

## Talking Heads' Fear of Music (33 1/3)

*Jonathan Lethem*

*ebooks | Download PDF | \*ePub | DOC | audiobook*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#734681 in Books 2012-04-26 2012-04-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.51 x .2 x 4.711, .30 #File Name: 1441121005160 pages | File size: 20.Mb

**Jonathan Lethem : Talking Heads' Fear of Music (33 1/3)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Talking Heads' Fear of Music (33 1/3):

33 of 33 people found the following review helpful. Truly terrible  
By agnosticI hate to be critical of this author, because I consider him to be one of our greatest working novelists. Fortress of Solitude is probably my favorite novel of the past 20 years, at least. But he should not write music criticism. There are hardly any good ideas in this book, and it is groan-inducingly bad in many places. I would never have finished it if it weren't so short. It is almost entirely devoid of true inspiration or insight. The main theme of the book is this: This album really, really blew my mind when I was a precocious teenager in the greatest city in the whole world! Variations on this theme are interspersed with dull, wooden attempts at snappy but probing exegesis. You can feel him counting the words to meet his quota. I'm sorry to

pan this, but I consider it a public service. Upped a star because of how much I respect Lethem's fiction and other brilliant essays. I can't hang with this man intellectually, but I also can't hang with this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What's to Fear about Music Writing as Personal Memoir? By Trace Reddell The best thing about the 33 1/3rd series is the variety of styles and approaches that the writer's take. I like some of the musicological pieces, most of the more academic pieces (though I will forever be angered that Eno's ANOTHER GREEN WORLD was given such a shoddy, dispassionate treatment!), and all of the more creative and personal responses. Colin Meloy's book on the Replacements' LET IT BE has been at the top of my list, but Lethem's FEAR OF MUSIC sits right up there with it. The insights are personal and connect the experience of big new music to everyday life, and two distinct stages of life at that. I've often learned more about music by reading about how different writers connect to music than I have by reading the most scholarly or cultural analysis. I most appreciated Lethem's description of the circle he drew when trying to determine whether to write from what he knows and thinks and remembers, and to stick by that, not dilute it, with other people's stories, versus spending all his writing time and energy researching and incorporating other writers' ideas and biographical factoids into his circle of impressions and ideas. And he introduced me to the program "Freedom," a great little tool that temporarily shuts off your access to the Internet ... this is a writer's god-send, and it really transformed my own practice as I've been finishing up one of my own book projects and starting on a new one. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What a treat! By Steve K. Oliver III think the reason I enjoyed this book as much as I did is that I share much in common with the author: we both were in our teens when the album came out, we both listened to it a lot at the time, and frequently over the years. Finding this book feels like a validation to me: Someone else enjoyed this album as much as I did, and I am grateful to have found this book. The book follows along with the album's song list, and intersperses the discussion with topics such as where this album falls within the entire Talking Heads discography, the band roster, and more. The song discussions are a lot of fun. Many of the ideas he brings up are similar to what a lot of us would find, but he also brings in many I had not thought of. And with an author of his talent, it's a joy just to read his interpretations. Take the advice Jonathan Lethem gives in the introduction: Listen to the album while you read the book, and turn the volume up! I wish more talented authors would share their thoughts about their favorite albums. A lot of other reviewers seem to have been looking for a more scholarly examination of the album. While this book was not written by a music scholar, it certainly examines many, many themes and ideas. What this book does not provide (and perhaps this is the reason for the low rating) is much in the way of history surrounding the band, its members, or what was going on in the studio while the album was being made. I suppose that would have been interesting, but I am satisfied with this book because it is about the album, not the making of the album.

It's the summer of 1979. A fifteen-year-old boy listens to WNEW on the radio in his bedroom in Brooklyn. A monotone voice (it's the singer's) announces into dead air in between songs "The Talking Heads have a new album, it's called Fear of Music"; - and everything spins outward from that one moment. Jonathan Lethem treats Fear of Music; (the third album by the Talking Heads, and the first produced by Brian Eno) as a masterpiece - edgy, paranoid, funky, addictive, rhythmic, repetitive, spooky and fun. He scratches obsessively at the album's songs, guitars, rhythms, lyrics, packaging, downtown origins, and legacy, showing how Fear of Music hints at the directions (positive and negative) the band would take in the future. Lethem transports us again to the New York City of another time - tackling one of his great adolescent obsessions and illuminating the ways in which we fall in and out of love with works of art.

By far the biggest name in the 33 1/3 roster of writers, Jonathan Lethem is no music critic, but an award-winning fiction writer ... His take on Talking Heads' 1979 album forgoes fiction for first-person criticism, in which Lethem's teenage self acts as a sympathetic protagonist. Even as he plumbs each song on Fear of Music for meaning and significance, he uses the album as a point against which he can measure his own growth as a listener, becoming older and wiser and hungrier for connection with each year and with each listen. Stephen M. Deusner, Pitchfork About the Author Jonathan Lethem is one of the most acclaimed American novelists of his generation. His books include Motherless Brooklyn, The Fortress of Solitude, and Chronic City. His essays about James Brown and Bob Dylan have appeared in Rolling Stone. He is Roy Edward Disney Professor in Creative Writing at Pomona College, US.