

The Visible Man Chuck Klosterman

From Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs: Chuck Klosterman IV: and Eating the Dinosaur, these essays are now available in this ebook collection for fans, in particular, of Klosterman’s sportswriting.

Originally collected in Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Film and Television, this essay is about The Real World.

A savage, funny, and mysteriously poignant saga by a renowned author at the height of his powers. Lionel Asbo, a terrifying yet weirdly loyal thug (self-named after England’s notorious Anti-Social Behaviour Order), has always looked out for his ward and nephew, the orphaned Desmond Pepperdine. . . . He provides him with fatherly career advice (always carry a knife, for example) and is determined they should share the joys of pit bulls (fed with lots of Tabasco sauce), Internet porn, and all manner of more serious criminality. Des, on the other hand, desires not to protect a family so close to the death of him). But just as he begins to lead a gentler, healthier life, his uncle—once again in a London prison—wins £140 million in the lottery and upon his release hires a public relations firm and begins dating a cannily ambitious topless model and “poet.” Strangely, however, Lionel’s True nature remains uncompromised while his problems, and therefore also Desmond’s, seem only to multiply.

Originally collected in Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Media and Culture, this essay is about porn.

A Heavy Metal Odyssey In Rural North Dakota

Prairie Silence

The Mirage

Grappling with Villains (Real and Imagined)

Supersthetics

The Real and the Coreal

A rural expatriate’s struggle to reconcile family, home, love, and faith with the silence of the prairie land and its people
Melanie Hofferf longs for her North Dakota childhood home, with its grain trucks and empty main streets. A land where she imagines standing at the bottom of the ancient lake that preceded the prairie: crop rows become the patterned sand ripples of the lake floor; trees are the large alien plants reaching for the light; and the sky is the water’s vast surface, reflecting the sun. Like most rural kids, she followed the out-migration pattern to a better life. The prairie is a hard place to stay—particularly if you are gay, and your home state is the last to know. For Hofferf, returning home has not been easy. When the farmers ask if she’s found a “fella,” rather than explain that—actually—she dates women, she stops breathing and changes the subject. Meanwhile, as time passes, her hometown continues to lose more buildings to decay, growing to resemble the mouth of an old woman missing teeth. This loss prompts Hofferf to take a break from the city and spend a harvest season at her family’s farm. While home, working alongside her dad in the shop and listening to her mom warn, “Honey, you do not want to be a farmer,” Hofferf meets the people of the prairie. Her stories about returning home and exploring abandoned towns are woven into a coming-of-age tale about falling in love, making peace with faith, and belonging to a place where neighbors are as close as blood but are often unable to share their deepest truths. In this evocative memoir, Hofferf offers a deeply personal and poignant meditation on land and community, taking readers on a journey of self-acceptance and reconciliation.

Takes a humorous look at expectations versus reality in pop culture, sports, and media, exploring such topics as pop culture’s obsession with time travel and what Kurt Cobain and David Koresh have in common.

After a bestselling and acclaimed diversion into fiction, Chuck Klosterman, author of Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs, returns to the form in which he’s been spectacularly successful with a collection of essays about our consumption of pop culture and sports. Q: What is this book about? A: Well, that’s difficult to say. I haven’t read it yet—I’ve just picked it up and casually glanced at the back cover. There clearly isn’t a plot. I’ve heard there’s a lot of stuff about time travel in this book, and quite a bit about violence and Garth Brooks and why Germans don’t laugh when they’re inside grocery stores. Ralph Nader and Ralph Sampson play significant roles. I think there are several pages about Rear Window and college football and Mad Men and why Rivers Cuomo prefers having sex with Asian women. Supposedly there’s a chapter outlining all the things the Uahombler was right about, but perhaps I’m misinformed. Q: Is there a larger theme? A: Oh, something about reality. “What is reality,” maybe? No, that’s not it. Not exactly. I get the sense that most of the core questions dwell on the way media perception constructs a fake reality that ends up becoming more meaningful than whatever actually happened. Also, Lady Gaga. Q: Should I read this book? A: Probably. Do you see a clear relationship between the Branch Davidian disaster and the recording of Nirvana’s In Utero? Does Barack Obama make you want to drink Pepsi? Does ARBA remind you of AC/DC? If so, you probably don’t need to read this book. You probably wrote this book. But I suspect everybody else will totally love it, except for the ones who totally hate it.

