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**#13**





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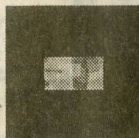
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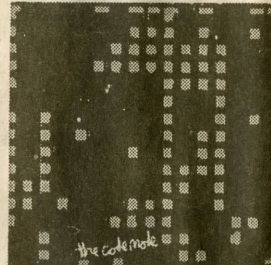
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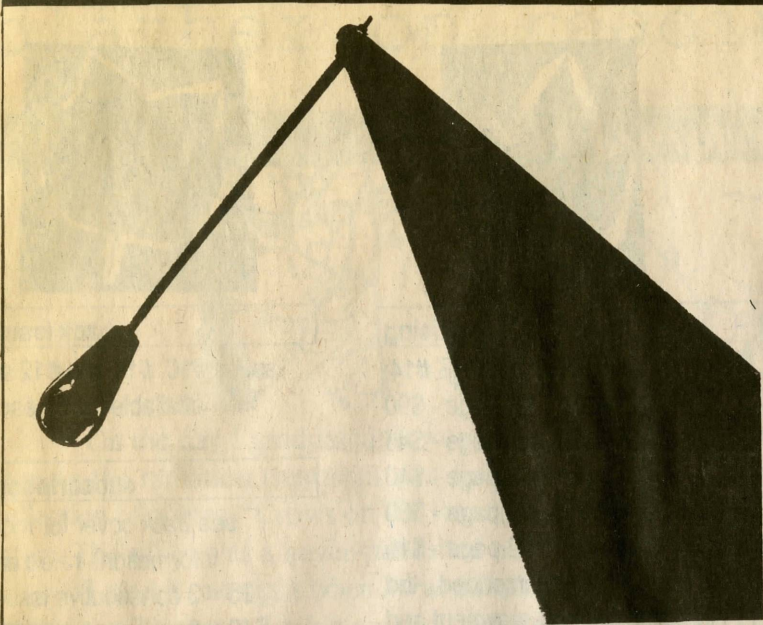
## THE LOT SIX *the code mode*





## INTRODUCTION TO SORE #13

November 29, 2001.



When it comes right down to it, I love how yielding self-imposed deadlines are. Compared to real deadlines (the ones that I couldn't decide to push back), for the last month or so the deadline for putting out this issue was a beautifully non-binding date, one that really didn't mean anything unless I made it. And so, that's why it's already December. I kept pushing it back, and back.

This past week, though, was miserable. Unfortunately, I decided to no longer take advantage of this ability and finally call the printer and get something set in stone at the exact same time I had other, binding deadlines.

In short, everything collided, smashing frantically into each other, leaving me sleepless, exhausted for a week under obligation. My conclusion: deadlines for this zine will continue to roll as long as there are other deadlines that can't.

Well, regardless of that, SORE #13 is finally out and done. And I feel pretty good about it, though I think it's a very awkward issue. Given the state of world affairs for the last two or three months, I knew this issue would come out weird. In the first few weeks that followed September 11<sup>th</sup>, which was just before the deadline for issue #13, I really considered scrapping all the work I had done for #13 and starting a brand new issue when I finally felt like it again. Keep in mind, that in the grand scheme of things, my personal reaction is petty. But it relates to this issue of SORE in a lot of ways. Like a lot of people, I went through a period of feeling like what I'm doing here really is worthless, useless, and irrelevant. For the first time since I started SORE, I felt like I wanted to quit. Nobody talked me out of it because I didn't talk to anyone about it. I was secretly going to put everything away and bring it back out when I felt like I could.

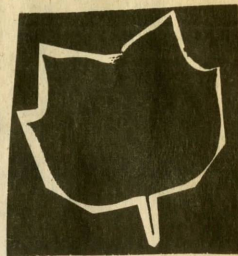
Well, I was wrong. I was really wrong. I can't even believe I'd let things like that go through my mind.

About three weeks ago I finally pulled my notebooks and records from the side of my desk and re-started on this issue. Right before I got back to work on this issue, I made a decision with myself to let this issue construct itself. I was just going to let people write. If they wrote about tragedy, I'd put it in. If they wrote about the seasons, I'd put it in. This issue, like all of the other issues, is a chronicle. And it chronicles a lot from the last six months: just because we have tragedy doesn't mean we don't have seasons.

Some of you also may have been expecting this issue of SORE to feature interviews and information on various "punk rock teachers." I was expecting it too. In fact, I was damn excited about it. So excited, actually, that I decided to push it into SORE #14. I had gotten in touch with three teachers, but because one lives in New York city, he was unable to get his information to me. As things settle down, I'll likely hear from him, and hopefully between now and March (another meaningless, fake deadline), when #14 is slated to come

continued page 6





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# blather on reading.

zach savich

## crumbling expectations



On the day I graduated from sixth grade, my father had surgery to remove a tumor from his colon. During the radiation treatment that followed, he gained weight, lost hair, and wrote two books. One, a collection of poetry, "Crows on the Road," dazzled me when I finally had the courage to read it three years later. The other was a never-published novel, called "Crumbling Expectations."

I read it one night when I was still living in Washington State and he was already in Maryland. Both drafts, one 70 pages, double-spaced, the other about 90. The set-up is superb: Lake Michigan is gradually advancing on a cheesy resort. The resort is run by a guy named Bob, who used to have big dreams but is currently having a mid-life crisis, complete with sex in the barn with a waitress. Bob has a wife -- who has a spiritual awakening at a New Age hotel that exists to contrast the lakeside resort-- as well as a moody son. Business is bad, but the geezer owners don't want change. In the end, the resort falls into the lake, and Bob embraces his wife, realizing the power of their love and so forth.

The plot is somewhat standard, and I, as a quarter-lifer, would get rid of the mid-life stuff and focus only on the lake --which the early chapters revolve around with intriguing and skillful detachment-- and on the relationship with the wife, which never really emerges. However, the beauty in the book lies in this reading:

Let's say the resort represents ambition, life's work, pressures, and so on, all sorts of expectations and hard work; it could even be the novel itself. Meanwhile, the lake is life and mortality and memory and reality and time. It encroaches, it advances, it is at the center of things. In the storm, your work falls in. You are left on the shore to hug your wife. As at the end of the book the resort becomes obsolete and absurd: and so does the novel itself. In writing it, my father wrote out his own release from expectations, I speculated. Why bother with books when there are wives to be hugged?

Of course, writing changes when you know the writer. In my experience, it's what makes most poetry bearable. This knowledge can distract from objective meaning, if you believe in objective meaning, but it can also add layers of interpretive depth. Yes, I know that analysis is a risky and oftentimes ridiculous game. But it becomes less so when I remind myself that what matters is not what the writer intended, but the possibilities that he presented. Like any research, knowing the writer offers additional tools for comprehension.

I think this with my own expectations crumbling. As high school ended, many friends gave up the name tags of musician, footballer, and photographer, and other constructs of identity that helped them pinpoint fashion, path, and desire. And now, I wonder about the courage that accepts life without tour vans or Yale. If we are being honest, all writing is essentially useless. After all, you could be eating ice cream right now. You could be making love. And why aren't you?

The question is that when the lake comes, what will we grab. I love reading, but I would quickly memorize some lines and dump my shelves to the waves. And thus, the meaning and impulse behind literature could survive its symbolic ships. The irony, of course, is that I came to this conclusion after reading my father's manuscript.



## INTRODUCTION, continued.

out, I can contact some more teachers to include. Basically, I had the choice of doing the feature half-assed in this issue, or just as great as I had planned in my next one. I chose the ladder.

You may have noticed that the new mailorder price for SORE is \$1 and stamps, or \$2ppd. Well I feel terrible about it. But, this is the first time I have raised the mailorder price of SORE since I started. And, every time I mail a single copy of this issue for \$1, I actually lose money, and I'm anticipating that the USPS will raise postage costs again, shortly. I'm not going to refuse any orders, but if you can include a stamp or two in the future, please do. You'll be rewarded.

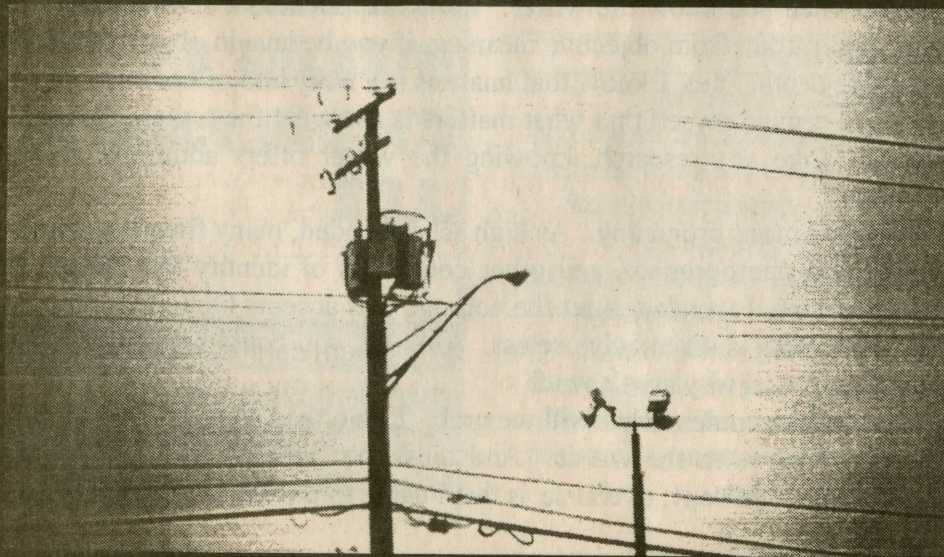
Where was I last year this time? Well, I was running across the boulevard in my sweater and with my camera slung around my torso with Rachel. We went to the school football games together because we liked other people when we were together. It was all a big sincere joke, that was witty and clever. We knew what was going on, but we invented it all so well that it worked perfectly. My voice of reason and solid companion during a time when Chaos was swimming home by six o'clock in alcohol. He'd laugh and tell me the stories, and I'd laugh back nervously, cursing my future best friends for changing him.

