For my wife, Stephanie, because you love me — KA

For Garrett and the boys — MRH
Part One: 

Hollywood
There’s this dream

I’ve been having
about my mother
that scares
the holy night
out of me,
and each time I wake
from it
I’m afraid to open
my eyes
and face
the world that awaits, the
fractured world
that used to make sense,
but now seems
disjointed— islands of possibility
that float by— like
a thousand puzzle pieces
that just don’t fit
together anymore.

So I think
of Chapel
and grab hold
of the only other thing
that matters.
My guitar.
Strings

Mom used to play
this game
on the tour bus
to help us
go to sleep:

Who's the best?

We’d go through
every instrument:
piano, drums, horns.
Our favorite was guitar.

My sister, Storm, always said
Eddie Van Halen
was her favorite,
probably ’cause

he once made her
pancakes
at 4 am
in a Marriott kitchen.

Ask Rutherford and
he’d say,
I’m the best in the world,
I’m outta this world.
Electric soul brother interstellar man,
which is ironic
because he was trying
to quote
Lenny Kravitz, who

Mom would say
was in her top three
along with Jimi Hendrix
and me,
just to piss him off.
Chapel
is the great song
in my life.
The sweet arpeggio
in my solo.

Her lines bring
color and verve
to my otherwise
crazy life.

Without her
I’d be a one-man band,
with a played-out sound
and no audience.

The magic
we compose
is endless,
immortal.

We could play
together
for centuries.
If I’m lucky.

And I love
the music
our bodies
make
when we’re dancing.

But there is one thing
about my girlfriend
I don’t understand.
She says
she doesn’t believe
in sex
before marriage,
but she never
wants to get married.
When I ask her, Where is this all going, then?
she likes to
get real close,
eyelash close,
and say things like
*Let’s live in the moment, babe*
or *we don’t need labels*,

and then
she kisses me
like we own the world
and nothing else matters.

It’s funny how
going nowhere
feels like it’s
going someplace

fast.
Texts from Chapel

7:37 pm
On your way stop by
Best Buy pls. Headphones broke.
Red or purple. K?

7:47 pm
They finally left. I
hate hiding. Wish my dad
wasn’t so CRAY. He

7:48 pm
thinks all the things
the tabloids say
about your family

7:48 pm
are true. He doesn’t know
you’re different, Blade.
He thinks

7:48 pm
you’re going to
drag me into sex
and drugs.

7:49 pm
Hurry up and get here.
They’re at Bible study
’til 10 . . .
Leaving in ten minutes

Sorry. Working on a song.

*Beats* or *Bose?*

And tell the Reverend I

only did drugs once.
The Show

My father,
Rutherford Morrison,
can’t stand
to be away
from the stage.
He has always craved
the spotlight,
needs it
like a drug,
posing, posturing, profiling
before millions—
an electric prophet, or so he thinks,
capturing concert worshipers
in the vapors
of his breath,
as if his voice
was preparing them
for rapture.

My sister and I
have always lived
under the stage,
beside it,
behind it.
The After-Party

There was always another party.
More loud music.
More loud groupies.
Booze
and still more groupies.

I was nine.

He grabbed me and held
a sizzling cig
in front
of my face.
Only it wasn’t a cig.
He blew smoke
circles around me
and laughed.

My boy.

The band uncles got
in on the joke too,
and I stuck my tongue
in a shot glass
full of whiskey,
soaked it up
like a dirty sponge.

I loved making them laugh.

The whiskey hurt
my throat and
stung my eyes.
But the laughs
were epic.

Before I knew it
I was taking my finger
and dragging it
across powdered
sugar that looked
like ant snow trails
on the table.
Rutherford was too busy
kissing his ego
to notice.
I tasted it once,
twice, and
a few more times,
trying to find
that sugar sweet.

But, it wasn’t sweet.
It was salty
bitter
and it coated
my mouth
in numbness.

I woke up
in the ICU
frightened
and embarrassed
by my father,
who sat by
my bedside
crying
in handcuffs.
Hollywood Report

Rutherford Morrison has kept rock alive for twenty-five years.
His band, The Great Whatever, is credited with introducing a new flavor of
Hard Rock to America with the release of their triple-platinum album,
*The History of Headaches*. Even after an acrimonious band breakup,
Morrison continued to have an illustrious solo career, selling thirty million albums worldwide.

His music has lasted the test of time . . . until now.
Eight years ago, he was arrested for reckless endangerment of his child,
and he hasn’t released an album since.
Most recently he’s managed three DUls, and a drug overdose
that almost sent him to a rock-star reunion with Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse.

Rutherford may not have much time left before he falls flat on 12:00. Midnight can be so cruel.

Who doesn’t feel sorry for his kids, left answering the hard questions, like

> *How does it feel*
> *to be the daughter*
> *to be the son*
> *of a fallen rock star?*
Who Am I?

I am
the wretched son
of a poor
rich man.

I do not hate
my life.

I am not like
Sebastian Carter,
who found
his father kissing
his girlfriend
and now hates
his life.

My life is, hmmm,
inconvenient.

But
if it weren’t for Chapel . . .