Microdoses of the straight dope, stories so true they had to be wrapped in fiction for our own protection, from the best-selling author of But What If We’re Wrong? A man flying first class discovers a puma in the lavatory. A new coach of a small-town Oklahoma high school football team installs an offense comprised of only one, very special, play. A man explains to the police why he told the employee of his local bodega that his colleague looked like the lead singer of Depeche Mode, a statement that may or may not have led in some way to a violent crime. A college professor discusses with his friend his difficulties with the new generation of students. An obscure power pop band wrestles with its new-found fame when its song “Blizzard of Summer” becomes an anthem for white supremacists. A couple considers getting a medical procedure that will transfer the pain of childbirth from the woman to her husband. A woman interviews a hit man about killing her husband but is shocked by the method he proposes. A man is recruited to join a secret government research team investigating why coin flips are no longer exactly 50/50. A man sees a whale struck by lightning, and knows that everything about his life has to change. A lawyer grapples with the unintended side effects of a veterinarian’s rabies vaccination. Fair warning: Raised in Captivity does not slot into a smooth preexisting groove. If Saul Steinberg and Italo Calvino had adopted a child from a Romanian orphanage and raised him on Gary Larsen and Thomas Bernhard, he would still be nothing like Chuck Klosterman. They might be good company, though. Funny, wise and weird in equal measure, Raised in Captivity bids fair to be one of the most original and exciting story collections in recent memory, a fever graph of our deepest unvoiced hopes, fears and preoccupations. Ceaselessly inventive, hostile to cerniness in all its forms, and mean only to the things that really deserve it, it marks a cosmic leap forward for one of our most consistently interesting writers.

Fictional Nonfiction

The Billy Joel Essays

A Decade of Curious People and Dangerous Ideas

“Ha ha,” he said. “Ha ha.”

An Essay from Eating the Dinosaur

State of England

Originally collected in Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Film and Television, this essay is about the Left Behind series.

Explores a range of modern cultural phenomenon, including Internet pornography, tribute bands, baseball rivalries, and reality television.

A mind-bending novel in which an alternate history of 9/11 and its aftermath uncovers startling truths about America and the Middle East 11/9/2001: Christian fundamentalists hijack four jetliners. They fly two into the Tigris & Euphrates World Trade Towers in Baghdad, and a third into the Arab Defense Ministry in Riyadh. The fourth plane, believed to be bound for Mecca, is brought down by its passengers. The United Arab States declares a War on Terror. Arabian and Persian troops invade the Eastern Seaboard and establish a Green Zone in Washington, D.C. . . . Summer, 2009: Arab Homeland Security agent

Mustafa al Baghdadi interrogates a captured suicide bomber. The prisoner claims that the world they are living in is a mirage—in the real world, America is a superpower, and the Arab states are just a collection of “backward third-world countries.” A search of the bomber’s apartment turns up a copy of The New York Times, dated September 12, 2001, that appears to support his claim. Other captured terrorists have been telling the same story. The president wants answers, but Mustafa soon discovers he’s not the only interested party. The gangster Saddam Hussein is conducting his own investigation. And the head of the Senate Intelligence Committee—a war hero named Osama bin Laden—will stop at nothing to hide the truth. As Mustafa and his colleagues venture deeper into the unsettling world of terrorism, politics, and espionage, they are confronted with questions without any rational answers, and the terrifying possibility that their world is not what it seems. Acclaimed novelist Matt Ruff has created a shadow world that is eerily recognizable but, at the same time, almost unimaginable. Gripping, subversive, and unexpectedly moving, The Mirage probes our deepest convictions and most arresting fears.

Originally collected in Eating the Dinosaur and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Pop, this essay is about truth.

Raised in Captivity

Fargo Rock City

Chuck Klosterman IV

The Amazing McNugget Diet

50 New Hypertetical Questions for More Strange Conversations

Lionel Asbo

Originally collected in Chuck Klosterman IV and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Rock, this essay is about Led Zeppelin.

Originally collected in Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and Chuck Klosterman IV, and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Pop, these essays are about Billy Joel.

