

## JANDEK ON CORWOOD TRANSCRIPTION

### **SCREENTEXT:**

In 1978, a musician released his first album, "Ready for the House."

It featured a lonely voice accompanied by acoustic guitar

### **SUNG:**

By the sea, By the sea, in a... Point Judith diary, I,  
found many rocks all pretty colors. I found waves that  
split the sands

### **SCREENTEXT:**

His subsequent recordings made him one of the most  
prolific artists in contemporary music.

Almost nobody has noticed.

### **SUNG:**

In this Ghost-town by the sea/This ghost-town by the sea.

### **SCREENTEXT:**

In 1985, John Trubee Performed a phone interview with the  
musician, known as Jandek.

It is the only successful attempt to interview the  
reclusive artist about his music in his 25-year career.

### **JOHN TRUBEE:**

When Spin Magazine started off in 1985, I knew its  
executive editor, Edward Rasen. And he was looking  
around for writers, he had seen me do poetry readings, he  
had read my liner notes in the back of my albums and read  
my poetry, and got the idea that I could write, Ha ha.

So he asked me to write some material for Spin, because  
he needed material for this publication he was starting  
off. And the first thing that came to mind was Jandek,  
simply because he was underground, nobody knew about him,  
he was doing things on a shoestring, he wasn't some  
plastic rock star put out by the major labels, which were  
things that I would avoid writing about, because who  
needs to hear about them, and usually they don't have  
very interesting stories. So, that's what motivated me

to want to write about Jandek. Here's a guy that was putting out weird, unusual music, not too many people would hear about him, here's a new medium where we can get the word out about this person that I found very intriguing.

**SUNG:**

I got a vision/a teenage daughter/who's growing up naked in the afternoon.

**JOHN TRUBEE:**

I had heard information that he was very reclusive, hermetic. I didn't want to disturb anyone's private space, or intrude upon their privacy; at the same time I wanted to get some information about this. So it was similar to nosing about the forest with a stick, digging into burrows and under rocks, to try to locate a small wild animal, a mammal, that might be rabid, might be dangerous, but you're a scientist and you want to glean some more information about this mysterious animal.

**ONSCREEN SIGN:**

NO TRESSPASSING

**SCREEN TEXT:**

The Music

**SUNG:**

You are a cowboy/when you wear those boots

**JOHN FOSTER:**

I understand you have never heard a Jandek song in your life, and I'd like to describe that for you. There's a man in a room. He's got a guitar. He knows a few chords. And... he's a melancholy sort. He picks up the guitar and he sort of free-associates his way through several minutes, and he stops, then he does it again, and he does it over... 20 or so odd albums. There it is.

**BROOKS MARTIN:**

Imagine you're ten years old. And you've never played the guitar. Then you just start hitting strings. And you're like "that sounds pretty good, that's pretty exciting." And you start singing the Blues from stream of consciousness. That's kind of what it sounds like, at first impression. Upon closer listening I think there's

a lot more going on, but if you just hear it, first off, that's your impression.

**DR. DEMENTO:**

It's a guy singing lyrics, which apparently he scribbled on a scrap of paper somewhere, to something vaguely recognizable as melody and banging away on an acoustic or electric guitar, sometimes just a few chords, sometimes something a little more spirited. It is not the sort of thing that your average American consumer would describe as "music."

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

Totally incomprehensible and grating on the nerves; who says that art has to be pretty, anyway?

**BEN EDMONDS:**

When you listen to Jandek you really have to sort of evaluate what your assumptions are about what counts as Rock music, what counts as good music. You have to think about music in a different way after listening to Jandek.

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

Spooky, personal, honest / compelled / wispy.

**NILS BERNSTEIN:**

"Ready for the House" came out in '78, and that was right after Punk Rock which obviously kind of started this whole DIY aesthetic about music... that you don't need to be technically proficient, you don't need to have a lot of financial support. You know... you can put out a record on your own, you don't have to be a great musician. You can just do it.

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

May he never tune his guitar.

**SUNG:**

I guess you knew that wasn't possible/

**AMY FRUSHOUR KELLY:**

He's not talentless. He's just kind of doing what appeals to him. So the music isn't necessarily designed to appeal to anybody else in the whole world. If we get it... that's pure luck.

**SUNG:**

I guess there's no such thing as today or any day

**JAKE AUSTEN:**

When you hear a Jandek song... or Yahndek, I always thought it was Yahndek, but I guess some people have had some kind of contact with him. It's hard for me to believe it's not "Yahndek."

I guess it's more like, you have to experience it as an atmosphere, to me at least, more than as a song. You start to believe in "Yahndek's" or Jandek's world when you're listening to it, because you are definitely in some other world when you listen to the way his music sounds.

**SUNG:**

And if you're staying/back behind  
 You must want to be the one that's blind/  
 To some people that could use you/to help them/  
 Get along

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

A dark, suicidal void.

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

The main kind of Jandek song, the kind that people usually think of, is somebody playing very slowly on an acoustic guitar that is very badly out of tune, and sort of... moaning a death blues. Not just a death blues, but... a suicide note blues. I sometimes think of Jandek's songs as being a 33 volume suicide note. He always sounds like he's about to sign off, and he never does quite, and then there's always another one that comes after it.

**ANGELA SAWYER:**

When people come to the store and they want to have odd records described to them, usually I try and overstate the case, because a lot of people who want to try music that they have not tried before don't realize quite what they're getting into, and you don't want them to be too unhappy about it. And then people who are excited about getting an experimental record want the most ridiculous record they can possibly get, so you try and let them know what's going on by telling them a little bit too severely what's actually there. So a lot of times with a Jandek record I would usually tell people that it's someone who has a completely untuned guitar, and is just

kind of meandering and yelling over it. That might not tell them... that wouldn't tell a person who has a bunch of Jandek records what it sounds like, but for somebody who has, you know a bunch of Toni Braxton records or some U2 records... that'll help them out.

**BEN EDMONDS:**

I mean, really, at least for me, the appeal of the stuff is, in a way, the fact that it is so unappealing. I like the music, but there are a lot of things that are sort of "ugly" about it. And, again, it's not your standard stuff that you tend to hear. And I think that a lot of people like it because it's difficult and because it's somewhat alienating to the average listener. It gets strong reactions and I think that if Jandek were to start putting out Power Pop albums, I'm guessing that people would be pretty turned off. I don't think people are coming to Jandek, you know, for a predictable music experience.

