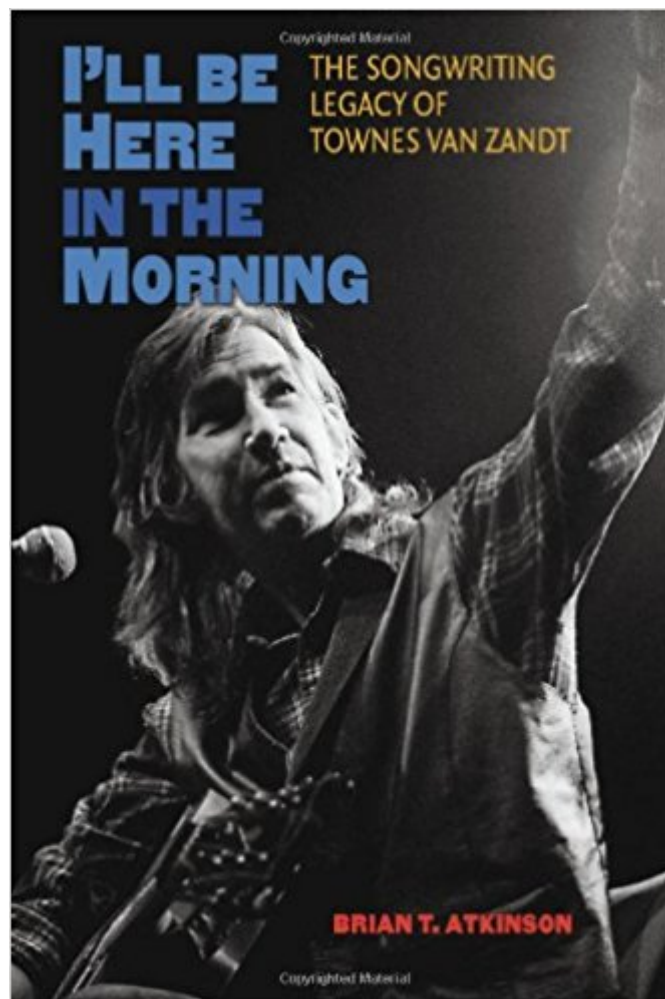


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# **I'll Be Here In The Morning: The Songwriting Legacy Of Townes Van Zandt (John And Robin Dickson Series In Texas Music, Sponsored By The Center For Texas)**





## Synopsis

The writer of such influential songs as “Pancho and Lefty,” “To Live or Die,” “Cs to Fly,” “If I Needed You,” and “For the Sake of the Song,” Townes Van Zandt exerted an influence on at least two generations of Texas musicians that belies his relatively brief, deeply troubled life. Indeed, Van Zandt has influenced millions worldwide in the years since his death, and his impact is growing rapidly. Respected singer/songwriter John Gorka speaks for many when he says, “Pancho and Lefty changed it • my idea of what a song could be.”

In this tightly woven, intelligently written book, Brian T. Atkinson interviews both well-known musicians and up-and-coming artists to reveal, in the performers’ own words, how their creative careers have been shaped by the life and work of Townes Van Zandt. Kris Kristofferson, Guy Clark, Billy Joe Shaver, Rodney Crowell, Lucinda Williams, and Lyle Lovett are just a few of the established musicians who share their impressions of the breathtakingly beautiful tunes and lyrics he created, along with their humorous, poignant, painful, and indelible memories of witnessing Van Zandt’s rise and fall. Atkinson balances the reminiscences of seasoned veterans with the observations of relative newcomers to the international music scene, such as Jim James (My Morning Jacket), Josh Ritter, and Scott Avett (the Avett Brothers), presenting a nuanced view of Van Zandt’s singular body of work, his reckless lifestyle, and his long-lasting influence. Forewords by “Cowboy” Jack Clement and longtime Van Zandt manager and friend Harold F. Eggers Jr. open the book, and each chapter begins with an introduction in which Atkinson provides context and background, linking each interviewee to Van Zandt’s legacy. Historians, students, and fans of all music from country and folk to rock and grunge will find new insights and recall familiar pleasures as they read *I’ll Be Here in the Morning: The Songwriting Legacy of Townes Van Zandt*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"When I got to Austin in 1973, the songwriter's songwriter was Townes Van Zandt. It's been that way ever since. As each and every songwriter in Brian Atkinson's wonderful book attests to, it's all for the sake of the song."--Joe Nick Patoski, author of *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life and Stevie Ray Vaughan: Caught in the Crossfire* (Joe Nick Patoski 2011-08-16) "Atkinson takes testimony from the right people--those close enough to Townes Van Zandt in his best days to be there at the telling moments, and some moved by him later and able to talk about it--and comes away with a memorable, telling, often funny group portrait. Commendably, *I'll Be Here in the Morning* celebrates the sporadically brilliant, artful song maker and intellect Van Zandt was at his best, and avoids further romanticizing the driven, sadly self-destructive man lurking behind the songs."--Barry Mazor, journalist and author, *Meeting Jimmie Rodgers* (Barry Mazor 2011-08-26) "My friend and fellow musician, Professor Craig Clifford at Tarleton State University, ranks Townes Van Zandt at the top of his list of 'Ruthlessly Poetic Songwriters.' This insightful phrase truly captures the essence of Townes, his work, and his legacy. Brian Atkinson brilliantly brings the term, 'Ruthlessly Poetic,' to life and into context with his new biography of Townes, *I'll Be Here in the Morning: The Songwriting Legacy of Townes Van Zandt*."--Craig Hillis, Austin musician and Musicologist (Craig Hillis, Austin musician and Musicologist 2011-06-02) "I'll Be Here in the Morning stands as an affectionate look at Van Zandt that doesn't fall into the trap of romanticizing the reason he needs to be remembered posthumously in the first place."--Andrew Gilstrap, *Pop Matters* (Andrew Gilstrap *Pop Matters* 2012-02-02) "Townes remains endlessly fascinating as we trace his fatalistic plunge into self-destruction, as he all the while leaves great songs in his wake."--CMT.com (CMT.com 2011-12-01) "Brian T. Atkinson...spent nine years coaxing music veterans to explain why Van Zandt remains revered as one of the best songwriters in country-music history."--Chuck Yarborough, *Cleveland.com* (Chuck Yarborough *Cleveland.com* 2011-12-18) "...Austin journalist Brian T. Atkinson has compiled an oral history of Van Zandt's life, work and ongoing influence by talking to peers who knew him intimately..."--John T. Davis, Austin