An instant New York Times bestseller! From the bestselling author of But What If We’re Wrong, a wise and funny reckoning with the decade that gave us slacker/grunge irony about the sin of trying too hard, during the greatest shift in human consciousness of any decade in American history. It was long ago, but not as long as it seems: The Berlin Wall fell and the Twin Towers collapsed. In between, one presidential election was allegedly decided by Ross Perot while another was plausibly decided by Ralph Nader. In the beginning, almost every name and address was listed in a phone book, and everyone answered their landlines because you didn’t know who it was. By the end, exposing someone’s address was an act of emotional violence, and nobody picked up their new cell phone if they didn’t know who it was. The 90s brought about a revolution in the human condition we’re still groping to understand. Happily, Chuck Klosterman is more than up to the job. Beyond epiphenomena like “Cop Killer” and Titanic, and Zima, there were wholesale shifts in how society was perceived: the rise of the internet, pre-9/11 politics, and the paradoxical belief that nothing was more humiliating than trying too hard. Pop culture accelerated without the aid of a machine that remembered everything, generating an odd comfort in never being certain about anything. On a 90’s Thursday night, more people watched any random episode of Seinfeld than the finale of Game of Thrones. But nobody thought that was important; if you missed it, you simply missed it. It was the last era that held to the idea of a true, hegemonic mainstream before it all began to fracture, whether you found a home in it or defined yourself against it. In The Nineties, Chuck Klosterman makes a home in all of it: the film, the music, the sports, the TV, the politics, the changes regarding race and class and sexuality, the yin/yang of Oprah and Alan Greenspan. In perhaps no other book ever written would a sentence like, “The video for ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit’ was not more consequential than the reunification of Germany” make complete sense. Chuck Klosterman has written a multi-dimensional masterpiece, a work of synthesis so smart and delightful that future historians might well refer to this entire period as Klostermanian.

Originally collected in Eating the Dinosaur and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Media and Culture, this essay is about advertising.

Mysterious Days

The Jack Factor

Through a Glass, Blindly

A Collection of Previously Published Essays

Eating the Dinosaur

It Will Shock You How Much It Never Happened

The author recounts his more than 6,500-mile journey across America, during which he visited the sites of famous rock star deaths and experienced philosophical changes of perspective.

One-of-a-kind cultural critic and New York Times bestselling author Chuck Klosterman “offers up great facts, interesting cultural insights, and thought-provoking moral calculations in this look at our love affair with the anti-hero” (New York magazine). Chuck Klosterman, “The Ethicist” for The New York Times Magazine, has walked into the darkness. In I Wear the Black Hat, he questions the modern understanding of villainy. When we classify someone as a bad person, what are we really saying, and why are we so obsessed with saying it? How does the culture of malevolence operate? What was so Machiavellian about Machiavelli? Why don’t we see Bernhard Goetz the same way we see Batman? Who is more worthy of our vitriol—Bill Clinton or Don Henley? What was O.J. Simpson’s second-worst decision? And why is Klosterman still haunted by some kid he knew for one week in 1985? Masterfully blending cultural analysis with self-interrogation and imaginative hypotheticals, I Wear the Black Hat delivers perceptive observations on the complexity of the antihero (seemingly the only kind of hero America still creates). As the Los Angeles Times notes: “By underscoring the contradictory, often knee-jerk ways we encounter the heroes and villains of our culture, Klosterman illustrates the passionate but incomplete computations that have come to define American culture—and maybe even American morality.” I Wear the Black Hat is a rare example of serious criticism that’s instantly accessible and really, really funny.

Originally collected in Chuck Klosterman IV and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Pop, this essay is about U2.

New York Times bestselling author of Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and Downtown Owl, “The Ethicist” of the New York Times Magazine, Chuck Klosterman returns to fiction with his second novel—an imaginative page-turner about a therapist and her unusual patient, a man who can render himself invisible. Therapist Victoria Vick is contacted by a cryptic, unlikable man who insists his situation is unique and unfathomable. As he slowly reveals himself, Vick becomes convinced that he suffers from a complex set of delusions: Y___, as she refers to him, claims to be a scientist who has stolen cloning technology from an aborted government project in order to render himself nearly invisible. He says he uses this ability to observe random individuals within their daily lives, usually when they are alone and vulnerable. Unsure of his motives or honesty, Vick becomes obsessed with her patient and the disclosure of his increasingly bizarre and disturbing tales. Over time, it threatens her career, her marriage, and her own identity. Interspersed with notes, correspondence, and transcriptions that catalog a relationship based on curiosity and fear, The Visible Man touches on all of Chuck Klosterman’s favorite themes—the consequence of culture, the influence of media, the complexity of voyeurism, and the existential contradiction of normalcy. Is this comedy, criticism, or horror? Not even Y___ seems to know for sure.