It was the period when my extracurricular consumption of caffeine was at it's comic best - my brain and my body would become humorously inebriated under the weight of such a surge. I went to a show at a church during a period of unconditional unity --life was shockingly merry. Sarah and I had a chugging contest on the sidewalk outside with two cans I had in my jacket pockets. She'd never, ever, in her sixteen years thrown up. Until I made her laugh mid chug and she dropped to her knees, in a chaotic mix of panic and hilarity.

I was spending endless nights rummaging for friendships (they stay so strong) in a lifestyle enclave that was not my own. I was getting sick and sad, and every night I missed my friends. It got scary when it got dark.

Lately - this year - I've been excitedly hanging out in cold, dark garages. I've been helping put effort behind great ideas. Laughing much more, smiling more consistently. That lifestyle enclave underwent a string of contortions, and at night I sleep knowing that it's been turned full-circle for a lifestyle like mine.

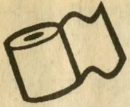
So enters winter. Enjoy the cold winds, the crisp nights. Tell me what you're doing. You'll hear my stories in March.



-TAYLOR.



# (not) freehand tattoos



not this time. — no sir.

My real name is Michael Gentry. It's important that I use my real name for this article. For now, I am not a narrator. I am neither reporter nor documentarian. In the last two issues of SORE, I submitted thinly veiled dramatizations of my real life using the guise of Oscar O'Connor. However, recent events have made such displays seem vane and frivolous. Perhaps, in future issues, I will return to Freehand Tattoos, if only for my own diversion. Right now (two words that currently compose the only relevant perspective), I'd like to get a few things off my chest. I hope you'll bear with me.

I am twenty-five years old. That makes me seven to eight years older than most of you. I don't really participate in the same scenes as you. I hate emo. The widely divergent definitions of punk rock confuse me and the indie thing still seems somewhat self-destructive and at times too exclusive for my taste. Pearl Jam is still my favorite band. In rock-n-roll terms, I'm middle aged. So, I may be a little out of touch as far as you're concerned. So for what it's worth, this is what I think.

I am a patriot... there was a time when I had given up on my countrymen. The complacency draped in bravado that so largely permeates our culture had disillusioned me to the point of disgust. However, as I saw my fellow Americans line up in droves to donate money and blood, then thousands more gather to light candles in remembrance, my kinship was reignited. The notion of e pluribus unum is very real and vital in this nation. We are united by an often unspoken love of liberty and a way of life that allows us to be different from one another. I once thought that overt flag-waving was a relic, something relegated to fanatics and nostalgic grandparents who couldn't let go. Wrong. That banner is a symbol of free will throughout the world. It's an inspiration to so many immigrants who, often at their own peril, seek our shores. It has been a comfort to see it stand defiantly amidst the devastation in New York and D.C. We should always be so reverent and proud. I pledge allegiance.

I admit that this notion has been taken to extremes by mindless red necks without the intelligence to properly sublimate their anger. Realize these are exceptions, not the rule.


Leap of faith... with record attendance in churches, synagogues and mosques we have seen a renaissance in religious participation. This has to be one of the most positive outcomes of the last four weeks. Recognition of a higher power and the existence of a soul makes us as human beings more accountable. Hopefully, this will lead to a judicious and moral take on retaliation and justice. As a Christian, one of my first obligations is to forgive those responsible for these atrocities. I'm not sure I've fulfilled that duty. I'm not sure if I can, but I am willing to try. Hopefully, our focus on spirituality will continue and reveal itself in our everyday interaction with one another.

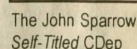
Some say no "god" would let this happen. In response, I say think of God as a father (this image is, of course, already prominent in the Judeo-Christian interpretation). Every father eventually allows his children freewill with the hopes that they will triumph. Humankind has been allowed that same privilege. Sometimes we triumph, sometimes we fall. The mission of a terrorist is the act of no god. It is the failure of man.

Shoot to live... While forgiveness is certainly an element of religious conviction, we are not dealing with an enemy that would allow us the opportunity to forget. Since the Vietnam conflict, all American war efforts have been met with a great amount of homeland protest. While much of our previous dissent may have been merited, we are now thrust into a situation that cannot be side-stepped with sanctions and diplomacy. The men responsible for these atrocities made no declaration of war, claim no country and provide no head of state for treaties or other such niceties. Negotiations are not an option. Our efforts overseas now are not in the name of imperialism. They are no religious crusade. They are an act of protection and reckoning. Let's face it, pacifism is a luxury. It has always been protected by our



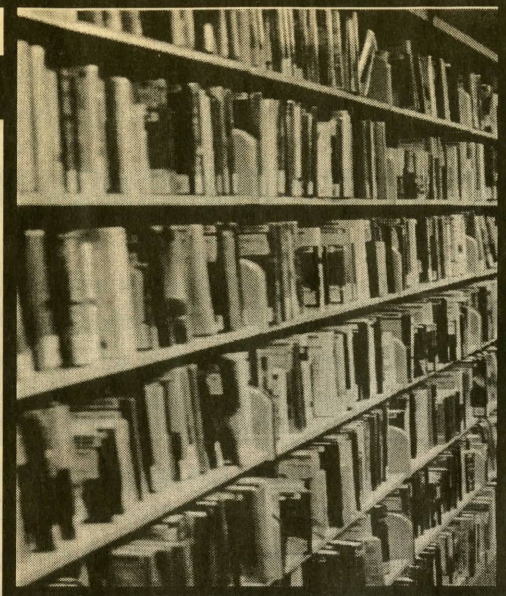
So, I wish I had more useful conclusions, like how to live the next day or what constitutes a successful life. The future seems so far away though. Tomorrow is really just a nice thought. In that capacity, it's priceless. Be careful and God bless.

Remember that you don't have to choose between taking a stance on something and being open-minded. 



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## Books.

As you can see, only two books were reviewed in this issue. Out of all of the books I had to review, out of all of the time I had to review them, only two were included. What's more ridiculous is that I could only write one of these. I had to get my friend Mike to write the second one.

All other excuses aside, let me sum up why I've slacked off: school. I've been reading more than two books at the same time since last June, and only in one instance was one of those books a book I had to review.

Regardless, some other books I've been reading and enjoying are...

*East of Eden* by John Steinbeck. You've got the Salinas Valley, you've got intricate stories of entire lives, entire families, and rich detail. Not to mention an entire plot based on assorted biblical stories.

*Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt. It won the Pulitzer Prize, and it's been a movie already. A rich memoir of a childhood in Ireland. Lots of people like it, and for good reason.

*Gardner's Art Through the Ages*. My Art History textbook.

-taylor.

## ***Adios Muchachos***

**By Daniel Chavarria**

I honestly don't know what exactly to make of this book. The general plot is more sticky than is necessary, and starts off following Alicia, a cunning bicycle hooker. Using her finely tuned skills in this trade, Alicia seems to be doing fairly well supporting herself and her mother. Foreign businessmen appear to be the most frequent of her clients, all of which feel they have a special affair with Alicia. They secretly leave extra money for her and her mother before departing, and purchase appliances (which are then sold by Alicia and her mother) to replace ones that appear broken. Alicia stumbles into Victor King through her business, who then hires her to do her work, so to speak, on the opposite side of a two-way mirror so that he and his wife can overlook. About a hundred more vague twists and turns later, Victor and Alicia are working together to preserve Victor's business career (which is threatened when his partner dies), falling in love, and looking forward to leaving Cuba.

In my opinion, this is really a mediocre book. The plot could have been a lot more gripping, for I was given the impression that this is what Chavarria intended. Any events that thicken up the plot are vague and unbalanced. The dialogue is, well, cheesy. This, however, could be attributed to the fact that the entire novel is translated from Spanish and therefore certain elements of fluidity may have been lost in the conversion. The high point is definitely originality. From the conception and explanation of Alicia's job as a bicycle hooker to her interaction with others along the way, it's clear



that conceiving the plot took some imagination. Overall, though, certainly a let-down. -taylor  
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 www.akashicbooks.com]

## ***News Dissector: Passions, Pieces, Polemics 1960-2000***

**by Danny Schechter**

*News Dissector* is a collection of essays and articles by journalist and radio personality Danny Schechter. Each piece examines social or political issues from the far left. It may as well be titled White Liberalism 101. Whether on the lecture circuit with Malcolm X or visiting labor rallies, Schechter's work is infused with the privileged white male guilt that is the hallmark of so many liberals. Especially in his early writings, Schechter appears almost ashamed of his own identity. He is often envious of the oppressed and the nobility that comes with struggle. His response to such yearnings is activism. Seeing the inner city with his own eyes, investigating the practices of the CIA, using his station in life to dodge the draft...yes, hypocrisy occasionally rears its ugly head, as it will anytime such staunch opinions are held. The same guy who panders to and quotes Malcolm X pulls some strings when his number is called (as many of his friends from the ghettos are shipped off to Vietnam). Fortunately, the irony is rarely lost on the author. Otherwise, this collection would be as insufferable as any number of Rush Limbaugh's works must be. I've never read any, but there is such thing as a safe assumption. In short, lefties can nod along, conservatives can get pissed off and everyone else can use the book to further shape their own opinions. - mike [Akashic Books | P.O. Box 1456 | New York, NY 10009 | akashic7@aol.com | www.akashicbooks.com]



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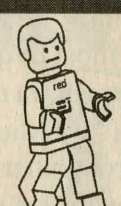
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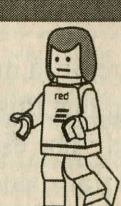
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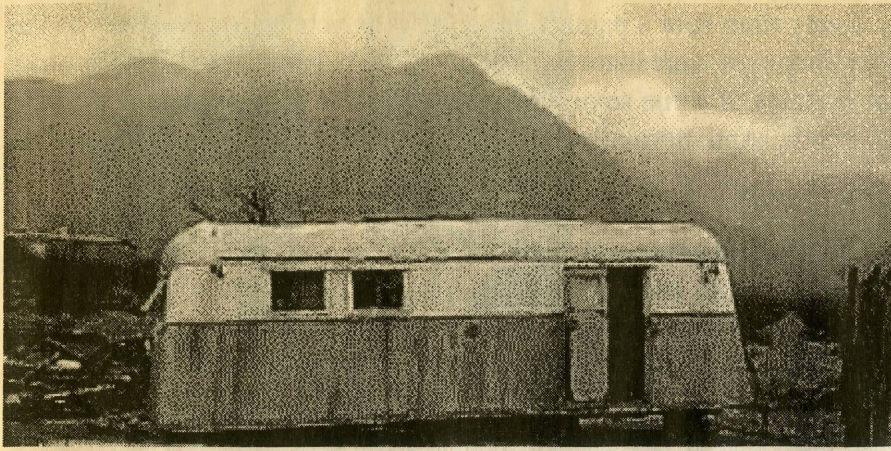
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# Kingdom Come

by Ron Gibson, Jr.

