romantic bad timing, but serve also as Hatfield's rueful salute to her own durability. "I've been in the spotlight," she says quietly. "I've been out of the spotlight, but my desire and determination never wavered. And when the spotlight turned away from me, it didn't make me any less desperate to create music. So in this book I wanted to tell the truth about myself and make people understand my motivations and my dedication. And I'm still not sure why I need to put that stuff out there, but I think that I'm so almost pathologically reserved in my day-to-day interactions with people that the writing and the music are ways to communicate for me."

What else do we learn from *When I Grow Up*? That she is annoyed by Proust, Brian Eno's *Music For Films*, and the guitar solos of Richard Thompson. That she likes a bit of Abba and Ace of Base. "Sure, I loved the Stooges and Blue Cheer and

Squirrel Bait," she writes, "but I loved Wilson Phillips, too. Why couldn't I?"

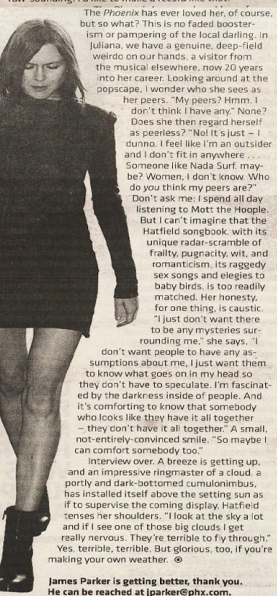
What an exquisite stroke of irony—the fact that this artist, entrusted by her muse with many heavy bummers and songs about falling to pieces, is obliged to deliver said bummers in compact doses of pop euphoria. Life is a detuned E string, but the heart has its super-sweet chords: Joe Carducci's *Rock on the Fog*; Narcotic, the *Levitation* of rockit, could have been a monograph on Juliana Hatfield. Even when petulantly distorting her gifts, as on the rocky all-aggro *Juliana's Pony*, *Total System Failure* (2000), she can't help writing the killer hooks.

Dissolution is communicated in trenchant couplets: "I feel funny," she moans on "What Do I Care" from 2005's *Made in China*. "Is it over? Am I dead or asleep on the sofa?" ("I freak myself up constantly," she says of her lyrics.) Her guitar playing grows slurred, low-slung, a noise like rusted chrome—still beautiful. "For a long time, I wanted to be like Mascis," she says. "I tried to play guitar like him, and I tried to write songs that were really gorgeous and heavy and fuzzy. A female! Mascis, I guess. Right now, though, I'm really liking the Tings Tings record. That's inspiring to me right now—really catchy, and well-produced, but kind of raw-sounding. I'd like to make a record like that."

The Phoenix has ever loved her, of course, but so what? This is no faded boosterism or panoplying of the local darling, in Juliana, we have a genuine, deep-field weirdo on our hands, a visitor from the musical elsewhere, now 20 years into her career. Looking around at the popscene, I wonder who she sees as her peers. "My peers? Hmm. I don't think I have any." None? Does she then regard herself as peerless? "Not it's just—I dunno, I feel like I'm an outsider and I don't fit in anywhere... Someone like Nada Surf, maybe? Women, I don't know. Who do you think my peers are?" Don't ask me, I spend all day listening to Matt the Hoople. But I can't imagine that the Hatfield songbook, with its unique radar-scramble of frailty, pugnaty wit, and romanticism, its raggedly sex songs and elegies to baby birds, is too readily matched. Her honesty, for one thing, is caustic. "I just don't want there to be any mysteries surrounding me," she says. "I don't want people to have any assumptions about me, I just want them to know what goes on in my head so they don't have to speculate. I'm fascinated by the darkness inside of people. And it's comforting to know that somebody who looks like they have it all together—they don't have it all together." A small, not-entirely-convincing smile. "So maybe I can comfort somebody too."

Interview over. A breeze is getting up, and an impressive ringmaster of a cloud, a pony and dark-bottomed cumulonimbus, has installed itself above the setting sun as if to supervise the coming display. Hatfield senses her shoulders. "I look at the sky a lot and if I see one of those big clouds I get really nervous. They're terrible to fly through. Yes, terrible, terrible. But glorious, too, if you're making your own weather. ☺"

James Parker is getting better, thank you. He can be reached at jparker@phx.com.



THE PHOENIX

September 19, 2008

24 SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 | NEWS + FEATURES | THE BOSTON PHOENIX

Continued from p. 23

A twig landed on my pant leg. A spider scurried up its web between two bushes next to me to check on the bug it had snared. A grackle squawked and I winced. Nature's sounds and stirrings went on harmonizing discordantly at full force, broadcasting their harsh indifference to my wretchedness.