Killing Yourself to Live

Essays from Chuck Klosterman IV

This Is Emo

What Happens When People Stop Being Polite

Thinking About the Present As If It Were the Past

How to Disappear Completely and Never Be Found

Originally collected in Chuck Klosterman IV and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Living and Society, this essay is about Chicken McNuggets.

From Fargo Rock City: Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs; Chuck Klosterman IV; and Eating the Dinosaur, these essays are now available in this ebook collection for fans of Klosterman’s writing on rock music.

Originally collected in Eating the Dinosaur and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Film and Television, this essay is about sitcoms.

The cultural critic questions how modern people understand the concept of villainy, describing how his youthful idealism gave way to an adult sympathy with notorious cultural figures to offer insight into the appeal of anti-heroes.

A Memoir

I Wear the Black Hat

A Highly Specific, Defiantly Incomplete History of the Early 21st Century

The Nineties

Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs

Chuck Klosterman and Philosophy

New York Times–bestselling author and cultural critic Chuck Klosterman sorts through the past decade and how we got to now. Chuck Klosterman has created an incomparable body of work in books, magazines, newspapers, and on the Web. His writing spans the realms of culture and sports, while also addressing interpersonal issues, social quandaries, and ethical boundaries. Klosterman has written nine previous books, helped found and establish Grantland, served as the New York Times Magazine Ethicist, worked on film and television production, and contributed profiles and essays to outlets such as GO, Esquire, Billboard, The A.V. Club, and The Guardian. Chuck Klosterman’s tenth book (aka Chuck Klosterman X) collects his most intriguing of those pieces, accompanied by fresh introductions and new footnotes throughout. Klosterman presents many of the articles in their original form, featuring previously unpublished passages and digressions. Subjects include Breaking Bad, Lou Reed, zombies, KISS, Jimmy Page, Stephen Malkmus, steroids, Mountain Dew, Chinese Democracy, The Beatles, Jonathan Franzen, Taylor Swift, Tim Tebow, Kobe Bryant, Usain Bolt, Eddie Van Halen, Charlie Brown, the Cleveland Browns, and many more cultural figures and pop phenomena. This is a tour of the past decade from one of the sharpest and most prolific observers of our unusual times.

Coming off the breakthrough success of Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and Killing Yourself to Live, bestselling pop culture guru Chuck Klosterman assembles his best work previously unavailable in book form—including the groundbreaking 1996 piece about his chicken McNuggets experiment, his uncensored profile of Britney Spears, and a previously unpublished short story—all recontextualized in Chuck’s unique voice with new intros, outros, segues, and masterful footnotes. Chuck Klosterman IV consists of three parts: Things That Are True—Profiles and trend stories: Britney Spears, Radiohead, Billy Joel, Metallica, Val Kilmer, Bono, Wilco, the White Stripes, Steve Nash, Morrissey, Robert Plant—all with new introductions and footnotes. Things That Might Be True—Opinions and theories on everything from monogamy to pirates to robots to super people to guilt, and (of course) Advancement—all with new hypothetical questions and footnotes. Something That Isn’t True At All—This is old fiction. There’s a new introduction, but no footnotes. Well, there’s a footnote in the introduction, but none in the story.

Originally collected in Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Film and Television, this essay is about John Cusack and Woody Allen.

Treating a delusional scientist who has been using cloaking technology from an aborted government project to render himself nearly invisible, Austin therapist Victoria Vick listens to his accounts of spying on the private lives of others, a situation with which Victoria becomes obsessed to the point that it threatens her career and marriage. 125,000 first printing.

Billy Sim

Chuck Klosterman X

An Essay from Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs

A Book

But What If We’re Wrong?

An Essay from Chuck Klosterman IV

A tale based on a deadly 1984 North Dakota blizzard follows the experiences of a small rural community devoted to its high-school athletics and its citizens' minor scandals, until a dangerous storm impacts the town in unsettling and powerful ways. 100,000 first printing.

Originally published in Fargo Rock City and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Rock, this essay is about Chuck’s favorite heavy metal albums.