**BYRON COLEY:**

It's the kind of music that you could play for somebody who will say [that will make them say] "This is random, you know. Anybody could do this." And it's an argument that goes back as soon as people start to make any kind of break from representational art, anywhere. When you can't argue about the quality of technique. When you have to start saying "This has a theoretical presence and this has an intellectual basis for it that has nothing to do with... a measurable technique." There's art that is going on here... that's not representational, and it's not supposed to be beautiful and it's not supposed to be attuned to any kind of standard in a commercial sense.

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

As a guitar player, Jandek is like nobody else on the planet. This is not necessarily a good thing. But it's a unique thing. He approaches the instrument in a way that nobody else does. Either he doesn't really tune it, or he puts it in some sort of tuning that's not really anybody else's... tuning.

**GARY PIG GOLD:**

Jandek has no need to "learn to play the guitar" quote unquote, because he has a guitar, and it's an extension of him. So if he writes a song and he's mad that day, or if he writes a song and he's happy that day, he'll pick

up the guitar, or the snare drum, or sometimes nothing at all... or a chair, and he'll just bang on it. And if he bangs on it, you get a percussion instrument. If it's not in tune, he's not singing about an event that has to be in tune. What better to accompany him being very upset and troubled over something than a guitar which is just as hard to listen to as his lyrics are to absorb. It's perfect... it's brilliant. Eric Clapton wouldn't know how to do it... I love Eric Clapton, but, you know, he's no Jandek.

**JOHN TRUBEE:**

You can tell that it's only a tape recorder. You hear the tape hiss, you hear any pops or bumps into the microphone or microphone stand. It's obviously in somebody's room. There's no audio processing devices or any of the expensive equipment you'd find in a recording studio. And this is part of the charm of the recordings.

**GEORGE PARSONS:**

Jandek is saying things that people... may hallucinate or talk in their heads, but they seldom say out loud. When I think of Jandek, real often, it's like staying up too long, you know. Being sleepless for a couple days, I think we all sort of get into a Jandek-like state. Where there's maybe not enough insulation on the nerve endings. It's uh... I think it is frightening music, because it's very honest.

**SUNG:**

You're one in a million/

**GARY PIG GOLD:**

Like a dream state, or just coming from the subconscious, it's just stream of consciousness, I think that's his approach... to his life, not just to his music.

Listening to Jandek's music, I think, is like meeting someone on the street or waiting for a bus late at night, and you're looking across the street, or you're looking down the bench and you see some interesting character sitting there, and at first you might be a bit taken aback, or maybe even frightened, but then he becomes a source of fascination for you, and he doesn't even have to say anything, and he doesn't have to do anything.

So if you're willing to trust your ears and your emotions and you're willing to let something like that in--in other words, if you're willing to answer the door and open it without looking through the peephole first--then you can be a Jandek fan.

**SUNG:**

UNINTELLIGABLE

**SCREENTEXT:**

Corwood Industries  
Post Office Box 15375  
Houston, Texas 77220

Address of Jandek's Record Label

**BROOKS MARTIN:**

If you want to get in touch with Jandek there's only one way to do it. You can write to this PO Box on the back of the record, it's always been the same address--Corwood Industries in Houston Texas.

**ONSCREEN TEXT:**

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE  
DENVER HARBOR  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77020

**BYRON COLEY:**

Corwood Industries... I mean it always had a very mysterious kind of ring to it. Whether or not it existed before Corwood records is... unclear to me. But Corwood Industries is an industrial giant in the Houston area, dedicated entirely to manufacture and disseminating Jandek musical materials.

There were no distributors that would carry them. They had business contacts with, what, one record plant in Houston.

**ONSCREEN TEXT:**

HOUSTON RECORDS, LTD.  
Manufacturer of Jandek records

**BYRON COLEY:**

So you would've had to deal with Corwood Industries directly in order to get them. So, you know, "Corwood"--what is it? It's a PO Box... I guess.

When there are record labels that are so associated with a PO Box... it's like a portal to somewhere in a way.

**RICHIE UNTERBERGER:**

I had this image of, you know, if Corwood Industries exists, what is it? One thing I thought of is—is Corwood Industries actually a real thing where maybe it's like—they manufacture plywood or... machines, and... it's where he works, but, as a tax write-off maybe or just a little sideline, are they putting out Jandek records? The "Industries" always intrigued me, and I had the image whenever I saw the back of an album, like, these records are being literally pressed on a lathe in the back of an industrial shop where he has a day job... as a welder.

**DR. DEMENTO:**

For many years I've gotten, oh, a dozen, two dozen recordings in the mail every week of people hoping to get stuff played on the show. They realize that I will play things that are outside the realm of the commercial music business.

So, I guess, about a couple decades now, I opened an LP and there was an album by Jandek. I got this album and I listened to it and I wrote a letter to the address of Corwood Industries asking for some biographical information, because there was none included with the record, because I just thought, "well, I'd like to tell my listeners something about this guy... if I play it."

I never heard back. But six months or so later another LP came in the mail—and they came pretty regularly for quite a while. One or two a year for, oh, 10, 15 years, and once in a while I'd play one on the show.

**NILS BERNSTEIN:**

I opened a store called Rebellious Jukebox in 1989. There was no doubt in my mind that, well, I'd better stock Jandek records, people are going to want them! So I wrote to the PO Box and [they] sent back a generic order form that had the instructions on it, and it was like "I'm gonna write this guy and I'm gonna buy a *hundred and fifty albums*, you know, it's gonna freak him out." And I made a big window display where I lined the windows with every album cover and just painted "Jandek, the Man, the Myth" on the window. So I thought I'd send

him a Polaroid of it. I got a postcard back from Corwood. Just a nice card, you know, thank you for the Polaroid - Corwood. And it's like, you know "Score! I'm in the Jandek 'inner circle' you know, great, I'm on his mailing list".. got a box of records.

**BYRON COLEY:**

It seems like everybody gets at least a catalogue back in the mail, or something. A lot of times there will be a little sentence written on there... signed "Corwood." Which I always figured was to give the impression that this is "official correspondence"—nothing off the cuff... although, it's always the same handwriting when I get it. The whole process is so mysterious, I mean it's like getting in touch with a secret agent somewhere, you know—getting your instructions from a telephone booth in some foreign city.

**ONSCREEN TEXT:**

You may not get all the answers you want/it's better that way  
Corwood

**SCREENTEXT:**

ALBUM COVERS

**JOHN TRUBEE:**

I had started receiving the albums and listening to them, and adding them to my record collection. I was very intrigued because they looked very similar to each other—these mysterious photographs. He didn't send out press releases he just sent out a page of his catalogue of albums, and that was it. The less information I received about him the more intrigued I was about this weirdo who was sending me these record albums. I appreciated them, but I was intrigued.