360 (John T. Davis Austin 360)"In the book's pages, Van Zandt emerges as a man of limitless talent and innate curiosity, a man of great kindness, intellect and gentility but also of unfathomable excesses. Those who knew him the best and loved him the most weight in with clear-eyed honesty."--Peter Cooper, *The Tennessean* (Peter Cooper *The Tennessean* 2011-12-28)"...sharp and interesting profiles of all the musicians interviewed...the result is candid and insightful..."--Martin Chilton, *Telegraph.co.uk* (Martin Chilton *Telegraph.co.uk* 2012-01-12)"...fascinating anecdotes and testimonials from 40 individuals, material that attests to Van Zandt's widespread influence and popularity..."--R.D. Cohen, emeritus of Indiana University Northwest, *CHOICE* (R.D. Cohen *CHOICE* 2012-05-15)"Townes Van Zandt got about as deep as you can get. He was an amazing songwriter, so sharp and sophisticated. He could say really hard things in a very simple way that makes you feel connected to him. That's why there are a lot of comparisons to my grandfather."--Hank Williams III (Hank Williams III 2011-08-26)"It does...shed additional light on one of Texas' most baffling but gifted musicians...an interesting work with its own...impact."--L. Patrick Hughes, *East Texas Historical Journal* (L. Patrick Hughes *East Texas Historical Journal* 2013-01-25)"By interviewing such a wide range of singers and songwriters, Atkinson sought to put Van Zandt into context of the evolving left wing of country music. Atkinson shows how Van Zandt's contemporaries saw him and felt his influence, as well as the way his unusually literate lyrics influenced new generations of musicians."--Chuck Vollan, Department of History and Political Science, South Dakota State University (Chuck Vollan *The Great Plains Quarterly* 2013-11-01)

BRIAN T. ATKINSON writes frequently for the *Austin American-Statesman* and has contributed to *American Songwriter*, *No Depression*, *Maverick Country*, *Relix*, *Paste*, *Texas Music*, and *Lone Star Music* magazines, among others. He lives in Austin.

Probably not the greatest book ever written about TVZ due to its format, but the reason it's worth picking up is due to the format in which it was written. All the characters that were there; the people who actually hung with Townes, wrote with Townes, and did drugs with Townes get a chance to weigh in the legend. This format gives the reader an invaluable 3 dimensional picture of who Townes really was as opposed to just one writers perspective. Coulda used way more perspective from Guy Clark. In fact, I think I may have learned more about Townes from reading Guy Clark's book to be honest. Of all the gripes I've read in the reviews, most of them are about the book going to far off topic with stories about the friends who knew him. Each person is introduced with each new chapter and the reader is given a background of that particular person.... and I agree, it feels a

bit strange. One gets the feeling that Atkinson's original draft placed these bits at the END of the book, rather than interspersed through out it...only to change it at the last minute thinking no one would read those parts. Just my hypothesis. In the end, it's a good read and worth picking up if you are a Townes fan.

There is some interesting stuff in this book -insightful comments by well known artists. But there's too much that isn't interesting -bios of people I've never heard of, comments that are mostly about the commenter and not about Van Zandt. My guess is that the writer interviewed everyone he could think of and then included it all whether it was interesting or not. This get a much better review at half the length and half the cost.

I like the way the story is told through the eyes of (sometimes) self absorbed musicians, but often in the case of those who knew him, as a true outpouring of love and respect. If you don't know much about Townes Van Zandt, this book will get you listening to his music and, more importantly, his Poetry.

I just finished reading it and it is a great book on Townes and the others. Thanks, Coach Javier

A great book that is all consuming with extremely interesting and in depth interviews on Townes.

How wonderful to know the real story.

After looking forward to a new TVZ book focused on the songs themselves, not the biography, I'm disappointed in this book. A collection of reflections and anecdotes from noted songwriters isn't a bad idea in and of itself, but I don't see much that's new, relevant or revealing. The jacket copy calls this a "tightly woven, intelligently written book" but it feels like something slapped together from random interviews. Guy Clark's meandering, expletive-ridden rant is a low point from someone who surely had more to offer. Also, don't expect much meat from this 206-page book. At least a third of the book is puff-piece biographies of the songwriters who contributed. They read like breathless excerpts from press kits. I didn't buy the book to get a 3-page rundown of Butch Hancock's career, followed by 2 pages of Butch's thoughts. Nice production values, and some good insights here and there, but this book leaves a lot to be desired.

For anyone who loves TVZ or simply wants to know what all if the fuss is about. A great read and narrative about the broader singer sing writer community.

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