Originally collected in Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Living and Society, this essay is about The Sims.

A collection by the pop culture commentator includes some of his most noteworthy profiles and trend stories, a selection of favorite opinion pieces, and a semi-autobiographical short story, in a volume complemented by twenty “hypothetical questions.”

An Excerpt from Fargo Rock City

Chuck Klosterman on Sports

A Mad Desire to Dance

Essays from Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs and Chuck Klosterman IV

The Visible Man

A Novel

“Full of intelligence and insights, as the author gleefully turns ideas upside down to better understand them. . . . Replete with lots of nifty, whimsical footnotes, this clever, speculative book challenges our beliefs with jocularly and perspicacity.” —Kirkus (starred review) “Klosterman’s trademark humor and unique curiosity propel the reader through the book. He remains one of the most insightful critics of pop culture writing today and this is his most thought-provoking and memorable book yet.” —Publishers Weekly (5 stars) Chuck Klosterman, exploring the possibility that our currently held beliefs and assumptions about the world will eventually be proven wrong—now in paperback. But What If We’re Wrong? is a book of original, reported, interconnected pieces, which speculate on the likelihood that many universally accepted, deeply ingrained cultural and scientific beliefs will someday seem absurd. Covering a spectrum of objective and subjective topics, the book attempts to visualize present-day society the way it will be viewed in a dis experts—including George Saunders, David Byrne, Jonathan Lethem, Alex Ross, Kathryn Schulz, Neil deGrasse Tyson, Brian Greene, Junot Diaz, Amanda Petrusich, Ryan Adams, Dan Carlin, Nick Bostrom, and Richard Linklater. Klosterman asks straightforward questions that are profound in their simplicity, and the answers he explores and integrates with his own analysis generate the most thought-provoking and propulsive book of his career.

From Elie Wiesel, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and one of our fiercest moral voices, a provocative and deeply thoughtful new novel about a life shaped by the worst horrors of the twentieth century and one man’s attempt to reclaim happiness. Doriel, a European expatriate living in New York, suffers from a profound sense of desperation and loss. His mother, a member of the Resistance, survived World War II only to die in an accident, together with his father, soon after. Doriel was a child during the war, and books—but it is enough. Doriel’s parents and their secrets haunt him, leaving him filled with longing but unable to experience the most basic joys in life. He plunges into an intense study of Judaism, but instead of finding solace, he comes to believe that he is possessed by a dybbuk. Surrounded by ghosts, spurred on by demons, Doriel finally turns to Dr. Thérèse Goldschmidt, a psychoanalyst who finds herself particularly intrigued by her patient. The two enter into an uneasy relationship based on exchange: of dreams, of secrets, of love.

The year is 1983, and Chuck Klosterman just wants to rock. But he’s got problems. For one, he’s in the fifth grade. For another, he lives in rural North Dakota. Worst of all, his parents aren’t exactly down with the long hairstyle which rocking requires. Luckily, his brother saves the day when he brings home a bit of manna from metal heaven, SHOUT AT THE DEVIL. Motley Crue’s seminal paean to hair-band excess. And so Klosterman’s twisted odyssey begins, a journey spent worshipping at the heavy metal altar of Poison. Soundtrack-tradition, FARGO ROCK CITY chronicles Klosterman’s formative years through the lens of heavy metal, the irony-deficient genre that, for better or worse, dominated the pop charts throughout the 1980s. For readers of Dave Eggers, Lester Bangs, and Nick Hornby, Klosterman delivers all the goods: from his first dance (with a girl) and his eye-opening trip to Mandan with the debate team; to his list of ‘essential’ albums; and his thoughtful analysis of the similarities between Guns ‘n’ Roses’ ‘Lies’ and the gos.

Originally collected in Chuck Klosterman IV and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Living and Society, this essay is about Super People.

A Low Culture Manifesto

The Led Zeppelin Essays

Downtown Owl

Porn

85% of a True Story

Super People

Twenty-two modern-day philosophers take a look at the concepts that fascinate author Chuck Klosterman, as well as try answer many of the hypotheticals that Klosterman poses in his own writings. Original.

Originally collected in Eating the Dinosaur and now available both as a stand-alone essay and in the ebook collection Chuck Klosterman on Living and Society, this essay is about voyeurism.

T Is for True

Chuck Klosterman on Rock