**SCREENTEXT :**

Album covers

**RICHIE UNTERBERGER:**

There was just... no attempt to impress at all. It was like "this is it, I'm just slapping this on, I'm sending it out, and... this is what it is. I'm not trying to hype myself into anything." There was no more attention to

the artistry than there was at these "do-it-yourself" photo-booths at Woolworth's.

**ERIC SCHLITTLER:**

Some of these places look like they could be anywhere. It's sort of this "American decay", like, these dying neighborhoods, and these strange sounds uttering from these curtain-drawn houses.

**DR. DEMENTO:**

It struck me that this was some sort of abstract art that somehow matched the remoteness of the music. That you had this impenetrable image there that... "what the heck does this mean?"

**BYRON COLEY:**

You can take these images. You could put those images up anywhere and they'd look great. You could put them in almost any order and you could create a narrative that would make some sort of sense in how they would connect.

**AMY FRUSHOUR KELLEY:**

He tells stories, and he takes pictures that are all about negative space. Negative space is, like, when you have a sculpture, and say the sculpture is two hands, and it's like this. The space right in between the two hands where there's nothing there, the void... that's negative space. And, I find it significant because his storytelling very much has to do with negative storytelling... leaving out very important parts, and by leaving out the important stuff like who this person is, and why someone did this—the motivation, all that stuff—you're just left with a sense that you're in it because you're feeling the emotion and you're not getting a lot else out of it.

**SCREENTEXT:**

The Ad

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

My name is Phil Milstein. I've been a Jandek fan since before he was even Jandek. To this day all my Jandek records are filed under the U's in my record collection because his first record was under the name "the Units." Certainly after the second one I could've moved them to the J's, but didn't realize that it was going to be

"Jandek" henceforth, so, they just stayed down in the U's and remain there to this day.

**SUNG:**

They told me about you

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

I wrote the very first review of one of his records ever published. I wrote it for Option Magazine before they were even Option Magazine. It was originally known as "Op." That readership seemed to be the ideal readership to try to turn on to Jandek.

I have no idea if any readers ever went and bought the album based on that, but Jandek seemed impressed, and that's good enough for me.

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

Phil M.

Your review circa 1980 of Ready for the House was the inspiration + force behind continuation of Corwood LP releases.

As always,  
Thanks,  
Corwood.

**SUNG:**

I'm crazy about you/I'm crazy about you/

**SCREENTEXT:**

Op Magazine Staff

**DAVID RAUH:**

And we did the first one, the "Ready for the House" record. He really didn't have any ambition to do more, he really didn't think anyone would pay any attention. And it was because of correspondence he got after the initial review appeared in Op that that really.. amazed him, that there was, some interest.

**TONI HOLM:**

That's why he went on.

**DAVID RAUH:**

Yeah, that was a really big encouragement to him.

**CALVIN JOHNSON:**

He became very attached to op magazine, it seemed like. And the reason was that he had said "I want to buy an ad in the magazine, a quarter page ad, I want it to say 'Jandek on Corwood' with the address, and that's all I want." And so Dana Squires, the art director of Op magazine, she had built the ad, and she had put 'Jandek on Corwood' and the address, and that was it.

**SUNG:**

*Arrange a new day*

**CALVIN JOHNSON:**

It came out in the magazine, and apparently, he called and was, like, so excited that she had done the ad exactly. Because every other magazine had always put, like, a little picture in there or tried to make it really fancy or had done something, because they thought "oh, you can't have an ad that just says *that*." And she was the only person who'd done it the way he'd asked, and he was really excited, and I think that's where the relationship really started to form.

**SUNG:**

*Gangrene in two legs*

**DAVID RAUH:**

It was hard sometimes to even get people to recognize that advertising could help them. And here was a guy who wasn't really approaching this in a professional way—he obviously wasn't seeking to be a pop star or something—but yet he had [a] very sparse, but nonetheless, an advertisement for his stuff.

**RICHIE UNTERBERGER:**

Jandek on Corwood. Black type on a white background, and nothing else. Very much like his albums, or at least the back of his albums, certainly, where it was just, like, that generic. But because it was that generic... it stood out, because nobody else making records was being that plain about it. It's like "here's the songs, here's the name of the artist, here's the record label, *and that's it.*"

**GEORGE PARSONS:**

By not saying anything, it's very much fitting into his whole ethic, or aesthetic sense—which is "less is a lot

more. So I'm going to say nothing, but you'll be curious." And everybody was curious. What is this?

**SUNG:**

*Vagrant in your crippled eyes*

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

I suppose just out of some sort of extravagant gratitude for that measure of initial publicity, Corwood Industries sent me a box of 25 copies of "Ready for the House." Just completely out of the blue. I have to say I had a real hard time getting rid of the rest of those copies, I kept a couple for myself, and some of them gave it back with some really strange comments. One guy commented that it reminded him of Mark Chapman crossed with John Hinkley. He was just really disturbed by it, and this is a guy who listens to a lot of disturbing sounds. I mean, I guess I can see what he means, but I didn't really understand the negative reaction that I was getting from people. To this day I really don't.

**SCREENTEXT:**

Mystery

**RICHIE UNTERBERGER:**

In 1986 I wrote a piece on Jandek for Option Magazine, and I had already heard that he almost certainly would not give an interview or even give any comment, but, I thought, as a good journalist I should try to get an interview or at least one or two comments that I could use in a shorter piece. So I gave him my standard interview request—you know... "we're running a piece on you and I'd like to ask you a few questions if I could—we can do it by mail or by phone." And, he wrote back and [his] entire reply was "Thank you for interest in your piece, questions *et cetera* can't be arranged. Anything else, just ask."

So, I almost thought, even then when I got that reply, it's like, well, he's being kind of disingenuous here, he's saying he's not going to do an interview, but, he's saying "anything else, just ask." Maybe at that point he was... there was a little bit of, you know, trying to propagate this image of the total recluse, or the enigma—the enigma even more than that. Because, I mean, it wasn't that much earlier that John Trubee had actually done a phone interview with him for *Spin*, 1985, I think.

So, this is only about a year later and he's saying "no interviews."

Here's this guy that, you know, making the most uncommercial music in the world, he's not selling any records... doesn't want to do interviews!?

**GEORGE PARSONS:**

I suppose if I'm writing for a mass audience I'm going to hook on the mystery aspect. You know... people... the mystery, the curiosity of Jandek. "What is this?" Why is it, and why doesn't it fit in with the rest of the world?

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

The cumulative effect of Jandek's career certainly prompts or begs many questions about the nature of the person behind it... the identity of the person behind it, *et cetera*. That was... some of that was apparent with the first few releases, simply because of... just the manifest dearth of any documentary information on there—that was very striking, even from the first, that the only information is just the names of the songs and the name of the album, and the address of Corwood Industries.

