

## DEXATEENS BIO

### Montgomery, Alabama

The first capital of a society, now mostly dead. The last capital of a society, now mostly dying. In its heart, a cemetery, where Hank Williams lies buried and, on its margins, a road where Wilson Pickett learned to walk. At 644 Washington Avenue stands a house, from which Jefferson Davis sang of old virtues and preached an old ugliness. Two blocks away, stands a church, from which the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. sang anew those old virtues, shouted down that old ugliness. A congregation, tired and desperate and yearning. John Smith and Elliott McPherson, relocated and born, respectively, 1976. Elliott sits Indian-style in front of a record player, fawning over his daddy's Elvis Presley 45's. John stealthily revels in contraband KISS records. They are unknown to one another.

### Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Named for the Black Warrior. His river—now, literally, almost—black, crawls beyond a steel mill and a boat full of bearded men, towards the mounds which his fathers built and, in which, they were buried. There is a football team here, and it has a University. John Smith and Elliott McPherson, enrolled, 1988 and 1994, respectively. Years filled with countless enraptured nights at punk rock shows, innumerable art classes, one National Championship. Jeb Smith, brother to John, co-inhabitant to Elliott McPherson at 109 Crestwood. Brother John returns to 109 Crestwood. A rock and roll band will be his fatted calf. Dexateens' first rehearsal, 1998, 109 Crestwood. Personnel includes Matt Patton (born, at a specific time, in Curry, Alabama, where he danced to devil-music Otis Redding, through the kitchen, with his mama). Bars and houses become late-at-night congregations, desperate and yearning. Amplifiers blow up. Guitars are held together with duct tape. Sonic sanctity.

### Diaspora

Matt Patton, exodus to Birmingham, 1999. Elliott, married, 2000. One sweet wife, two good boys, myriad sacred duties: a pickle. Four years, hem and haw. *Why don't you settle down?* And, a revelation, a yearning, a blessing. The Dexateens, *The Dexateens*, 2004. In Texas, Tim Kerr, rebel yells, *old pappy's going down*. Oh boy, we're moving now. John moves to Ohio, 2004. Long drives south. Elliott remains. Keep it rolling. 2005: Tim Kerr rolls tape on *Red Dust Rising*. A drawling harmony. Boots stomp, guitars shake and bass snakes around. *I was lost. I was found. Take me home.*

From out of the West Alabama wilderness, their voices carry—eastward—to Athens, Georgia, falling upon the ears of Patterson Hood and David Barbe. There are bills to pay, friends left and lost, heated words in overheated vans. And then there is *Hardwire Healing*, Mssrs. Hood and Barbe attending. Like sunshine through a cloud of gnats: a golden pillar. *All the lost and found, out by the Maker's mound.*

The voices carry further, miles and oceans falling beneath them. Into offices filled with clacking keys, control rooms with flickering lights, a dorm room with Lee E. Bains, III (born, 1984, Birmingham, Alabama, where he learned to sing on songs of salvation and play on songs of sin). Folks are really taking notice now: an ever-widening congregation. Matt Patton, return to Curry, 2006. Blacktop beneath his wheels, air beneath John's wings, fall away, carrying them home. Brian Gosdin (born, Asvhill, Alabama, where dirtbikes and drums split the St. Clair County calm), enrolled in Dexateens, 2007.

Old Capital Recordings, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where Shane Lollar wrangled the boys into a single room on University Boulevard and where John, fresh from his own fits of hemming

and hawing, returned with a passel of songs, serving—as it were—to reconcile: to resurrect. *Lost And Found*, 2007. The congregation, waiting, fans itself. South By Southwest: Austin, Texas comes to believe. Trailing the Drive-By Truckers, the van—acting right—holds gentler words, glides over smoother blacktop. Crowds shake and holler, yearning.

### **Repatriation**

John, relocated, Nashville, Tennessee, 2008. Close to home. Lee E. Bains, III, enrolled in Dexateens, same year. Each, lost, finds himself, a stone's throw from the other. *Home Found. Singlewide*, Mark Nevers of Nashville, Tennessee presiding. *I want to be a new boy*. More and more folks, coming to believe. The boys believe, too, and, thus, emerge anew. Onward: as the Black Warrior, rolls, tumbles, within its banks, and the van between the ditches, on its course, found in one place, bound for some place else.

- Birmingham, Alabama  
July 20, 2008