Rita was summer. She wasn't sunny, bright or anything nostalgic like that. It just so happens my girlfriends began and ended with the seasons. It wasn't something I planned. In the end, it always just worked out that way. It was as if I were repeating some ancient, internal cycle inherited from some farmer ancestor, except I substituted girls for crops. So, as you can imagine, I've been cited for being an irresponsible male with a fuck-'em-and-leave-'em attitude. People just don't understand; when my body said plant rhubarb, I accidentally planted Rita.

She would call me up late after work, if her parents went out to the casino on the Indian reservation to get drunk and lose money, and ask me over. More times than not, no matter how tired I was, I would oblige. You could say it was the farmer's constitution for hard work in me, but I suppose you wouldn't.

Rita lived in a trailer park called The Pines. It was a scuzzy little piece of oil-contaminated land on the edge of town, next to the railroad tracks. The owner planted a six foot hedge made up of artificial Christmas trees in front of the trailer park to keep the allusion of pines and to hide the eyesore from bystanders. It fit in perfectly with the overall theme of cheap and shitty.

Every time I made the turn from the street, driving past the false facade, the trailer park would open before me like a piece of rotting fruit. My headlights would sweep across assorted garbage, rusted car carcasses, half-starved cats and dogs; my shocks taking a beating from rolling up and down two foot potholes and mud puddles, until my beams caught on The King.

Nobody knew his real name, age, or anything about him. All anyone knew was that The King looked like he was ready to pop with gout. He would seemingly sit all day and night on his rain-warped front porch, that sagged under his weight, silently watching everybody come and go.

When I would reach Rita's trailer; her silhouette standing in the doorway like a sexy photographic negative, I couldn't shake the thought of The King's dark pig eyes shrinking under my headlights back into his pie face. It was like he had an omnipresence over the entire trailer park. Like he was watching everything you did, even though he never moved from his one spot. Sometimes it took hours of watching TV or Rita practicing her striptease to upbeat Madonna tunes -- (she planned on stripping at Deja Vu when she turned eighteen) -- before I was able to relax, forget The King, and perform nightly deeds.

When I would leave, I would be sure to always honk and flip off The King just because of the mental disturbance his presence caused me. But he never budged or said a bad word in response. He just silently watched me go, as if to say, "I'll be here when you come back. I'm The King. Get used to it."



But I never did get used to it. Every time Rita's parents got another paycheck to hand over to the Indians and I was summoned over, those dark eyes were there to greet me. Rita began to think I had another girl or was suffering from the beginning states of some sexual dysfunction. But there was no other girl; summer wasn't due to end for another month. And, normally, my libido was like an attack dog; it raged on command.

The next month crawled along like it would never end. Rita only called me over twice, but those two times were tedious as funerals. She sat me down to read excerpts from her diary about how she hated her parents, the trailer park, life, and, basically, me for not treating her right or desiring her enough. Typical teenage ramblings. She cried long enough to where The King left my brain, again, and I fucked her back to her false sense of happiness.

The days were growing shorter and you could feel the change beginning to take root in the air. The sunset was cresting over the horizon down in the valley like a final napalm wave, when Rita called. I knew it would be the last time I would see her, but I never let on.

I pulled into The Pines expecting The King to once again rain on my parade, but he was nowhere to be seen. Only his bent, metal chair sat empty like a monument.

Without the disturbance of The King, Rita didn't know what had gotten into me. She acted as if my revived libido was the confirmation of her self-worth as a human being. That she was an empty shell until I fulfilled her. I wanted to say, "you'll always be empty and alone, just like me and everyone else forever on," but I didn't have the heart.

We laid there, sharing dying moments, when we noticed red lights strobing against her curtained window. She peeked out, blanket wrapped around her, and said that there was a fire engine and an ambulance outside.

We both got dressed and joined the rest of the trailer park residents. They all had come out of their foil-covered-windowed trailers, that reeked of meth and ganja, and stood around the flashing lights in the night.

Besides the fire engine's motor continually sighing, the crowd mumbled and whispered amongst itself like a secretive, incestuous family reunion. It wasn't until Rita inquired that we were let in on the gossip.

Apparently, The King died on the toilet, reading the *National Enquirer*. The fire engine had to use the jaws of life to pry open the corner of the trailer and it supposedly took ten men to strap his dead body to two stretchers, side by side.

Even as the ambulance lumbered away, back-end bottoming out, sparking on the concrete, everyone stood motionless. It didn't seem to be a sadness, more than the shock of losing what was familiar that had kept them gathered outside. The King was dead, and I could feel fall seeping into the night, calling me back to plant another seed in another field for another season. I whispered a shoddy excuse that her parents may soon return from the casino, and left Rita standing there.

During my last look back in the rearview mirror at the gathered residents of The Pines, I knew I wasn't the only one that wondered if the EMT's wiped The King's ass before they hauled him away. We weren't to blame; we were all just humans.



Living in a city full of actors and entertainers, you'd think we New Yorkers would be used to drama. But never in my life did I, or anyone else, think that the drama would become real. We never thought the special effects that we see on the silver screen would be right in front of our faces to smell, see and touch. The horror that unfolded on the morning of September 11, 2001, will forever be burned in my memory. The sight of those burning buildings will stay with me for the rest of my life, and the pain of not knowing where my mother was for an hour will haunt me and strip me of the innocence I once had. Now when the phone rings, I wonder if it's someone on the other line telling me that something else has happened and she's missing. When airplanes fly low I wonder where they're going to land. When I sleep at night I have to keep the windows shut because the smell of burning debris and bodies haunt my home. On September 11, I saw the innocence of the world ripped away from us. I saw lives end abruptly for selfish reasons, and I saw a city that I have lived in my whole life turn upside down. But most importantly I saw more love than I ever have before. I saw strangers running into a crumbling building to rescue people they did not know. I saw people handing others money and cell phones so they could reach their loved ones and tell them that they were okay. I saw strength and compassion that for a long time I doubted existed among people.

If you ask anyone where they were on that fateful morning, when those two airplanes slammed into the World Trade Center buildings, they can probably tell you exactly where they were, and what they were doing. I was asleep, and was awakened by the phone ringing. When I went to answer it, I was disconnected. Confused, I turned on the television to see Tower 1 on fire. I burst into tears and the first thought that entered my mind was "where is my mother?" She worked down the block from the towers, and when I tried calling her office there was no answer. I became increasingly upset as I looked out my window to see the skyline on fire. Then the second plane. It was a clear attack. I get too upset reliving the memories, but all I can say is that until I heard from my mother an hour later, when she told me she was okay, I seriously thought I was going to go insane. My mind wandered as I thought of all the possibilities. Where were all of the people I knew who worked there? Who did this? Were they targeting anything else? Nauseous, confused, angry, and upset I paced around my apartment and shut all of the windows. The smoke was in the air, and if you looked closely into the clear summer sky you could see pieces of debris and paper floating around. I live about fifteen minutes away from the city by car, so you can imagine how close to home this attack was for me. Not only did I work in the building for two years, but that whole area was so familiar to me. My mother worked down the block. I shopped in that mall. I ate dinner in those restaurants. And now it was on fire, with people inside of it, and the rest of us were left only with questions and tears.

Aside from the horror and grief that accompanied the attack, I must say that it did bring out the best in all of us. We, as New Yorkers, and humans, were tested to the fullest capacity. If these terrorists wanted to tear us apart, they brought us closer together. In the face of evil, we also faced the goodness that is evident among all of us. On my way into the city last week, for the first time since the attack, I passed the local firehouse. Adorned with yellow ribbons, flowers, pictures, and candles, I glared proudly at it. A tear trickled down my cheek but I knew that these people gave up their lives to save others. And as senseless as an act this was, we still pulled through it. Our city and our country is still standing. It may be different, but it will only get better. Although the streets of New York are now lined with soldiers rather than business men and women, we are a strong city and we will overcome the horror and sadness that has been inflicted upon us. For the first time, people of all races are uniting under one flag. The diversity among the city is still there, but instead of letting it segregate us, it is bringing us together. We are all facing the same evil, and the good will win this fight.