**ANGELA SAWYER:**

My reaction to hearing about it was a lot stronger than my reaction to actually hearing it. And I remember hearing that Jandek was some crazy guy who was reclusive, and that was really about all I knew. I was more interested in ones that were the same all the way through—ones that just had acoustic guitar on them, maybe, and... because I was much more interested in the idea that there was this, you know, reclusive guy writing these songs that made no sense.

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

When you do that same... present that same structure record after record, and add to that this very... I don't know, kind of a forlorn quality in his voice—certainly after a while I just got a sense of "this was a guy who just was not very social."

**DR. DEMENTO:**

His music seems very introverted, like it was just for himself and one other person... or maybe just himself.

He's... Jandek often sounds like he's just singing to the wall.

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

There's a lot of surrealist qualities to his music that can be interpreted as derangement. Perhaps subconsciously, that effect comes across of somebody who's just a bit deranged and, add to the antisocial element, and you think "isn't that the basic ingredients of a sociopath."

**RICHIE UNTERBERGER:**

I did have the image of... this guy who was really weird and alienated. You have a feeling you're eavesdropping on this guy who can't sleep, picking up his guitar at 3 AM in some desolate skid row hotel room and singing. And a tape recorder just happens to be there without him knowing it. One guy, alone, in a bare room, and one light bulb.

I really had the image of him being, you know, this borderline dysfunctional person who had virtually no contact with the outside world.

The first time I heard a Jandek record with musicians other than Jandek it was a big shock, because every record I had heard up to that point was just him and his guitar. And my first reaction was "oh, how did he find people to play with him?" Because my image of him at that time was very much of this loner—maybe borderline deranged loner who did as little to associate with other people as possible—not just in his music, but in anything. And I was like "well that kind of puts the kibosh on that part of the image because he's obviously in the same room with somebody" So it was like "well, you know, he can't be that anti-social. He knows somebody—a woman, for that matter

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

6. NANCY SINGS

**SUNG (NANCY) :**

*A dozen drops fall from your face/  
Shaking the rain in a quiet place/  
Shining clean, a fresh new day/  
Wakes up the world in a fragrant bouquet/*

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

"Nancy Sings" is probably my favorite Jandek song—which is strange because Jandek... it's hard to tell if Jandek actually plays on it or not. It might be him playing guitar, but it's certainly not him singing. It's a woman that... we guess she's called "Nancy"... we don't know. But it's a really beautiful song, it's sung by somebody that can really sing in the sort of like, 60s American/English Folk tradition.

**BYRON COLEY:**

So "Nancy Sings"... Well it could be anything, you know, it could be a song about Nancy singing, you know, why not? But when you get there and it's actually a woman singing, you like, grab the album and you're looking at it and it says "Nancy Sings"! So you're like, "I guess it's Nancy."

It's so funny that a song would have such a literal title in the midst of these other songs that are so aliteral.

And it was something that he seemed, then, to continually allude to when people would enter the picture. When you hear somebody that sounded new, it seemed like he felt like he should identify that there was somebody new who was coming in.

**ONSCREEN GRAPHIC:**

3. JOHN PLAYS DRUMS

**PHIL MILSTEIN:**

In a way you could trace his career as almost a soap opera, you know, here's this guy alone in his bedroom, strumming, wailing his blues, and then that lasts for a few albums, and then you get "Whoa, there's a drummer here." I remember when I first heard the drums, and how shocking that was, because, cumulatively you get the image of this guy alone in his room playing, and he does come off as very antisocial after a while, and then there's clearly another person in the room. And that just takes your preconception of who this person is behind this music, and shifts it completely from "antisocial" to "social" even on a minimal scale.

**SUNG:**

A dozen drops fall from your face/

**GEORGE PARSONS:**

It was surprising, and at the same time it was kind of a relief. Because I thought "ok here, this guy, at least he talks to other people." There's something about listening to it, you project, or at least I would project, that maybe this guys sort of sociopathic and extremely isolated, which may or may not be true but when you heard, like, "Nancy Sings" it was sort of a relief to know "Oh well, he's got some friends, you know, there's some other people out there."

**BYRON COLEY:**

By the time that that record had come out, people that liked Jandek had certain ideas about what the music was like. So already by that point, people who were into it were into the nuances. And sort of, you know, trying to figure out what was going on. And, some theories had started to be brunted around already that all the records had been recorded at one time as part of a therapy session by a manic-depressive in Houston, and that he was working in some record plant, and whenever he had enough money to press one up, he'd press one up... and that there was a finite number of them—at one time it was said that there were nineteen of them, and once that nineteenth one came out there wouldn't be any more, since they had been recorded in a short time span.

**JOHN TRUBEE:**

...and I asked him where he found these people that he recorded with because they weren't credited on the albums—I didn't know their names, and I posed that question to him and there was a minute or so of silence. It was uncomfortable. And then he said "I don't think it's right that I tell you that." And [it] was really strange and that simply fuels my wacky speculation that he met these people in a drug rehab place or a mental hospital or they're part of some quasi-conspiratorial criminal conspiracy, or drug dealers or some... you know when somebody doesn't reveal something as simple as who their associates are that worked with them on a creative project that really intrigues the hell out of you, and you start imagining all these dark and weird things.

**JOHN FOSTER:**

He wants people to hear it, and he wants to know there's some reaction to it, yet, he's not at all forthcoming about who he is, and in the music, it may all be there—

who this man is, and what he's saying but there's a wall or something that gets in the way of what it is that he's trying to share. I think this wall is part of why I had the feeling that he was mentally ill. It's that... he really just doesn't know how to reach someone. I don't think that he purposely puts up a wall, but I'm sure he's scared of people. And, I'm sure [by] the same token he'd like to have friends and he'd like to be normal like everyone else. But he just doesn't know how to communicate, so I think he has conflicted feelings about what he wants to get across. I know he knows how he wants to do it but he doesn't really know how far he wants to step and whether he really wants people to know him—and that's the push and pull of Jandek.

**SCREENTEXT:**

Down in a Mirror

**BROOKS MARTIN:**

I think listening to Jandek records late at night by yourself is kind of the most intimate Jandek experience you can have. Just maybe having a few glasses of wine and sitting down with Jandek and just listening... Your kind of revealed to the inner thinkings of his psyche and his soul.