It was very clear to me at that moment: the night falls and the day breaks and they don't stop for anyone. And sometimes a baby bird falls from its nest before its little wings ever have a chance to fly, and it's dragged away to some shaded spot where, before long, its bones and feathers and black sunken eye-holes are covered in leaves, and forgotten, as if it had never even existed.

How could I get up onstage and sing "Spin the Bottle" knowing all this?

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

I became fixated on windows. There was a lot of downtime spent waiting, hanging around before and after soundcheck and before and after the show, while equipment was being set up and broken down, and while opening bands were playing. I began spending all of my spare time studying the windows in the campus buses, which were stationed in each night. The first thing I would do as soon as I came upon a new window was to see if it opened, and if it did, how and how far. Some didn't open at all. And some opened wide enough for a person to fit through. I would nestle myself as comfortably as I could right up next to the glass and gaze out, pondering what would happen if I jumped and hit the ground below. I envisioned the blow knocking me unconscious, and thought how wonderful that would be. How wonderful it would be to sleep, I mean, and to not wake up for an extended period of time, until my depression had lifted.

"I'm gonna do it. Now, tonight, I'm gonna," I thought, every night after the show, as the others were packing up the gear and I waited in the dressing room, looking from my chosen window out at the ground. But every night I would lose my nerve. I would worry: I could break my neck or my back and then wake up paralyzed, if

I woke up. What if I died? I didn't want to die. There was no question about that. I just wanted to feel better, and in my severely depressed, muddled head I honestly believed that the only way for me to make this happen was to jump out of a window.

Every night I got up in front of a room packed full of enthusiastic, clapping, cheering college kids, not knowing how I would summon the energy to get through the show when, because of my diseased state of mind, I had no faith in what I was doing anymore. That was the worst part. All of a sudden my music felt hollow and worthless. I was singing without any love or conviction. Without the belief that what I was doing was meaningful and necessary, there really was no reason for me to be here, to be anywhere. There was nothing else to hold on to. My faith in my music was my one reason for getting out of bed in the morning. It had always been my lifeboat and now it was sinking, fast.

I somehow managed to get through each show and then, later, after I'd chickened out and not jumped out any window, I would go back to my hotel room and pray to God, every night before bed, for the courage to follow through on my plan the next day, to jump out the next window, the next night, on the next campus. Just thinking that it was finally going to happen — to really happen — tomorrow would make me feel almost happy, late at night, for a little while, like a bit of weight was lifting from me; I knew I would soon be lying blissfully unconscious, somewhere safe, out of the swamp in my brain, and away from everything and everyone; from the pressure and the business and the people at the label watching the charts

READ A REVIEW OF HATFIELD'S BRATTLE THEATRE PERFORMANCE THIS PAST SUNDAY, AT THEPHOENIX.COM/MUSIC.



and counting the days until they could drop the ball on me, on my album, on my future. And people would finally understand how much I was suffering, and that I wasn't sullen and antisocial by choice, and that I hated that I was that way, and they would understand how hard it was for me to navigate the world of people.

But every morning when I woke up, the terrible crushing malaise would be upon me, full force, and I would cry upon opening my eyes, cry because I was awake, cry because I didn't know how I was going to get through the day and the show.

This went on for the rest of the college tour until the last night, at NYU, where I had an epiphany. I realized in a moment of clarity that this depression of mine had become so unbearable that I was going to jump out of a window to get away from it, and that this was completely insane. I was sick in the head and something had to be done about it, immediately. I needed to cancel the European tour. My problem wasn't a simple problem, with a simple solution and a quick turnaround, like flu or a headache or food poisoning or a sprained ankle, and I couldn't manage it on my own anymore. I needed to check myself into a psychiatric treatment facility where trained professionals could help me to fix my broken psyche.

Before the show at NYU, I called my manager and told him that I wanted to cancel the European tour (which was scheduled to begin in a few days). I explained the situation and told him that if I didn't do something about it I feared I might end up hurting myself. And then I said, "Gary, I am not well."

LIFE ON HOLD

I found it hard to admit that something seriously bad and out of my control was happening to me, and even harder to make the decision to actually try to find someone to help me. I was always reminding myself that everybody gets blue sometimes. "It could be worse" was my mantra. But "worse," for me, now, might mean a broken back or a coma or two shattered legs.