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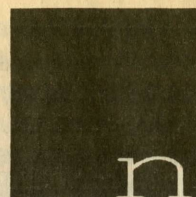
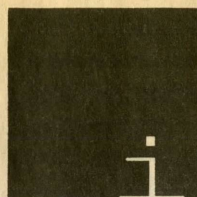
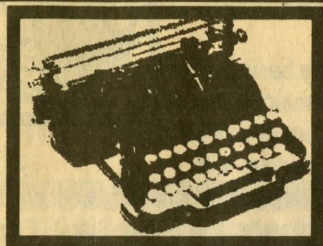
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a zine about love, relationships & retail

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## reviews

### **A Day In June #5 / Basement Journals #3 - split issue**

**\$1? | 20 pgs | half-sized | copied**

This is a pretty interesting split zine from New Jersey. Every left page is Basement Journals, and every right page is A Day In June. The Basement Journals pages are pretty much a collection of personal writing from Cathy on numerous topics. All of the pieces are interesting to read, and hold your attention well enough to want to flip the page. The A Day In June pages are mostly handwritten scraps about Phill's journey from Louisville, KY to New Jersey. There are also some short music reviews in A Day In June. Overall, worth checking out if you're into personal zines, especially personal split zines. [32 Winonah Ave | Wayne, NJ 07470]

### **Ad Hominim #12**

**\$5 | 96 pgs | full-sized | copied \*comes with sampler CD\***

This is another good issue of Ad Hominim. Complete with tons of short interviews with tons of bands, some cut and paste layout, and comics thrown in here and there among many live photographs of bands. Some of the bands interviewed include Fall Silent, Hey Mercedes, The Nerve Agents, Saves the Day, Will Have, plus many more. There are also plenty of witty and sarcastic music reviews. My only real complaint with this issue is that though there are a lot of pages, and lots of visuals, there only seems to be two or three other articles to read. Either way, I'm really pumped about #13 because apparently the layout will undergo a tremendous transformation. It could be good or bad, but either way it's going to be just plain exciting. [1401 Portland Ave. S #C303 | Minneapolis, MN 55404]

### **Angry Tomato issue #1?**

**stamp | 12 pgs | half-sized | copied**

This is a very short, but sort of entertaining zine. There are a few rambles about some of the editor's experiences, and some drawings, a couple ads, and a video review. The entire thing is sort of sarcastic, which can be funny and is, but I could think of some more exciting places to go where I could be called a "motherless fuck," a "dirty little fuck," etc. which is how the readers are addressed. Don't get me wrong, I'm not whining or being bitter and old about it. It's funny but needless. Anyway, the real content of this zine lies in food topics. There is a recipe for vegan pancakes, and a lot of information about soy products and other ingredient alternatives. This is some pretty valuable information - the editor works at a health food store and it shows. There is also a little bit of fiction. I think every issue is issue #1, so keep your eyes out for... the next issue #1. [c/o Bobb Easterbrook | 12 Plane St. | Butler, NJ 07405]

### **Aphasia #3**

**\$1/stamps/trade | 32 pgs | quarter-sized | copied**

Aphasia #3 would be the same thing as Static #3, but Suzanne changed the name between issues. Previously known as Static. Presently known as Aphasia. This is a pretty good personal zine with the usual-but-well-done elements of: cut and paste words onto cool backgrounds, lots of revealing stories and memories, some stories of experiences with people (including food service workers) at college. There are also some zine reviews at the end of the zine that are well-written and informative. Overall, among the better in the genre. Check it out. [c/o Suzanne | P.O. Box 113 | Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922-0113 | xdec4f409x@aol.com]

### **Blue 'zine #15**

**\$1? | 20 pgs | half-sized | copied**

I have to admit that when I opened up the cover of this 'zine and saw two pages devoted to the "what's punk?" question, I was slightly apprehensive. However, the rest of this zine was pretty interesting and entertaining. Through the quick read, one can definitely see that the editor likes doing his 'zine a lot, and has a lot of interest in it as well. There is some information on *The Goonies*, a rant about apathy/sectionalism in the hardcore scene, and a really interesting and comical series of e-mails between some kid who wanted to personalize his Nike shoes to say "sweatshop" and Nike themselves. There is also some information on the death penalty, as well as a twenty question interview with D.I. Overall, there's a fair amount of content in this small 'zine. [32 Eardley Rd. | Edison, NJ 08817]

### **Box of Rocks #3**

**\$1 | 48 pgs | half-sized | copied**

Another solid issue of Box of Rocks, a literary zine with almost entirely fictional stories. This issue, though, includes a bunch of zine reviews scattered about the zine as well. Unfortunately, no stories stand out a whole lot this issue, but they are all pretty good, and worth reading if you're a fan of underground writing at all. Though the cover on this issue is well done (made to look like a worn brown box), the layout throughout the zine is getting a little bit drab and is beginning to remind me of a high school literary magazine more than a literary zine. All fine, but be warned - there isn't much that is visually appealing in here to share pages with the words. All in all, Box of Rocks is still one of my favorite zines out there right now and I'm definitely looking forward to the next issue. [P.O. Box 841 | Bloomington, IN 47402-0841 | anotheritem@hotmail.com]

**Brainscan #14 | Journalsong #4 | Three A.M. #7**



**\$2, donations appreciated | 100 pgs | half-sized | copied**

This is a really good three-way split zine from the west coast area. Brainscan and Journalsong are both located in Portland, and Three A.M. is from Berkeley. Three A.M. is a very artistic zine with space split almost equally between words and pictures. The writing is personal and good. Stuff about unemployment, friendships, and summertime among others. Next in order is Brainscan, which I've read before (see below review) and enjoy. Brainscan is a very open zine, with a lot of the writing being straightforward and honest. After reading through it, one gets a pretty good picture of what Alex's life is like, and when I read it, I get pretty excited to hear about kids all the way across the country being productive and having fun. Last in order is Journalsong, probably one of my current favorite zines. The layout is typewriter cut-outs on top of notebook paper and copied, and it is done very well. Steve writes about a bunch of different things, all personal stuff and all well-done. He writes about staying up in a cafe writing in the middle of winter, living (and moving out of) a punk rock house, and past relationships, just to name a few. Everything in this split zine is pretty much worth checking out. Send to Steve: [Journalsong c/o Steve | P.O. Box 3444 | Portland, OR 97208-3444]

**Brainscan #15****\$1 / stamp / trade | two extra-mini zines | copied**

Alex seems to always be doing something new and cool with her zine, at least for as long as I've been reading it. This issue is really a little pouch/envelope-type thing with two very small zines inside. One is called Suspended Like a Star, and the other Cigarettes as Currency. In both little zines, Alex seems to write half "on-the-whim" personal thoughts and memories of relationships and things of that sort. The layout is very cool throughout both - mostly cool photographs with cut and pasted typewriter words on top as the foreground. The writing quality is pretty good, at first read one might feel awkward because the writing is fairly revealing and indeed personal, but the comfort level increases. Anyone who is very into personal zines, personal writing should enjoy this a lot. [P.O. box 14332 | PDX, OR 97293 | brainscanezine@ureach.com]

**Cinco La Playa - numerous issues****stamps/\$1 for a few | 4 pgs each | half-sized | copied**

Gunther calls this a zine equivalent to an EP. This puppy comes out fairly frequently, and each issue is unnumbered and consists of a single sheet of paper, folded over. Every one has a few different stories, most of them well-written, witty and interesting. Don't look here for poetry or written and re-written prose. This is lighthearted, easy reading. And it's all for the most part worth it. Not to mention that it's also from Virginia Beach. [e-mail Gunther for contact info: gunther8544@hotmail.com]

**Counter Theory #4****\$2ppd | 64 pgs | half-sized | offset \*comes with CD sampler\***

With this issue, Brian moves from full-sized newsprint to a more intimate half-sized offset printed version. For some reason, Counter Theory seems to fit very well into this smaller format. The

content this time around is pretty basic, and the same as past issues. There are a few pages of columns, a couple more of scene photos, zine and tons of music reviews with visuals. The interviews this time around are done very well, and are with Milemarker, Geoff Farina (Karate, The Secret Stars), Engine

Down, Le Shok, The Haggard, Ohev Records, and Law of Inertia 'zine/record label. The first 1,000 copies get a sampler CD, which is pretty good and includes songs from Eiffel, Kite Flying Society, Small Brown Bike, Planes Mistaken for Stars, and many more. Counter Theory is worth checking out and keeping an eye on. It would be great if Brian could put out more than one issue per year, though. [c/o Brian Ellis | 8608 NW 59 Court | Tamarac, FL 33321]

**Fragments #2****\$2 | 44 pgs | full-sized | copied**

This is an interesting zine. No ads, no reviews. Basically, nothing like a typical zine of this size. The topic of this issue is power, and there are articles, facts, images, opinions, statistics, and all kinds of theories piled upon each other by the editor of Fragments and a number of other contributors. Everything seems to be very well-researched and there's tons of interesting and rich information included. To quote the intro, "The

idea is that the various disparate elements should interact, complementing and contradicting each other to build meaning synergistically." Some of the sub-topics include "Power and Sex," "Power Over Nature," and "Social Power." This is all pretty hard-hitting stuff. It's not necessarily leisure reading overall. [P.O. Box 28253 | Santa Ana, CA 92799]

**Fuck Yer Fascists #1****send stamps | 7 pgs | full-sized | copied**

This is a pretty interesting little zine, but it seems that certain things about the content haven't really "broken in" yet. As the cover says, F.Y.F. is supposedly "A mini-political zine analyzing personal thoughts and views on various subjects," though I found a lot more "stating" rather than "analyzing." For example, the zine is made completely without the use of a computer, which gives it a look that I am fond of, but the only response Molly gives to this is a statement of "That's just my beliefs." Well, that just left me feeling unfulfilled and uninformed. If the purpose of this zine is to help get people who are not politicians involved in politics—which is a great idea and a great goal for a zine—why not also shed light on certain beliefs, and perhaps explain things from your viewpoint? There is some really good information in here, though, like a page devoted to information on Thomas Paine as a historical hero, some recommended independent films, and newspaper clippings. Molly

**How To Order Zines.**

1. Pick some you like.
2. Find the price of the zine at the top of the review.
3. If you are generous, or live outside of the country, send more than what is requested.
4. Locate the address of the zine at the end of the review.
5. Hide your money in an envelope, and send it over with your address.



has enough interest in this for it to be good in coming issues, but for now I wish she would just tell her readers *why* we should "fuck cell phones." Back yourself up!! [F.Y.F. | P.O. Box 269 | Boerne | TX 78006]

#### **Gulk #6**

**\$1 or \$2 | 28 pgs | half-sized | copied/thick stock cover**

This is a pretty interesting comic zine that will probably either completely freak you out or totally entertain you. For me it was actually a consistent combination of both. The comics are definitely off-the-wall stories, but they definitely held my interest. I mean, we're talking the first eight pages being a little story called "Wormgut" about insane intestine (and brain) worms that result in an equally as insane explosive bowel movement. A quick read, for sure, and I was definitely a little bit thrilled to read something so completely nuts. The artwork and overall copy quality is above average, so this is definitely something you should check out if you're into D.I.Y. comics. [c/o Tim Hofmann | RR#3 Box 5760 | Skowhegan, ME 04976 | skybone@hotmail.com]