**SUNG:**

*We can't deny/There's spirits in this house/  
You shut the door/the wind closes two more/  
I laugh a dark laugh, you smile and think about it/  
You'll come again/I'm sure you can't refuse/  
Your spirit's here/laying on a white table/  
I wish I could/Leave this room and lock the key/  
Someday I would/take hold your hand and let it be/  
In the skyway/a shining path for you and me/  
Come back, oh please come back  
I don't know what to do*

**SCREENTEXT:**

"Personal songs primarily for voice and guitar by 'Jandek' aka The Units...

a hopeless amateur whose limited, rather unique guitar-playing tends to meld with his whispery vocals, taking on a

trancelike ambience.

You really have to  
force yourself to  
concentrate on it,  
and I still haven't made the commitment."

John Foster - review of Jandek's 3<sup>rd</sup> album in Op  
Magazine

**SCREENTEXT:**

END, PART 1.

**SCREENTEXT:**

A Conversation

**GEORGE PARSONS:**

I read a review in OP Magazine, I believe. And the review was intriguing enough, I wrote to Corwood, and um... some fellow called. And it was very much that voice that, to me, that is on the records singing, talking, and it sounded like from the same room. It had that same feeling. And, I don't know how he got my phone number, I guess he just tracked it down. And, I think he was looking for information at that point, he'd just kind of started. I think it was around the time of the second or third album. And he was approaching it, I thought, surprisingly commercially. He was looking for places to sell his records. "How can I move a few units" you know... "how can I sell a few of these, do you know any record stores that would carry my records?" and I was very honest and said "hell no," you know. "I don't know anybody who'd touch this stuff... but good luck with it." And then we just went off and talked about other stuff. And I always felt like there was some sort of a... mutual camaraderie between us that [we could] kind of communicate. I kind of like getting deeper than small talk, and so we talked in a... I don't know, you know? It's like, not knowing each other we could be very honest with each other. I mentioned... something that was troubling me—and... he jumped on it—he said "well, you've *sinned*"... and I said "you're right." And it was true. And I've gotta say, I appreciate that moment probably more than anything else that we shared—was that forthrightness... because most people want to slough it off and make it easy. And I don't think that's in him at all. He has a pretty highly evolved sense of sin and

"right" and "wrong" and of moral conduct and I appreciate that in his work, I think that's something that doesn't really exist in the world that much anymore. He didn't let me off easy at all. And I think that makes him... a better person maybe.

**SCREENTEXT:**

Periods

**BYRON COLEY:**

There are a variety of different periods that the music moves through... which I came to regard in higher and higher terms as it accrued. I mean, when there was one record it was an anomaly—and it was interesting. But then there was the second album, and there was a third album—they really started to pick up pace in terms of coming out. It seemed to—all of a sudden—be something that was done very consciously. And they were being presented as a package. And it was being done with... these kind of art values that you wouldn't necessarily think of if [something] existed by itself. But, the general idea, up until, say, the last year or the last couple of years was that there were three groupings of Jandek records that seemed separate enough that you could figure out what they were in terms of being an early period, a middle period, and a later period. And the early period was really the idea that these were very hermetic recordings—they were all solo and they were acoustic and they were all—for the most part—single string guitar playing. There was that feel to them that they were spontaneous compositions rather than something that was thought out or... worked on too much.

**SUNG:**

*Settle back easy and/make up your mind to stay*

**BYRON COLEY:**

The second period kind of starts with the introduction of Nancy's vocals. There's this slow accretion of other sound elements—when the drums come in, when there starts to be electric guitar and some other things like that—where, all of a sudden, what's been so... involuted in terms of... all of its emotions are turned inwards, all of a sudden you get this... flowering in a way, of the music. They're just out of control almost... I mean, they're really fun—really these joyful... pieces. Dionysian... stuff in comparison to what had been going on previous[ly].

**SUNG:**

*We are here (we are here)/in earth/in light/  
In sky/ in magic/ in rain/ in love*

**BYRON COLEY:**

And then you sort of hit the wall of "Blue Corpse." I mean, from the opening notes of it you feel that something... is going on here. This is such a change. There's a change of mood, there's a change of tempo, there's a change of instrumentation that seems disconnect[ed]. It's like the bottom dropped out again.

**SUNG:**

*I passed by the building/you were working in*

**BYRON COLEY:**

But it's not a return, really, to the form of the original stuff, either. It contains elements of the second portion. But... again, it seems as though... this is music that is internally based. But it seems like that starts a third period of stuff... in which... there are electric instruments and there are some other people playing on stuff. But it's not the raging material that had been going on during the second period... the first real electric stuff.

**SUNG:**

*Rain's pouring down in windows/ and I'm sitting here in  
Madison/ trying to figure out where you are*

**BYRON COLEY:**

So if you want a recap: the first batch of records are these incredibly weird, hermetic, acoustic records—then there are these explosive electric records that seemed to be... the idea of "turning outward" and not having to compress all this stuff anymore. And then the bottom falls out and it's back to the more morose original material, but it's still using other people, using some of the techniques that were evolved in the second portion. And then you get into the... those acapella records—those, to me, are particularly bizarre.

**SUNG:**

*I been through your nursery rhyme/  
I been through your nursery rhyme*

**BYRON COLEY:**

Some of them seemed like... creepy messages left on an answering machine. I thought they were really powerful—but I found it not entertaining to listen to, at all. And they sort of stand by themselves as a trinity of... I don't really know what.

**SUNG:**

*I say "let me up"/Please... let me up/you...*

**SCREENTEXT:**

On Mystery

**GARY PIG GOLD:**

Some people will interpret that he's very closed off and he doesn't want people that close. I feel the opposite, I feel that he's welcoming people in. He wants people to think about him, he wants people to talk about him, and I've never talked this long about anyone before and I've been doing interviews for years, and I couldn't think of this much to say about Dylan, or Brian Wilson, or the Beatles, or Elvis, because it's already there. But with Jandek, we have to talk about it, we have to talk about other peoples' interpretations, and we have to try to get... not "the" picture, but various pictures of Jandek.

**BROOKS MARTIN:**

When I'm talking about Jandek... I can't help but talk about the mystery of Jandek, first, because when I've actually played the music for people telling them that—I find that they're much less receptive to the music.

**DR. DEMENTO:**

Obviously the mystery of this guy is what's most interesting about him. Simply that he's continued so long, putting out all this stuff and so little is known about him—he's such a cipher. I think that has become more interesting than anything inherent in his music itself. And I suspect most of the people who might be counted on as his fans feel pretty much the same way, when you get down to it.

**SUNG:**

*Didn't get too close/wouldn't get too close.*

**ANGELA SAWYER:**

It had to do with wanting to make records that were anonymous in some way... or that the actual author was not seen—and that's part of the point of Jandek's thing in general—there's kind of a "Wizard of Oz" thing where the person that you see, "Jandek", is a made up person. The reason I think that's neat is because that way you can even control that. Not only is he in control of the record—he's in control of "who the artist is."

