

# Luna Eclipsed

IN SINGER-SONGWRITER **DEAN WAREHAM'S** CANDID TALE OF THE RISE AND FALL OF ONE OF ALTERNATIVE ROCK'S MOST ATMOSPHERIC BANDS, THE LITERARY FRONTMAN'S BREAKUP WITH HIS WIFE LOOMS LIKE AN INESCAPABLE CRATER.

**W**hen dream-pop demigods Luna broke up in 2005, shortly before the release of their eighth album *Rendezvous*, it was the second big bust-up for frontman Dean Wareham.

A few years earlier, his seven-year marriage imploded after he began an incendiary affair with the band's beguiling new bassist, Britta Phillips. The two conflagrations, from cause to earth-shattering effect—Wareham and his wife had an eight-month-old son—loom large in his new memoir, *Black Postcards: A Rock & Roll Romance* (Penguin Press, \$26).

In 2000, Luna's fortunes were at a low ebb, Wareham recounts. They'd yet to score a bona fide radio hit, they'd just been dropped by their record label for disappointing sales, and their bassist decided to decamp to New Zealand for good. When blonde, green-eyed Britta walked into an audition, radiating Scandinavian sex appeal, Wareham was snared. And she played a mean bass to boot. Just when everything seemed blackest, "Britta made the band exciting again," he writes.

The pair carried on a secret affair for months, sneaking into each other's hotel rooms while on tour like a couple of college kids. When Wareham's wife inevitably found out—tipped off by an unsuspecting maid who answered the phone in Wareham's room at the Day's Inn near Buffalo where Luna was recording what would turn out to be their final album—she demanded he either fire Phillips or move out of their apartment. He tried to let go of Britta for the sake of their child, but just couldn't bring himself to do it. Finally, Wareham packed his things and walked out on his wife and young son, and cried for weeks afterward, afraid he'd ruined his life forever.

When Luna finally collapsed a short while later under the weight of its own epic, eloquent failure, it seemed to some that he really had lost everything. But Wareham had his new girl, and they formed a new band, "Dean & Britta," cutting an album called *L'Avventura* that stands up to some of Luna's best work. Unsurprisingly, many of the lyrics are poignantly autobiographical.

Wareham's divorce finally came through—"We worked harder on it than we had on the marriage," he says—while recording their new album, and one day Dean and Britta went down to City Hall and got married. They took a day off and then went back to work, and he knew that he'd done the right thing after all. —*Jared Paul Stern*