#### **Inside Joke #5**

**\$.75 | 20 pgs | half-sized | copied**

Though there seemed to have been an abnormally long lapse between issue #4 and #5 of Inside Joke, #5 is finally out. Unfortunately, this one seems a little thin, but it does contain the usual elements that readers have grown to expect. There are a few personal/journal-like pieces by editor Dave as well as a "political ramblings" page. There is some work from contributors as well, including a write-up about the Wild Theory Fest, an extension of a radio show on a Cocoa Beach Christian station. There are some live photos, a couple of music reviews, and a piece about Dave's experience at a Get Up Kids/Weezer show. Dave also does a fairly interesting interview with Christen Carter, who runs Busy Beaver buttons and stamps (she made my stamp for me). Overall, this Inside Joke seems to be a fairly quick, light read. As always, I look toward the next issue for improvement and more entertainment. [c/o Dave Mulet | P.O. Box 6613511 | Miami Springs, FL 33266-1351 | daveNml@yahoo.com]

#### **Keep Me At Arm's Length #1**

**\$1 + 2 stamps | 24 pgs | half-sized | copied**

This is a pretty entertaining 'zine for a first issue. The cover is refreshingly different, consisting of a pretty good ink drawing with the title drawn into the picture. There are little bios about the editors, as well as contributed poetry and fiction stories. The layout, for the most part is cut and paste with plenty of drawings and pictures to look at. There are a number of fiction pieces by co-editor Alexys that are pretty interesting to read. This is one zine that I truly do believe will improve tremendously over time, and I'm definitely looking forward to it. [c/o Annie Beare | 7 E. Brookland Ave. | Wilmington, DE 19805 | xthatanniegirfx@aol.com]

#### **My Fat Irish Ass #3**

**\$1 | 72 pgs | full-sized | copied**

"The official magazine of absolutely nothing" adorns the cover of the third issue of MFIA. The statement pretty much sums up the zine entirely. There are some stories, and an elegy for Joey Ramone, some pictures, and some Family Circus cartoons with the words changed. Most of the stories are about Tom Paine, who I'm pretty sure is actually the person who does this zine. So basically everything is written in the third person, including an interview with

Tom Paine. Tales of drunken experiences and alcohol addiction. Basically, this zine is bad, but boy did I giggle throughout the entire reading experience. It's worth that much. [P.O. box 65391 | Washington, DC 20035]

#### **The New Scheme #3**

**\$2ppd | 56 pgs | full-sized | newsprint**

This issue of *The New Scheme* came out toward the end of this summer, and compared to issue #2, it is pretty similar, if not slightly less stimulating content-wise. This issue contains some pretty good columns, though only four of them. There are interviews with Shai Halud, The Thumbs (who I haven't heard anything about in a couple of years), and Anasarca. The highlight of the issue for me was a few pages worth of an interview with Adam Voith, who wrote the book *Bridges With Spirit*, edits *Little Engine* fanzine, and also runs TNI Books. This is an interesting interview. There are also publication and music reviews this time around. It seems like Stuart is starting to work even harder on his zine, and one result seems to be an accelerated release schedule, which is great. So look for the new issue very shortly. [P.O. Box 19873 | Boulder, CO 80308 | [www.thenewscheme.com](http://www.thenewscheme.com)]

#### **Paping #3**

**stamps/\$1 | 48 pgs | quarter-sized | copied**

This is definitely one of the most entertaining comic zines I've read in a long time. This issue contains mostly stories and drawings in comic form of John's job as an art teacher in a public elementary school. Everything in here pertaining to that topic is very interesting and fun to read about, I guarantee. There is also a series of drawings that make up the middle of the zine, entitled "A Brief History of the Vasquez Family", which is also interesting. This is definitely something worth checking out, especially if you are into comics, teaching, or just like to read something done by a really nice guy. [c/o John Mejias | 60 St. Mark's Place | Apt. 4 | New York, NY 10003 | speedymyskha@aol.com]

#### **Retail Whore #3**

**\$2ppd | 40 pgs | half-sized | copied**

I really enjoyed this zine a lot. Seeing as how I have worked in retail for over two years, the rants and tales of the retail life were comical and easy for me to read, since the bulk of customers being insanely ridiculous seems to be a very universal trait. Aside from the consistent retail work-oriented personal pieces by Katherine, there are also lots of personal stories and journal-like entries that contain a whole lot of emotion and tons of mood. There is also this really interesting (and sometimes funny (in that dark humor sort of way), and then again sometimes so brutally honest that it's upsetting) part called "the paxil diaries," where Katherine writes about a few days in a row she experienced without Paxil. And perhaps my favorite to quote and read to my friends at work: "101 customer complaints," which would be ridiculously funny if you've never worked retail, and both ridiculously funny and believable if you have. Throughout *Retail Whore*, Katherine writes with such an open and active voice that it's very difficult not to get sucked into what's going on in the parts of her life she puts onto paper. This is definitely a zine worth reading, especially if you have ever had a terrible job with terrible customers. [c/o K. Raz | 5741 N. Ridge Apt. #3ne | Chicago, IL 60660 | [retailwho\\_re@hotmail.com](mailto:retailwho_re@hotmail.com)]

#### **Retail Whore #4**





**\$2ppd | 40 pgs | half-sized | copied**

This is the second issue of Retail Whore that I have read and #4, just like #3 is a very good zine. This issue deals a lot less with retail as compared to the one above, though, which was a little bit of a downer for me. But this issue doesn't necessarily have a main theme to the writing. Most of it has to do with past relationships, experiences, and definitely drug trips. Page after page of personal stories with reprinted e-mails that have to do with the story at hand included, which makes for a very nice alternate form of dialogue. The information that Katherine reveals in an issue like this is really pretty amazing and good for people who are looking for something a step above the regular personal zine. [c/o K. Raz | 5741 N. Ridge Apt. #3ne | Chicago, IL 60660 | retailwho\_re@hotmail.com]

**Semi-Sweet #1****\$1/ trade | 6 pgs (single sided) | full-sized | copied**

This is a pretty bold first issue. It lacks a lot of the generic zine characteristics that zinesters tend to reproduce after reading other zines before they start their first issue. This is really a poetry zine, but it is laid out like an oversized book. There is a paragraph-long introduction on the first page with a little bit of information about editor Kat. After that, there are a total of six poems, one after the other. The layout is a little bit plain, but it only makes it look more like a book, which might be the goal. We'll have to see as far as future issues go. Anybody who's into poetry will like this. Most people will probably wait at least another issue until Kat really gets on her feet with this. It is good to be seeing first issues again though. [c/o Kat Becker | 3640 Karen Ct. N | Decatur, IL 62526 | sickslacker@bolt.com]

**Touched By an Anvil #14****\$1-2/stamps/trade | 56 pgs | quarter-sized | copied**

This is a pretty thick personal zine from a girl in the Northwest. Though there really are plenty of those floating around lately, luckily none that I've found thus far are very terrible. Including this one. Though I can't get entirely into all of the stories of broken hearts and lost love that are in here, I'm still fairly interested in learning about Webly's life and what's going on. There's an interesting story and reprinted e-mails/online conversations about a dumb high school kid who tried to get Webly to change the name of her zine because it was the name of his band. There are also a couple of cartoon strip type drawings that lighten things up and are simple and witty. There are journal entries, and lots of other types of stories, and definitely enough pages in here that if you don't like one thing, you're sure to find something that interests you. Not bad, but you definitely know who you are already if you are going to get super excited about this. [P.O. Box 30104 | Eugene, Oregon 97403]

**Waggy #6****\$2ppd | 48 pgs | full-sized | newsprint**

It's been a long time since the last issue of Waggy came out, but finally #6 is out. The content this time around is fairly similar to that of #5, but this time there are lengthy interviews with Bouncing Souls, The Vandals, H2O, and Microwave Orphans. Both Grace and Korenne also include some of their own writing and thoughts, as well as a section called Fuzzy Memories (which they had last issue) in which the two write about funny past experiences together. Another similar section is called Monkey Business, where Grace and Korenne as well as some friends tell funny stories. There are album, zine, and show reviews to top off the back end of the zine

as well. [c/o Grace | 9 Black Gum Tree Lane | Kings Park, NY 11754 | waggyzine@hotmail.com]

**Wonkavision #15****\$2 | 80 pgs | full-sized | thick-stock newsprint**

This is actually the first time I've read an issue of Wonkavision, and it's enough to surprise me. From what I had heard of Wonkavision before reading it, it seemed to be a fairly big zine, with plenty of readers and a pretty serious approach to publishing. Unfortunately, after reading the zine, I came away with a completely different feeling. The cover is great - a well-designed full color glossy with the words "the self growth issue" across the side. Initially I expected something roughly along the lines of Punk Planet, or other similar publications. No. Inside the layout is unperfected, and the format of information is cluttered. And the typos, spelling and grammatical errors are so obvious and plentiful that it makes it difficult to even read through the zine. But, indeed Wonkavision has its plus points. There's lots of information in this zine. Interviews with The Faint, Strike Anywhere, The Lot Six, just to name a few. Also included are letters, rumors, news, show and record reviews (no zine reviews). There are lots of articles as well (homosexuality and youth, underground publishing conference, etc.) that are typically hit or miss. Overall, Wonkavision seems like a zine that grew in readership and circulation before it grew in style, organization, and overall quality. In time, it might be better. [670 Inca Street | Denver, CO 80204 | www.wonkavisiononline.com]