I knew that my guys and my audiences and the European promoters would recover from my canceling. But I also knew there would be repercussions. Record companies don't like it when artists shirk their promotional duties, for whatever reason.

For example, I was once in the middle of a tour when my bass player received word that his beloved grandmother had passed away. He wanted to take two days off to fly home and attend the funeral, and then rejoin the tour. It would mean a canceled show. When we informed my record company about the situation, their reaction was, "Does he really need to go to the funeral?"

I knew that my decision to cancel a whole tour of a whole continent, which was meant to launch the release of my newest album over there, would quite likely hurt the album's success and sales. If I didn't continue working, pushing my new product, working the momentum I had built up from my last big attention-getting album, I could screw up my whole career and future by failing to capitalize on whatever fleeting buzz I'd managed to acquire, temporarily.

And on top of that, my musicians and crew had been counting on paychecks and had planned their lives around going to Europe and working for the next two months. A couple of them had sublet or given up their apartments and so had no place to go back to until two months later. And now they were going to be all of a sudden out of work in New York City.

Just before showtime at NYU, I gathered my band and crew in the dressing room

and told them what I had told Gary: I was canceling the European tour. The guys had seen that I was struggling with something pretty badly, and most of them, when I announced the cancellation of Europe, were either sympathetic or graciously hid their displeasure from me. My merch guy, Dale, however, said without blinking an eye that he wanted to be paid for the canceled dates, and wasn't shy about letting me know that he was annoyed, angry, and unsympathetic.

"I'm really sorry, Dale," I said. "I'll still pay you, okay? But I just can't go to Europe right now. I really cannot do it. I'm not well. I need to see a doctor." And then, addressing all of them, I said, "It wasn't an easy decision to make, but I have to do it. I waited till the last minute to cancel because I was hoping I could just keep it together, but I can't. At this point I really feel like I don't have a choice. This thing I'm dealing with has gotten kind of out of control."

I had never canceled anything before. How could I explain to my guys that, if I didn't quit right now, I was probably going to end up mangled on the ground under a second-story or possibly even third-story window? Would they understand?

I didn't understand it myself. That was why I needed to try to get on some kind of path to figuring it all out. In the meantime, I needed medicine. I had read all the books on the newly popular SSRIs and I thought I'd be the perfect candidate. When my mood had been stabilized, my plan was to move out of the city and back to Massachusetts, where it was a bit more low-key and comfortable for me; get a puppy; find a good analyst; maybe try yoga. Anything and everything I could think of to help get me on my feet, and get better, and stay that way so I never had to go through this again and so I could do my job. I had to take charge of my mental health and well-being rather than continue to react to my feelings and to life with harmful, self-destructive thoughts. If I'd ruined my career by opting out (albeit temporarily) in the middle of it, then so be it. I wasn't enjoying myself anyway. This way, maybe I could figure out why I wasn't having a good time, and how I could in the future — if I still had a future.

It was reported in the music press that I canceled my tour due to "nervous exhaustion." I wondered why my publicist hadn't simply told everyone the plain truth — that I was suffering from a spell of severe depression and had sought medical help and was currently undergoing treatment — instead of issuing such a vague, all-purpose "nervous exhaustion" line, which doesn't really mean anything and as far as I know isn't even a real diagnosis. "Nervous exhaustion" made it sound as if I had collapsed, but in fact I had done the opposite: I had deliberately walked off and away from the stage, and the road, and my career, for a little while, in order to avoid an impending collapse — to nip it in the bud. I had taken necessary action to save myself. And this was seen by some as a bad move (and not in everyone's best interest). In the eyes of the music business and media machine, it's better — saner — for a girl to work, work, work, and promote, promote, promote until she breaks down or blows out and is hauled away on a stretcher than for her to walk away on purpose when she still has some power to decide for herself what is right.

Severe depression was my problem. I had no reason to hide it from the world. I couldn't hide it anymore. Why couldn't they have called it what it was? People would have understood. Besides, "severe depression" sounds so much more badass than "nervous exhaustion." ©

Juliana Hatfield lives in Boston. When *I Grow Up* will be in stores on September 23. *How To Walk Away*, her 10th solo album, was released this past month. For more info, go to julianahatfield.com.



I JUST WANTED TO FEEL BETTER, AND I HONESTLY BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR ME TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN WAS TO JUMP OUT OF A WINDOW.