**BROOKS MARTIN:**

Jandek has--in not creating a public personality--created one of the stronger public personalities of somebody of his musical ilk... probably the strongest. Somebody that makes music that's that "outsider" can't really have more appeal than Jandek does. Jandek has captured the imagination of more people than he probably ever imagined when he started putting out those records. I mean, if he did imagine that as many people would be interested in his music as are, then he really is crazy.

**JOHN TRUBEE:**

When someone's intrigued about something and they want to research it they go and get whatever information they can get, and if they don't get information about it their mind tends to connect pieces together—connect some sort of pattern or order. The human brain is an amazing pattern recognition device—it even puts patterns on things that don't deserve patterns—sees order where there is no order. Man is a psychotic animal in that sense.

**GARY PIG GOLD:**

You can like it... you can hate it... you can like it again the next day, because he's put such honesty, but such a blank, perhaps unfinished canvas out there. And it's like radio [was] in its prime, you have to project your imagination and your thoughts onto that. And that's what I do, and I think that's what a lot of people do with Jandek's music.

**DR. DEMENTO:**

When listening to a body of music you always wonder what it reveals about the artist. Of course it depends entirely on the artist, for some [they] lay their heart on their sleeve, for others it's just an act. For some what they express in their music is inseparable from the way their brain operates in daily life. They'll go to the supermarket and they'll see a pretty girl and they'll

write a song about the emotions that girl stirs up in them. That's been going on as long as there's been songs. [For] others of course, the music is just an act. You get somebody that writes songs that are very violent, and then they turn out to be a very mild-mannered, pleasant chap when you get to talk to them.

**NILS BERNSTEIN:**

I think people should read what they want to into the Jandek records and have the music however they want. I think it's a little tricky when people start making judgments about who Jandek is based on these records—and I think it's a romantic idea, and it keeps him as this freak in a bedroom in rural Texas that nobody knows about. I just... I... I... I think it's just a little too romantic to me for people to pick up a Jandek record put it on and go "OK, I know who this guy is." It's not that literal.

**CALVIN JOHNSON:**

I don't really buy the whole "recluse" thing. Just because someone chooses not to participate in mass media, does not mean that there's something wrong with that person. I think that there's something wrong with our society if we define a person [in] that way. I think the fact that he makes his art [is] good enough for him. He doesn't need any other validation beyond doing it himself.

**RICHIE UNTERBERGER:**

You would have to assume that there's a lot of loneliness in his life. Even if the loneliness doesn't make him sad... he projects a very solitary feel. Not just in the way that the albums were recorded, but in the way he lives his life. You can't imagine him having too many friends. But... maybe this is a persona he feels most comfortable presenting... maybe if he has a really stable job and he has a wife he doesn't feel comfortable talking about that—we might only be seeing one side of Jandek through his art... that's a possibility that I've thought about, as well.

**BYRON COLEY:**

If you accept the fact that these records are art, then you have to acknowledge the fact that they may not have anything to do with real life. It's easy to confuse and conflate art and reality and it happens all the time.

Especially on something that's viewed as being as personal as these Jandek records. It's an appealing thought, but it doesn't mean it's true. The process is to have this stuff appear realistic, because you're creating something that you want people to have people feel viscerally, and you want them to relate to it in a way that transcends them thinking that you created it—that they're involved in a real experience. That's a very important part of creating art successfully. It's much more amusing for a listener to think that they're not—that these are real "slice of life" type things, but in the lack of anybody coming forward and saying that they are, it's really just speculation, and anybody's theory is as good as anyone else's in that regard.

**SCREENTEXT:**

The Interview

**SUNG:**

*Doom/pending doom/pending doom/pending doom/pending  
doom/pending doom/New York to Pacific Sea/Two travelers  
approach/Unconscious thread/in shield of friendship/ on  
parallel course/master and navigator*

**SCREENTEXT:**

TEXAS MONTHLY

AUGUST 1999

Jandek and Me

Why is he a cult hero to deejays and record collectors—and why is he such a recluse? I wanted to know, so I tried to find him. And I did, in an upscale Houston neighborhood. And we drank beer. **By Katy Vine**

**KATY VINE:**

Well I was in Houston in front of this person who looked exactly like the person who's on all the covers, but sort of an older version of that person. Very distinguished looking—he was wearing a white, pressed shirt, black tie, black pants, spiffy black shoes... he had cufflinks that were square silver with a little black square in the center.

I started asking him if he was involved with Corwood Industries. There would be a long pause and it was the

summertime, Houston in the summer is boiling hot—and he just starts sweating like crazy. I just said “we don’t have to talk about this if you don’t want to but I came to Houston to try to find out some things about this and if you can answer anything about this it would help me tremendously.” He said “Well... you came all this way. I have to meet some friends at a bar... do you drink beer?”

We went to this bar and met, I think, four of his friends who were dressed exactly like he was, which was really weird—you start thinking “is this a setup?” I thought “this seem[s] so unexpected” and then you almost start thinking the whole thing is staged.

I didn’t know how to conduct the interview because I was told that he didn’t really want to talk about the Corwood Industries project or Jandek at all. So I just decided at this point, you know... have a good time. So he started talking about... allergies or something? And, you know, movies and... food and a bunch of other topics. Maybe it was just because the whole setup seemed absurd—to meet somebody and the questions that were most important to you[r] being there are just not allowed. So it was a setup for real comedy. Once in a while I would try to ask a question about Jandek to see [if] I could just sneak it in... and he would just stop and sort of look around—and the pause would be so long that I would just crack up. Like “this is just... weird.” And, for the most part I really didn’t get any information about the music, and on the other hand, it didn’t matter.

**SCREENTEXT:**

Last Songs

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

There are three other songs that I’m particularly interested in talking about, and they’re last songs on records, and they all have a sense of finality—they all have the sense that “this is the last song on the last Jandek record.” *Lost Cause* Has a 20-minute song on its second side—the entire second side is occupied by a song called “The Electric End.” Which, after a relatively sedate album, [is] 20 minutes of... noise. Of just taking the guitar and cranking it up and making a gigantic, horrible noise with it. He screams a little bit towards the end, and there’s something very, very final sounding about it—like he’s saying “goodbye” to everything.

A few months later he made another record. A few years later there's another "last song." It's the long piano song "the Beginning." "the Beginning" is the name of the record, what a perfect name for a final record. I think at some point on that album he actually says something like "I'm ready for the house." I'm like "Ok, we've brought it full circle." At the end of it, there's this long instrumental piano piece. He's never really played piano before on any of the records. The piano is as out-of-tune as his guitar, it's as out-of-tune as anything else he's ever done. It's unmistakably his playing. His sense of rhythm, his sense of just hitting a bunch of notes and seeing how they sound and letting that sound linger.