**Xerox Debt #5****\$2 | 40 pgs | half-sized | copied**

This is a great zine for anyone who is really into ordering new and different zines. This has pages of detailed and interesting zine reviews written by zinesters and other writers, all in each person's preferred style of reviewing them. There is also some basic zine scene news and information, announcements about new zines, zine submissions, etc. There's also a few pages of information on Bill Price, an imprisoned child molester who has ordered numerous zines done by young women. This is a great resource, but don't look here for very stimulating articles or design. This is still a zine-review zine, even if it is a good one. [c/o Davida Gypsy Breier | P.O. Box 963 | Havre de Grace, MD 21078 | leekinginc@hotmail.com]

**Zine Guide #5****\$6 | 156 pgs | full-sized | newsprint/glossy b&w cover**

I've been waiting for this puppy to come out for months now and finally, the fifth issue of the great Zine Guide is here. With listings of thousands of zines (if you have on send it to them) and tons of great resources, this is definitely something every zinester needs to have on his or her desk. There are lists of favorite zines determined by surveys broken down into categories such as favorites among readers, girls, boys, zinesters, record labels, and overall. There is a zine forum with many zinesters' opinions on and answers to topics and questions such as "What would you like to see happen with your zine in the next year and what resources would you need to achieve that?" Also included is a list of distributors for zinesters and other free or cheap services for printing, flyers, etc. Zine Guide is a great resource for anyone who is at all interested in zines. [Zine Guide | P.O. Box 5467 | Evanston, IL 60204 | zineguide@yahoo.com]



# A Little Sugar, A Little Salt.

by

Marion Solace

## [Sugar: The Two Second Bread Run.]

It was in high school, over summer vacation. About a week before my seventeenth birthday. The night I lost my, well, you know. But this story is not about that. Me, my best friend Gina, and our boy friend Brandon who hung with the whole crew at the time, were getting drunk in Gina's bedroom. Drinking forties, Mickey's, if I remember precisely, yeah ghetto style nasty, just shooting the shit, probably playing cards and listening to music. Korn had just come out with their first Cd and probably weren't very well-known at the time. We were most likely listening to that or Marilyn Manson, or Juliana Hatfield if I was able to catch Gina in the right mood. Gina was sitting on the top portion of her huge bunk bed and suddenly she started hyperventilating. We couldn't get her to stop, she was heaving and getting all loud. She was a bit psychotic at this time in her life, and I suddenly realized I hadn't been paying very much attention to how much she had been drinking, which really got my heart racing. So I turned to Brandon who was sitting up in the top bunk with her and was like, "What do we do!? What do we do!?" It was the middle of the night and we were trying not to wake her parents up. Brandon was like, "Go get her some bread." It seemed like Mission Impossible to me and to all of us. I was drunk off my ass and the thought of venturing down into the house in the dark of the night without waking anyone to try and look for some bread was a bit overwhelming to all of us. So I stood up tall and accepted the challenge bravely. "I can do this!" I declared. Brandon was like, "We've got faith in you, now go!" So I went. I remember seeing the stair case, I remember popping into the kitchen and seeing the bread on the counter top, I couldn't believe my luck, it was right there laying out. I don't recall my feet hitting the staircase more than once on the way up, I seemed to be flying with the wind whipping through my hair. I was all slow motion, yet super-fast. I remember thinking to myself, two seconds, I've been gone two seconds. I wonder if they'll think I was as fast as I think this has been. I burst through the bedroom door, holding my prize up in the air to see their astonished faces. I looked at them, and we all had an understanding that it was one of the most amazing things that had ever happened to us. Two seconds. And they knew it too.

## [Salt: Give Me Grief.]

I am oftentimes very nonchalant and flippant in the day to day grind of things. Instead of talking about whatever pop culture thing that is toying my interest at the moment, this afternoon I will talk about loss. I think I am going to put on my serious hat for a little while.

I am the youngest of three children. I am the only girl. Daddy's girl. Or at least I was. I am in my twenties now. But I guess I will always be daddy's girl. We just don't show it anymore.

I have two older brothers. One is seven years older than me. The other is ten years older than me. I shouldn't be referring to the eldest one in present terms. The eldest one is dead.

I will call him Julian. Julian died five years ago when I was a junior in high school. He was killed in a car accident on his way down to visit us. (He lived in Seattle for the time being.) He was with his fiancée and they were coming down to shop for engagement rings. I guess she fell asleep at the wheel. No other cars were involved. She survived, with a broken collar bone. He was thrown from the car and pronounced dead at the scene. He wasn't wearing his seat belt. He had been all the way reclined in the passenger seat, sleeping.

I, of course, will never forget the night of his death. I was asleep in bed, it was about two A.M. I hear the doorbell ring. I woke up, but I just rolled over, thinking they had finally arrived. I heard my mother scream. She was screaming to my father, "Oh no, oh no, there is a state trooper at the door!" I don't even think she could talk to him. She must have ran away from him. She knew immediately that Julian was dead. I remember getting up and throwing jeans on and following my father down the stairs as he was tying his robe around his waste. I heard the last bit, in and out, of the trooper's stone-faced stoic speech. "At approx 12:50 A.M., February 19<sup>th</sup>, blah, blah, your son, blah blah,



were never very unsafe about it (the worst thing we probably did was record a song while under the influence, therefore limiting its quality). But this was a nightly occurrence nonetheless, and it quickly became as acceptably routine to us as the good conversation that both influenced and surrounded it. I never drove home with hard lemonade in my belly - the nights were so endless that I could actually feel my body come back up in the course of the night. This lasted about two or three weeks, nightly. When we finally came to our senses, I realized that I'd been missing out, in an attempt to celebrate, and Morris had been butchering his sleeping patterns in an attempt to make his waking hours (nearly all twenty-four of them) more enjoyable. So we let that go.

But in the mornings before those nights, I'd drive the forty-five minutes to my favorite surfing spot that surprisingly few people know about. I'd go alone usually, convincing myself that I wanted to do things like this by myself from now on. When I went so early one time that there was a shimmery, gold shine from the water, and the porpoises were launching themselves fully out of the water and over the waves, I knew I really did want to do things like that by myself now. There's just something to be said for being a hallmark card every now and then.

The middle segment of summer is a bit of a blur. Plans tended to lose their luster, and ritual became habitual. But when August hits, one becomes aware of missed opportunities and forgotten plans. This happened. I got antsy and eager to, for the sake of time and my future self, engage in adventures. Unfortunately, a great deal of our adventures went no further than comical brainstorming on the couch until three or four o'clock in the morning. I did, however, manage to get myself to explore the very old Cavalier Hotel. Almost ancient to us, we snuck in through a front door by the indoor pool, circa 1920. The door was opened to allow a view of the ocean from the hill that the hotel sits on. We got to the sixth floor (the seventh floor is completely inaccessible - blocked off for some reason, a mystery we like to scare ourselves with). We climbed the back staircase past the seventh floor as it grew thinner and thinner in an almost attic-like area. We followed a spiral staircase to the bell-tower, completely open to the outside. The sun was setting and I stood and looked out into the ocean and up and down the coast while the warm summer breeze and the sound of the waves on the nearby beach reminded us where we were.

And so as summer closed, we went to the Mexican restaurant and dissected movies together. We stayed up later than usual, and all got sick with the cough, all knowing that we've re-entered the season where we're only seen on weekends and jackets become necessary, leaves only carpet.

Now, the days fly by and there's plenty of work to be done. It's fall, that's how long it's been since an issue of this zine came out. It was supposed to straddle the gap between summer and fall, but instead it lies in a bed of leaves, right in the middle of autumn.

My nights are cut short, five times out of seven. But the remaining two are bright and quick. My last year of high school and it seems that finally I've manipulated the system enough so as to ensure both good times and good education. Sure, I work a lot harder but I'm feeling a lot more fulfilled. And I'm getting more and more happy about the glorious and definite possibility of college. (So much more content that I spend hours researching, weighing, and applying.)

The season has changed so that I go to sleep late on weekend nights -- the sheets cold like the outside -- and read myself into the morning. The season has changed again so my evenings and weekends are exciting, youthful, and new. And though I used to think I was too good for high school and the people there, I'm humbly and happily admitting my misinterpretation. It took me a few years, but every afternoon there's a party in the parking lot, or an extended party across the street at the diner or at Rosa's house.

The House and I took advantage of a crisp evening and spent it on the Elizabeth River. It was dark and cool and windy and I spent the night quiet in thought and a mix of fear and contentedness.

Which is really how the last couple months have been for me, anyway. On the eleventh I was numbed for hours, unmovable and with an uneasy, gut feeling that things were only going to escalate. But the very next day, though still shocked and upset, I couldn't help but think to myself how good things were going for me, despite it all. This was a strange feeling. I had many possible sources of happiness around me, but there was... there is an effort of prevention.

So, enter the season I fear most. The one that renders me stale-hearted, downcast, and so disjointed that extreme happiness occurs only unpredictably and almost frighteningly manic. And nights are dark, afternoons grey. With only but so many soft, warm, and communal memories.

But in the white cold months to come, being melancholy only makes sweet things taste sweeter, and precious time all the more exciting. Keep yourself split. Keep happy things happy, for it's stronger to keep living like you should and how you want to when there's some element whose objective is disruption. Don't be disrupted.