Los Angeles Times

September 30, 2008

When purity was called virginity, and Juliana Hatfield was its poster girl

The mini-uproar that host Russell Brand generated at the MTV Video Music Awards by ribbing the Jonas Brothers about their "purity rings" has passed. The Jo Bros and their defender Jordin Sparks can go back to "Burnin' Up" while taking love "One Step at a Time" (as their respective singles describe), and Brand can sit back and enjoy the new season of "Californication." I tried to clear my mind the other morning by cracking open a good new book -- only to be reminded that sexual conservatism and pop have been strange bedfellows before, and not so long ago.

Juliana Hatfield, the author of the new memoir "When I Grow Up," was an indie rock star back when that music defined a slacker generation. She palled around with scene hottie Evan Dando (remember the [Lemonheads?](#)), wrote great songs about loving Nirvana and going to see the [Violent Femmes](#) and, with the band the Blake Babies and her ongoing solo career, helped misfit, thinking girls carve out their own corner of guitar heaven.

Hatfield is gifted with Top Model looks as well as a stunning sense of melody and the chops to play a mean guitar solo when required. Coming up alongside fiercely confrontational artists including Courtney Love and [Kathleen Hanna](#), she got a reputation as something of a prom queen. She was just too pretty, too aloof; and she had a habit of getting miffed with interviewers and saying things that sounded downright conservative....

She let loose one of her most controversial statements while promoting her first solo album, "Hey Babe," in 1991. Frustrated by a prying journalist's insinuations about whom she might be dating, she announced that, at 23, she was still a virgin.

The statement hit Hatfield's career like shrapnel. "Almost every subsequent article written about me referenced the quote," Hatfield writes in "When I Grow Up." "I couldn't shake it; my recorded words were like an incurable disease."



Los Angeles Times

September 30, 2008

Hatfield's disease metaphor is right on. I remember when that story came out (it was in Interview magazine), and how many of my friends -- feminists, critics and indie-culture fans -- reacted. Hatfield did suddenly seem somehow dangerous, contagious. The Riot Grrrl movement and the music of such artists as L7, Hole and PJ Harvey were blowing open the conventions of female sexuality in rock. And here was Hatfield, trying to take us back to the days of pristine [Sandra Dee](#).

Except that wasn't her goal. In truth, the young, painfully shy Hatfield was trying to embody a feminine stance few public figures have successfully filled. She describes it in her book:

I thought that by admitting my virginity I was being subversive, declaring my right to chose how to live. I thought feminists and anarchists and freethinkers and outsiders and late bloomers everywhere would cheer when they read the interview. Maybe people misunderstood me and were unable to decipher my motives simply because there is no archetype of a female loner-by-choice, especially in the pop-rock music world. The strong, silent, individualistic, solitary outsider -- the lone wolf -- is historically always male. But that is how I saw myself: standing alone, off to the side, with a tight grip on my own original, quixotic ideas, and not as a pathetic waif, desperate for some record executive to make me a star; not as a delicate shrinking violet waiting eagerly to be swept up in the arms of my future husband who would ravish me in a dramatic, yearned-for defloration.

When I read that, I didn't think of Sparks or Sandra Dee; I thought of Robin Weigert as [Calamity Jane](#) in "Deadwood," tough, alone and unabsorbable. Also sad. Our culture remains even more hostile to the idea of the female loner than it is toward the free sexual woman, because that kind of woman can't be packaged to sell.

I don't think Hatfield would have ever worn a purity ring. She isn't into groupthink, and as a good indie rocker, she would have found the prospect of prettied-up, undeniably sexy teen idols wearing them hypocritical. What she believed virginity stands for is far more provocative and challenging, both for the 23-year-old she was, trying to live against all the tendencies of the pop world, and for a culture addicted to voyeurism and the teasing lecherousness of the "[anything but](#)" lifestyle.

So, Juliana Hatfield, I'm offering you a 17-years-overdue apology. Purity has come a long way since 1991, but your honest book and music still stand up for it, in the best sense.

-- Ann Powers

Photo: Chris Pizzello / Associated Press

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ON HER TENTH ALBUM, JULIANA HATFIELD GETS READY TO TAKE STOCK AND LAY EVERYTHING ON THE LINE

BY PATRICK KENNEDY

"I GUESS YOU NEVER REALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS UNTIL SOME TIME HAS GONE BY, BUT I'M GLAD TO BE A PART OF THAT HISTORY."

