

## One

**AUGUST 5, 2005 . KAUAI, HAWAII**

### **Who's Going to Laugh at Mick Jagger?**

I'm on Kauai, in Hawaii, today, Friday, August 5, 2005. It's unbelievably clear and sunny, not a cloud in the sky. As if the concept clouds doesn't even exist. I came here at the end of July and, as always, we rented a condo. During the mornings, when it's cool, I sit at my desk, writing all sorts of things. Like now: I'm writing this, a piece on running that I can pretty much compose as I wish. It's summer, so naturally it's hot. Hawaii's been called the island of eternal summer, but since it's in the Northern Hemisphere there are, arguably, four seasons of a sort. Summer is somewhat hotter than winter. I spend a lot of time in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and compared to Cambridge—so muggy and hot with all its bricks and concrete it's like a form of torture—summer in Hawaii is a veritable paradise. No need for an air conditioner here—just leave the window open, and a refreshing breeze blows in. People in Cambridge are always surprised when they hear I'm spending August in Hawaii. "Why would you want to spend summer in a hot place like that?" they invariably ask. But they don't know what it's like. How the constant trade winds from the northeast make summers cool. How happy life is here, where we can enjoy lounging around, reading a book in the shade of trees, or, if the notion strikes us, go down, just as we are, for a dip in the inlet.

Since I arrived in Hawaii I've run about an hour every day, six days a week. It's two and a half months now since I resumed my old lifestyle in which, unless it's totally unavoidable, I run every single day. Today I ran for an hour and ten minutes, listening on my Walkman to two albums by the Lovin' Spoonful—Daydream and Hums of the Lovin' Spoonful—which I'd recorded on an MD disc.

Right now I'm aiming at increasing the distance I run, so speed is less of an issue. As long as I can run a certain distance, that's all I care about. Sometimes I run fast when I feel like it, but if I increase the pace I shorten the amount of time I run, the point being to let the exhilaration I feel at the end of each run carry over to the next day. This is the same sort of tack I find necessary when writing a novel. I stop every day right at the point where I feel I can write more. Do that, and the next day's work goes surprisingly smoothly. I think Ernest Hemingway did something like that. To keep on going, you have to keep up the rhythm. This is the important thing for long-term projects. Once you set the pace, the rest will follow. The problem is getting the flywheel to spin at a set speed—and to get to that point takes as much concentration and effort as you can manage.