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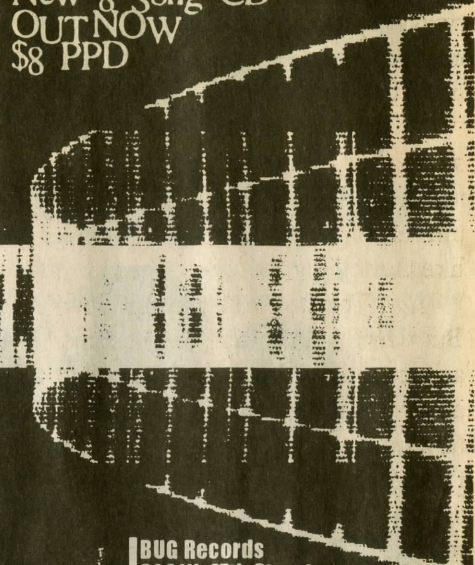
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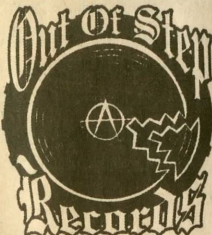


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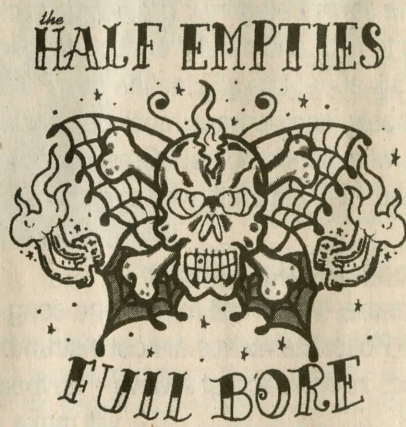
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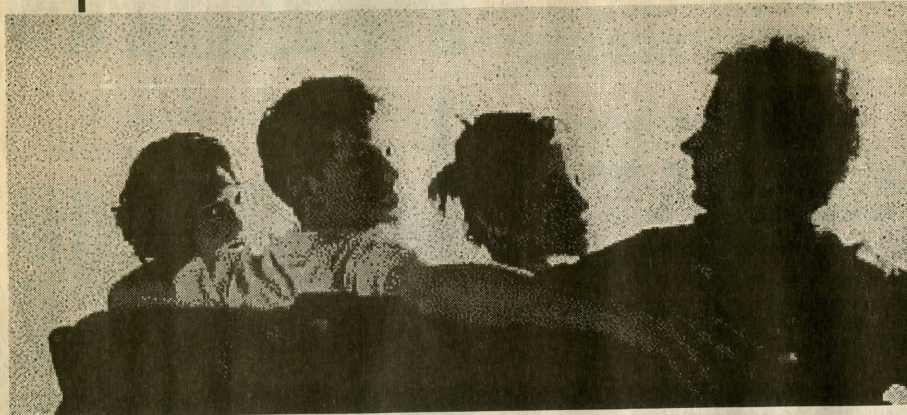
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worth more than a review.

# NOW IT'S OVERHEAD



This was a toughy.

Unlike last issue, I actually had to do some figuring before I could choose a band to feature on this page. I got a number of records that I thought ranked about the same (White Octave, Clive Holden, Red Animal War, Sorry About Dresden, New End Original, and Now It's Overhead). I really wanted to give

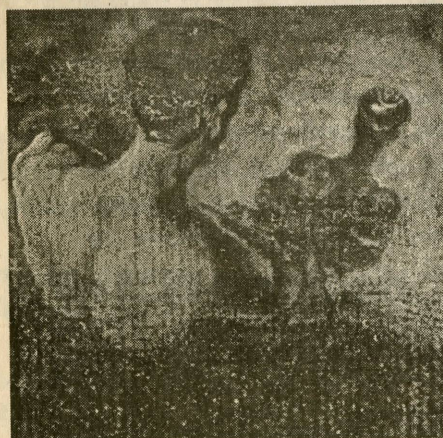
this page to one of those bands or artists, and after a lot of thinking, decided that it belonged to Now It's Overhead this time around.

You might ask why. Well, this Athens, GA four piece puts together a beautifully eclectic, original, and melodious blend of spacey, moody rock that comes across a lot thicker, stronger and technical than anything else I'd lump into the same category. The vocals stick out as being catchy and somehow dark at the same time; they're strong enough to rock and careful enough to follow the dynamics of the melodies.

Let's talk about this all-star line up. Piloting the ship is Andy LeMaster, fairly productive in the world of independent music, and perhaps most well-known for engineering and playing on early Bright Eyes recordings, as well as touring with Conor Oberst. Crewing for LeMaster are Maria Taylor and Orenda Fink, who also play in Azure Ray, and Clay Leverett, who is responsible for the smooth and echoic drumbeats that back the songs on this record.

## My favorite song: "6th Grade Roller"

Believe me, it's difficult to pick one song out of nine to claim as my favorite. All nine stick out individually. But, "6th Grade Roller" combines almost instrumental vocal melodies, a chorus that crescendoes into itself at the end of the song, and an almost awkward keyboard/guitar melody, that makes the song come across as jittery. It will make you nervous. You'll like that about it.



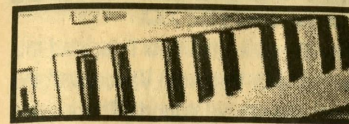
## According To Andy....

Andy has been involved in projects with fellow bandmates in Azure Ray, as well as Seaworthy, Flash to Bang Time, Isobel, Lovers, and REM.

Now It's Overhead will be touring the southeast in January with Desaparecidos, a new project from Conor Oberst from Bright Eyes.

## contact:

saddle creek records | p.o. box 8554 | omaha, ne 68108 | [www.saddle-creek.com](http://www.saddle-creek.com)  
now its overhead | [www.nowitsoverhead.com](http://www.nowitsoverhead.com)



"There ain't but two things in music: good and bad. Now if it sounds good, you don't worry what it is, you just go on and enjoy it." - Louis Armstrong

m u s i c  
reviews

## REVIEWS DISCLAIMER:

Believe me, I'm not out to make enemies or halt the forward-motion of any musicians or artists through my reviews of anything in SORE (books, zines, music, anything). But this is still my magazine, and I'm still going to write the reviews just as honest as I ever have. Because that's how the independent music scene works, friends. And further, this is a community that prides itself on better values, musicianship, and ethics. So, if you send me your record, you're silently consenting to accept any words I write of your work.

AM/FM - Mutilate Us

Polyvinyl Records | RATING: XXXX

For some reason this entire project reminds me a little bit of Fountains of Wayne, who actually did the soundtrack to the movie *That Thing You Do*. Two guys play poppy rock type stuff with all kinds of influences and very melodic vocals. Same general idea with AM/FM. AM/FM, though, play songs that are very different from one another, and there really isn't one single specific sound that seems to carry across from each song on the record. Instead, there could be an acoustic ballad in front of a drum, guitar, and cymbal heavy rock song. From track to track, they really mix things up a lot. Music with depth, vocals with passion, and an overall well-rounded approach to writing/recording. This feels a lot like something that your best friend, who is a musical genius, would do as a way to experiment and put together some music that has been sitting with him/her for a couple years.

Appleseed Cast - *Low Level Owl: Vols. I & II*  
Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXXX

Two volumes worth of Appleseed Cast, released separately and at separate times. This could very well be regarded in the future as a signature record of a certain sect of the independent music scene for a time period. These records are very good, but, they're not quite breathtaking. Then again, maybe it will get better with age. Certainly it grows in meaning with each listen, seeing as how there seems to be a purpose behind the flow of the songs. It's hard to say whether The Appleseed Cast has progressed musically since *Mare Vitalis* about a year and a half ago. Their sound now probably has more depth, and is slightly more technical, but definitely more mellow. On *Mare Vitalis* the boys rocked out when necessary, I suppose. That's practically no more, though it could be said that rocking out is no longer necessary. *Low Level Owl* has a more foggy sound -- soft and fluid. Hearing both records play into one another is also a really cool experience. The music lasts all night. It's good, and it's an

accomplishment. It might get even better by wintertime.

Bad Astronaut VS Armchair Martian - *War of the Worlds*  
Owned & Operated Records | RATING: XXX 1/2

This is a pretty interesting and strong record. Bad Astronaut and Armchair Martian each play three songs by the other band, and then all forces act as one to finish off the record with a seventh song. This reminds me a little bit of *What's Up Bro?* which was the split that Gameface and Error Type: 11 did about a year ago. Similar musical sounds - that same sort of really thick and sort of punky strong-rock. However, this one steps a little bit past that record as far as coolness goes. Bad Astronaut and Armchair Martian both got into the studio at the same time and recorded back and forth, also using some of each others' equipment. The record is short, though, and it leaves me feeling a little bit unquenched. Another complaint is that I never know which band is playing which song, but then again since they're playing each others' songs, I

guess it might just not matter who's playing when. I'd never heard either band before, so this may only be a problem for people in my situation.

Benton Falls - *Fighting Starlight*  
Deep Elm Records | RATING: XX 1/2

Though I'd place these guys in the same category as Appleseed Cast, they come across sort of stale and exhausted. The melodies indeed are somewhat dynamic, with breaks and builds in the music, but at a slower tempo, and with a lot less energy than I think music like this is better played with. The songs are long, and so the

record drags on longer than I want it to. I also think that the vocalist is probably such a good singer that it makes the entire record sound a little bit too perfect. Either way, these musicians are definitely talented, and though I can't get completely enthralled by the music, it is good on a lot of standards. Overall, I think this music is so clean that I have a bad reaction to it.

Burnside - *Loser Friendly*  
Out of Step Records | RATING: XX 1/2

This is your fairly typical, west coast snotty pop punk with slightly harder-driving guitars. This is actually only an EP - with six short songs, with a seventh joke song thrown in at the end. My overall impression of these guys is that they're doing a good job of playing this kind of music, but it's important to remember that this music isn't new. These guys sound pretty thick for a four piece, which is another side note. They might be able to do something a little bit more original with future releases because they're definitely tight enough. [[www.burnsidepunk.com](http://www.burnsidepunk.com)]



AM/FM



**Calendar Girl - everyone but you**  
**Intelligent Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

Calendar Girl plays a thick style of indie pop/rock that comes across as sort of plain, save a few very good instances. First the good. Two of the members of this band have a very punk rock oriented resume, where the other two have a slightly more indie rock oriented resume. This proves to be a fairly interesting combination, seeing as how one can almost hear the distinct elements from each side of the spectrum in a number of songs. Another good part of the record is the drums. Mixed high, and played punchy and tight, they play a very clear role in much of the melody. The downfall of this record is that it sometimes seems sluggish and drab. This is due to chunky and chord-oriented guitar work, and vocals that really sound too even throughout the record to hold my interest. Plenty of people will dig this, especially those of you who are into Gameface, and want to hear something slightly less grungy. For me, though, this comes at a bad time. I'm tired of music that makes me this tired.