I'm like "Ok, this wraps up the Jandek story... this is the end of that." And then of course [in] six months he makes another record. The record that came after that was the first acapella record that he made... the first of his spoken word records. And the last piece on that, after two very long pieces is a little minute and a half long piece called "I went outside." It's this absolute, completely distilled deathbed blues, there aren't even any notes, there's just his enunciation. He just says:

**SUNG/SCREENTEXT:**

*Cold, dark and lonely, I looked around for my shoes/*

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

And he says that four times. So he's gone past the blues repetition and he's repeated it again. Then he starts yelling, or yelping, or something... or *exclaiming*.

**SUNG/SCREENTEXT:**

*I put 'em on/I went for a walk/in the snow and ice/  
So cold!*

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

And the record cuts off right there. I'm like "that's it, that's what he's been reduced to. That's all that's left. That's his voice, and that could be the last Jandek record." And then six months later he made another one.

**DR. DEMENTO:**

How will the Jandek story end, if Jandek is a movie? I guess what I consider most true to life would be that he just keeps on putting out these records until he runs out of money, or gets tired of it. But I suppose another scenario that would make a better movie would be if eventually he finds some way to connect to a larger audience, and they decide to make him a star. Then comes the huge conflict that would take [up] half the film of whether he comes out and reveals who he really is, or whether he remains a mystery for all time.

**SUNG:**

*I thought I would send you/the last song I wrote*

**ERIC SCHLITTLER:**

I think that Jandek will continue on for quite a while. Maybe not indefinitely, but I don't really ever see it stopping anytime soon. And if it did I think that the albums would just become all the more valuable and rare and special.

**SUNG:**

*The last time I saw you/was I don't know when*

**BEN EDMONDS:**

I sort of have a feeling that he's one of those people who [are] probably going to just keep on putting out albums until he gets just too old and decrepit to even play guitar or sing, and maybe we'll just see one every other year then.

**SUNG:**

*Just look around/you're living in the new town*

**DOUGLAS WOLK:**

I don't know what the end of Jandek is. The end of Jandek—I hope—won't be until he dies. I hope it won't be until after that. I hope there will be new Jandek records coming out once a year forever, and I'll look at them, and listen to them and I'll say "he's making real progress on this one."

**SUNG:**

*Hey listen can you hear me/just because you're near me/  
Let's pretend there's a good chance/*

**SCREENTEXT:**

In 2003, a quarter-century after "Ready for the House," Corwood releases the 32<sup>nd</sup> Jandek album, "I Threw You Away."

It Features acoustic guitar accompanied by a solo voice, a return to the sound of his earlier albums.

The album cover shows a city street leading to a cathedral.

Within days of its release, fans identify the setting as North Cathedral in Cork, Ireland.

They begin to speculate about Jandek's mysterious trip to Europe.

**CALVIN JOHNSON:**

I've been blessed with knowing a number of artists who have become well known in some way or other. So seeing it in different contexts—the person before the notoriety and after—which is real? That's a basic, fundamental question... what part is real? Because when you encounter people that only know the person from their fame they have a totally different idea who that person is... or was, than you might.

**SCREENTEXT:**

Icon

**CALVIN JOHNSON:**

...and if you try to contradict the icon... people just don't hear it. They just don't hear it. It's like saying "well actually Columbus didn't discover America... there [were] these other people, and there were these people, and all these other people came before him... but it's still going to be "Columbus, the guy who discovered America." No matter how many times... there might be some disclaimers "Columbus discovered America, although there had been other people who were there before him." Which means that he didn't discover America?! But it's always going to be "Columbus, the guy who discovered America." That's going to be the definition of "Columbus." And he's an icon, and that's what his icon stands for to a lot of people. And I think when you get to be "famous" there is some sort of iconography that is attached to you

which is always going to be there no matter how many asterisks people might put on there.

**JAKE AUSTEN:**

I do a lot of work at my magazine and on the TV show—I end up talking to a lot of icons or outsider artists or weird people. And, while all of them are usually as interesting as you'd think they are, and their work always stands up, they also are very regular people at the same time. They [have to] go to the hospital when they're sick and they [have to] eat... this way and they have to go to chain stores and fast food places just because that's all [something] everyone has to do.

**SUNG:**

*Worst I had to tell you was I followed you here/  
First you made me promise that I wouldn't leave/  
Then I found my freedom/  
Gone floating down a river to Madrid/  
Lost some lovely people on the way/  
You gave them back, I heard you say/  
You're my only lover*

**JAKE AUSTEN:**

So you have this image of somebody, and then they become very normalized when you have to interact with them, which isn't always a bad thing, but I don't think I'm that interested... I wouldn't want to meet this gentleman and have him become just a regular guy to me. Not that he's some Superman or something, but [there's] a purity to not having to think about him eating a Whopper®.

**BROOKS MARTIN:**

I want the mystery to remain alive. I would feel cheated and robbed if all of a sudden I found out who Jandek was and he was just some guy that works at a record pressing plant and it was a big joke on me. I don't want finality. I [just] want it to stop when it stops.

**GARY PIG GOLD:**

Bob Dylan said that if he bought a loaf of bread, that doesn't entitle him to go knock on the breadmaker's door a couple of weeks later and ask him about the bread. Because it's just put out there for whatever reason. You can either eat the bread, and enjoy the bread, or try the bread, and never buy that bread again, or ignore the bread altogether. Jandek may invite you to... try to find

out more about him but I think he knows that although the doors may be open on some of his album covers, the door to overanylization is always closed. If you can't get it immediately... you're never going to get it.

**THE INTERVIEW:**

**JT:**

One of the reasons I was interested in talking to you, and I don't know how you feel about this, but this is the reason I'm calling up. I know a guy named Edward Rasen who used to be a photographer for Penthouse Magazine. About a week ago he gave me a call and said that he wanted me to write for a music magazine that he's working with through Penthouse called "Spin." He wanted me to come up with various ideas. So I suggested Jandek, or Jandek records, and so forth. I was interested in writing a short piece—not more than about five hundred words. I guess you don't like to be interviewed, but I'd like to write a little about your records, anyway, if that's ok.

**JANDEK:**

No problem about the records.

**JT:**

Pardon?

**JANDEK:**

No problem about the records.

**JT:**

Ok, but you don't want any personal information printed or anything?

**JANDEK:**

Rather not, John, to be honest with you.

**JT:**

Right. OK. So... Corwood Industries is you. Is that correct?

**JANDEK:**

It's a company on record at the city hall here in Houston of which I'm the sole proprietor.