From the dark hues of the Joe's Pub stage in New York City, a lithe figure emerges from behind the curtain and straps on a guitar. After a few brief words to the crowd and her pianist, she strums a few notes before unfurling a rich canvas of heartfelt melody and fragile grace. Her songs speak of determination and self-awareness in the face of loneliness, of finding hope in heartbreak. Projecting an uncompromising assurance through its girlish quality, her voice nestles into the hearts of the audience. The stripped-down and intimate performance paints a striking picture of singer/songwriter Juliana Hatfield — standing on the edge of the tenth album in her twenty-plus year career, and with more to prove to herself than ever before.

Juliana Hatfield travelled a long and oftentimes jagged path on her way to the upcoming *How To Walk Away* (Ye Olde Records), crafting a career filled with equal amounts of opportunity and hardship. After the breakup of college-radio favourites Blake Babies, Hatfield transitioned from her role as the band's bassist/singer/songwriter to a full-fledged solo artist. The release of her second album, *Become What You Are*, coincided with a nationwide media and marketing obsession surrounding alternative rock, which plugged Hatfield into a who's who of nineties cultural touchstones. The album's biggest single, "Spin the Bottle," appeared on the soundtrack to the Generation-X promoted *Reality Bites* (1994), and Hatfield appeared on the covers of *Sassy*, *Spin*, and in an episode of the

Lush Magazine

Fall 2008

seminal teen-drama *My So-Called Life*, starring the newly discovered, soon-to-be alterna-darling Claire Danes. Speaking of that time period, Hatfield says, "For me to be known by the Sassy people and matter in that world was cool. And I'm so surprised how many people saw that *My So-Called Life* episode and love the show."

Thanks in part to her involvement in these projects, Hatfield has earned a certain iconic status amongst today's young women raised by nineties culture. "Looking back, just that people perceive me that way shows that all that stuff meant something culturally," remarked Hatfield in hindsight. "I guess you never really know what it means until some time has gone by, but I'm glad to be a part of that history."

These experiences unfortunately ran parallel to mounting label pressures from Atlantic Records, and the relationship strained as a result. The label and Hatfield didn't see eye-to-eye on the marketing of 1995's *Only Everything*, while the recording sessions for *God's Foot* became endlessly drawn out by Atlantic's perceived lack of a single. In 1998, Hatfield requested to be released from her contract and Atlantic complied — though they would refuse to relinquish the rights to the unreleased album. For most people, this would be where the story ends. For Juliana, however, this is where her artistry would gain its strength.

After signing to Rounder imprint Zoë Records, Hatfield released a string of albums that expressed her varied creative impulses, including *Bed* — an album completed in less than a week, which she describes as "a raw, abrasive album" with "a certain je ne sais quoi — a cathartic quality" — and 2004's *In Exile Deo* (praised by critics and fans as some of her best work to date). With the release of each of these albums, as well as the start of her own record label, Ye Olde Records, the path has led to this fall's *How To Walk Away*, which Hatfield characterizes as "do-or-die." "All the years I've been making records, I didn't think about it, I just did it. I was so completely focused on going — writing, recording, touring, writing, recording, touring," explains Hatfield. "With this record, I really had to think about my place in the world, to contemplate things that I hadn't thought about before."

Hatfield met up with Andy Chase of Ivy in September 2006 at Stratosphere Sound in New York, with the purpose of working on two songs she'd written. "At this time, it was just an experiment to see how they turned out," says Hatfield. "Andy and I had such a good feeling about the sessions and our collaboration that we decided to make a whole album together." From there, the album came out in several creative chunks — shifting between week-long sessions in New York, and heading back to Boston to write more songs for the next session. "Andy was instrumental in the song choices and arrangements; he had really strong ideas on how the song should be arranged," says Hatfield. "We agreed on pretty much everything, though — he was the perfect producer." Chase was also able to bring in some talented friends to contribute on the album, such as Matthew Caws (Nada Surf), Richard Butler (Psychedelic Furs), Jody Porter (Fountains of Wayne) and Tracy Bonham.

The album focuses on some of the themes that cut through Hatfield's life — namely the need to, as the title states, walk away from negative situations and take stock in her own life. "It's a serious proposition," the singer reflects. "What am I doing with



my life, how far have I come, where did I think I would be, where do I want to be? I want to fix things in my life that needed fixing for a long time. In order to do that, I had to be alone."

The solitude brings Hatfield to a lush and meditative place. Each track buzzes with hypnotic warmth, sidestepping the themes of isolation and uncertainty to offer glimpses, however brief, into a world of possibilities and newfound hope. *How To Walk Away* stages a setting that reflects Juliana Hatfield's rich musical history, from alt-rock goddess to unrelenting and passionate artist, all while blazing new trails of strength and self-assuredness. ★