**JT:**

Oh, I see. OK so anything going to the PO Box is actually you and you answer it and run it and so forth.

**JANDEK:**

Yeah

**JT:**

Well when you strum the guitar is there any set tuning or is it a tuning that you made up? What would you call the guitar tuning?

**JANDEK:**

Well... I guess the epitome of the whole thing was that there was a review in Op Magazine—and thank goodness most of the people except, probably, John Foster gave me pretty good reviews in that magazine—[as a] matter of fact, the first review I got was what kept me going, because I did one album and then for two years I didn't do anything, and then I had a review from Phillip Milstein in Op Magazine.

**JT:**

Uh-huh

**JANDEK:**

After I read that, I just figured "well, I better keep going" and that's sort of what kept me going.

**JT:**

Right

**JANDEK:**

Because I got a thousand of the first one done--I thought I had a pretty good thing, but I didn't get any response, so... Anyway, they had a review in there of one of the more recent ones that [said] "May he never tune his guitar." And a lot of other reviews would make reference to total lack of tuning. The fact of the matter is, [that] I tune the guitar regularly.

**JT:**

Uh-huh

**JANDEK:**

...at least before each session.

**JT:**

Uh-huh

**JANDEK:**

...and frequently within the session, between cuts, but I don't tune it according to... I just tune it so that it sounds the way I want it to sound. I don't tune according to scales or things.

**JT:**

You tune it by what sounds good to your ear?

**JANDEK:**

Yeah, uh-huh

**JT:**

That's fascinating. That's fascinating.

Also, the name 'Jandek.' Now you explained that to me once, and I forgot it and...

**JANDEK:**

Originally I had called the thing 'the Units'... U-N-I-T-S.

**JT:**

Right

**JANDEK:**

The first album, I had a thousand done under that name.

**JT:**

Right

**JANDEK:**

...but I sent some to a record store in San Francisco and I got a... real nasty letter from somebody who sent me registered mail an entire portfolio of his group called 'the Units,' and that if I didn't cease and desist using it they were going to sue me. So I said "well, to heck with this" and I just tried to find out some name that nobody would use.

**JT:**

Right

**JANDEK:**

And... it was January, and I was speaking with somebody on the phone named 'Decker.'

**JT:**

Uh-huh

**JANDEK:**

So I just combined the two.

**JT:**

Uh-huh... that's great. Jan-Dek

I noticed that you have some electric instruments such as electric guitar and... they sound like, drums... like somebody on drums. Were you overdubbing the drums or [was] somebody playing them along with you?

**JANDEK:**

I got together with another individual who played the drums and did some vocals and I did guitar and vocals, and I think that there was a third individual who did some bass.

**JT:**

But you don't remember their names or anything?

**JANDEK:**

Uh...

**JT:**

Oh you don't have to give me their names, but they're friends of yours or just acquaintances, or..? How do you run into these people who would actually play on your tapes?

**JANDEK:**

Those people... I don't remember their full names--they had nicknames that I remember.

**JT:**

Uh-huh. ...and how did you meet them? How did they come to play?

**JANDEK:**

Uh...

I don't think I can answer that. How did I meet them?

I don't think it'd be right to answer that.

**JT:**

Oh, Ok. That's perfectly ok.

In the future you're going to keep releasing these records? How regularly will you release them?

**JANDEK:**

I figure I can't go less than two a year. If I do I'll really go into obscurity—which may be the case, anyway.

**JT:**

Right

**JANDEK:**

Two to three a year should be my target... I can afford that. I don't have many hobbies or anything.

**JT:**

Uh-huh

**JANDEK:**

I've only sold about a hundred and fifty copies in the last five years.

**JT:**

A hundred and fifty copies of all eight records?

**JANDEK:**

Yeah. I think there's nine now.

**JT:**

Uh-huh

I noticed [that] in much of your work you talk about natural things... naturalistic things. You talk about the rain, and there's a title called "Liquids Flow to the Sea." What is the central message that you're expressing? Sort of the beauty of nature, things of that nature?

**JANDEK:**

Uh... That's a tough one. That's a tough one.

**JT:**

Well, I think that it's almost inexpressible. I think the best thing one can do is go back and listen to the

pieces themselves, because they speak for themselves. But I was curious if you had any elaboration or... self analysis of why you write what you write. But that's almost an unfair question because it's very difficult to explain. You just do it spontaneously. I know a lot of my work I do spontaneously without really analyzing it.

**JANDEK:**

Yeah, yeah. I think, probably, the cut that I think has the most impact out of everything so far—and everybody has their own things that they like—the one that I thought had the best poetry and everything was a cut on *Six and Six* called... Ah... what was the name of it? "I Knew You Would Leave."

**JT:**

Ok... "I Knew You Would Leave"

Does that refer to anything specific, or...?

**JANDEK:**

Ah, it's just about... you know... someone that... left. The inevitable... ebb and flow of people into your life.

**JT:**

Right

**JANDEK:**

...and someone that had left quite totally.

**JT:**

Right. That's a universal phenomenon, I think everybody knows that.

**JANDEK:**

Yeah, I think so.

**SUNG:**

*The rocks crumble/unto dust they die/  
Once hard stuff of mountains/now soft powder among the  
sands/  
Who dares crush a rock?/oh rock, no rock/  
Reduced to the winds/*

**JANDEK:**

That word "The Rocks Crumble" is the whole thing. A rock, that was one thing... eventually crumbles either by

deterioration from age or water, or a sledgehammer—eventually it crumbles into sand on the sea. That's what happens to it, and what was once a rock then kind of goes into sand and eventually evaporates into the air just like water does. And that's sort of what happens when somebody leaves. There's a presence and then they evaporate and they remain a big presence in your mind like big pieces of rock and then that sort of filters down and... they're still there—what was once that rock is always going to be part of the universe—what was once that person is always going to be part of the psyche of your mind. You may dream about someone you knew when you were seven years old when you're thirty-seven, or twenty-seven, or seventeen, and they're always there. Or maybe when you're eighty nine, right before you die, you may think of somebody you knew when you were ten. It's like—they crumble, and they disintegrate and they go but they're still part of the universe somehow, whether it's material or mental. But, the rocks crumble/unto dust they die/once hard stuff of mountains/now soft powder among the sands.

**SUNG:**

Magic carpets fly to your planets  
 You have no place on earth  
 Who is it creates sand soliloquy  
 Is it everyone  
 Nay, you are a heathen  
 Erupting words of pretense  
 Oh Lord let my hand be guided  
 Sometimes I know it not  
 As the air, no air is still  
 And the weary sounds refrain  
 Now the hyena cackles  
 His clutch has found my heart bleeding