**The Casualties - Die Hards**  
**Side One Dummy Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

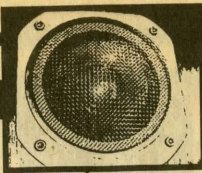
By the name of this band one can probably figure out what style of music they play: fast and crunchy old school street punk. They do an alright job at it, but I'm really picky about this type of punk rock. These four guys are from New York and have been together for ten or more years, which is remarkable because they look all look very young. The highlights of the record are the group vocals which give the record an almost youth crew hardcore feel. The guitars are also decent, which is a lot more than many bands of this genre have to brag about. The whole thing comes across as sort of blah because it feels like the mixing isn't as tight as it could be overall. But then again, it makes it sound older so maybe that's a good thing. Not bad, just keep in mind how picky I am.

**Contender - Scenic Overlook**  
**Not Bad Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

This Colorado band is made up of somewhat well-known musicians, including Kap from Comfort Creature fanzine, and Chuck and Colin of The Facet. There are two vocalists on this record, Chuck and Kap, who each write lyrics for a few songs on their own, and combine efforts for a sixth one. The sound this four-piece creates is both melodic and thick, hardcore-ish and punky, and comes across as pretty well-done. The melodies are tight and big, and the drums are fast and punchy. My only complaints are in the mixing. The vocals seem a little bit too low. Still looking forward to a full-length sometime down the line. [\$6ppd from Not Bad Records. See record label directory at end of Music Review section]

**Dead End - Killing the Messenger 7"**  
**Underestimated Records | RATING: XX**

I can't get too into this record, to be honest. These guys play real fast and punchy hardcore, and for the most part play pretty well, but the record seems to be mixed so poorly that they're difficult to listen to. All of the electricity on most songs runs into itself and ends up being just a loud fuzz of distortion and cymbals that painfully overpower the vocals. Indeed, the basslines are fast and good, the drums the same, and the guitars are also pretty good. And there are ten songs on this 7" (basically, a really inexpensive full-length, which is appealing). But, on another note: I'm getting tired of sound clips between songs on punk and hardcore records.



**Def Poets Society - self-titled CD**  
**New Disorder Records | RATING: XXX**

It took at least two listens until I decided this was a fairly cool record. Hip-hop from Vancouver, the Def Poets Society has a pretty raw, old school sound. There are 5 MC's, a beatboxer, and DJ. Though hip-hop is a type of music I haven't heard very much of, I can pretty much conclude that this is probably some of the better that I have heard of it. The record is pretty long (sixteen tracks) which can either be a plus or a minus, depending on how much you like hip-hop or how much of it you can handle at once. Pretty cool, but I won't keep it on heavy rotation, which, incidentally has nothing to do with their dumb name. [www.defpoets.net]

**The Facet - Adult Comedy**  
**Not Bad Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

So it seems like The Facet came back out of nowhere. I heard *Playing Second* (Dill Records) about four years ago when I started doing SORE, and liked it a lot. Though with this release The Facet could still largely be considered a good band, I'm not as into their style of music as I once was. When it really comes down to it, they are at least doing something a little bit less common than most punk bands these days. The Facet plays a more rock and hardcore rooted punk rock, with a very thick sound (five members thick), and stronger vocals as opposed to nasal whines. There are also some pretty nice breakdowns and time changes on a few songs as well, which merits a little bit more credit in quality. These boys have even incorporated intros and drum breakdowns that are the very early stages of a more dynamic, post-punk type sound. Definitely a record to check out if you liked *Playing Second* or if you're into hard punk with some subtle fancy twists. About a month after I got this record for review, I got wind that The Facet had broken up.

**Fall Silent - Six Years in the Desert**  
**Revelation Records | RATING: XX**

I really wanted to be excited about this record, but I'm not. Combining hardcore, hard rock, and a little bit of metal, these guys have a reputation for being angry through their music. Basically, their music is very fast-paced with thin, raspy and high screamed vocals. The guitar work is sharp and chunky, and drums are extremely fast. These guys really do prove themselves as far as I'm concerned with their cover of the Sesame Street theme song, but it just really shows how great they could be. Oh well, this just isn't my thing.

**The Flatliners - What A Waste...**  
**RATING: XX 1/2**

These guys play tight, fast, and dirty street punk/oi type stuff, and they do it pretty well. The songs are pretty vocals-heavy but the other aspects stand out as well. The drums are fast, very tight, and very sharp. They seem to be mixed surprisingly well with the rest of the music. Guitars are crunchy and sharp as well. There are group-sung choruses, which I'm a sucker for when it comes to hardcore and old school punk bands, and the CD is short enough that there isn't time to get bored with anything in the given period of time. I don't really dig all of the lyrics, but anyone really into old school street punk type stuff right now would definitely be into this record. The best song is "Razors In The Night," though, and I think it's a cover from a band called Blitz. Either way, not bad. [P.O. Box 701781 | San Antonio, TX 78270-1781 | flatliners\_oi@yahoo.com | www.geocities.com/flatliners\_oi]

**Glasseater - 7 Years Bad Luck**  
**Fearless Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

This record lies somewhere between metallic hardcore and melodic hardcore punk. The overall sound these five guys create is very thick, with lots of guitar sounds, very fast drums and lots of cymbals. My main complaint with these guys is that in the middle of a song they'll have a time change, and break into very, very throaty and thumping metallic-sounding hardcore with double vocalists, and then break back into sweetly sung punky hardcore. It makes for an awkward flow from song to song for the most part. I like the punkier stuff a lot better - they pull it off well. Strong vocals and hooky guitars. But those metallic breakdowns ruin the continuity for me.

Clive Holden

**The Hissyfits - Letters from Frank**  
**Top Quality Rock and Roll | RATING: XXXX**

An all-girl three piece from New York City, the Hissyfits are definitely a band that sticks out. This record for the most part falls into a category somewhat reminiscent of the early '90s West Coast grunge sound, with a little added pop and punk, leaving the record both listenable and flavorful. With melodic, hooky guitar lines, punchy drums, and melodic basslines, the overall sound of the music meshes well. On songs like "Doin' Fine," Princess, P-Girl, and Fon-Lin take a more mellow approach to the rock, and the song is perfectly placed on the record as a way to mix things up. I guess my only real complaint with the record is that the vocals, though sung very well and almost perfectly with the melodies, aren't very dynamic, which is something I think would give the record an extra umph. Regardless, I like the record pretty well as it is.

**Clive Holden - Trains of Winnipeg: poems & music**  
**Endearing Records | RATING: XXXX 1/2**

This is probably one of the most daring yet respectfully well-done records that the independent music scene has produced. The overall project is a collaboration between the Weakerthans' John K. Samson and Jason Tait, as well as singer/songwriter Christine Fellows and poet Clive Holden. Samson, Tait, and Fellows arrange the music behind Holden reading thirteen of his poems. The result is really terrific. The loops and the sounds behind Holden's words -- which are well-arranged, artistic and powerful -- sound perfect with the mood of the poems. There's a great mix of intended-to-be stale and cold sounds and feelings, and others that sound and feel more upbeat and cheery. Holden's poems, though they surely would be just as good in written form, sound like they were meant to be read in front of this music. There is so much mood in the words - just by listening, even passively, one understands the places and the moods he speaks about. And the slight melody and loops behind only make that more intense. It seems obvious to me that everyone involved in the writing and production of this record has a terrific grasp on the intense relationship that exists between words and music. This great for late nights and car rides when it's raining or nighttime, in any season, anywhere. [www.trainsofwinnipeg.com]

**Hot Little Rocket - Danish Documentary**

**Endearing Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

I don't know much about these guys, but their sound is pretty new and interesting to hear. Imagine goofy poppy rock meeting post-punk rock and coming out serious. There are lots of breakdowns and dirty guitars behind vocals that sound whiney but tough - almost like a tough nerd complaining (I'm sure the guy isn't a nerd, I'm just trying to put a sound in your brains). Either way, they come across pretty well, and are balanced well with an occasional section of honest melodious singing. Everything else is pretty beaty and gritty. This is good, but I really think the vocalist's voice will wear on most people.

**Hundred Hands - Little Eyes**  
**Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXX**

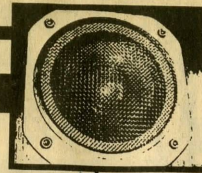
This EP really feels more like a full-length, seeing as how the songs are long and fairly drawn out. The record has a very long feel to it. There are three members in this band, Christopher Crisci and Aaron Pillar (who both play in Appleseed Cast) and the same guy who recorded this record and the Appleseed Cast's record, Ed Rose. I can't really figure out exactly why Hundred Hands was formed, aside from maybe the fact that Crisci and Pillar wanted to work alone on a project, because the overall sound on "Little Eyes" is very similar to that of what the Appleseed Cast put forth on "If Arsenic Fails, Try Algebra." The vocals are airy, soft and echoic. The guitar lines are pretty melodic and chord-less, for the most part, and the drums prominent and snare heavy. All qualities that the Appleseed Cast seems to have as well. The main difference, though, is that Hundred Hands really does seem even more mellow, and doesn't seem as thick and rockish as the Appleseed Cast can. This is a talented release, anyone who is really into the Appleseed Cast will definitely like this. As for me, I have to be in the right mindset to hear it. Otherwise I get antsy and want a little bit of rock.

**Denise Hradecky - two song 7"**  
**Intelligent Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

Denise Hradecky only put two songs on this 7" and it's a damn shame. The two that are included are very soft, very smooth and sweet vocals-centered mix of folk guitar and catchy, poppy vocals. Definitely good music overall. Well-played, well-sung and definitely falling into a category that is fairly uninhabited as of late. As far as comparisons go, Hradecky plays a lot like Jill Sobule, except maybe slightly softer, and a little more serious. I'm fairly impressed and pleased to hear something different and good at the same time.

**Killing For Culture - Hungry Bears Don't Dance**  
**Zip Records | RATING: XXX**

This is only a CD-single with a mere three tracks to sample Killing For Culture, a punk-influenced U.K. five-piece. These guys aren't bad. They have a fairly raw musical style that sounds a lot more like alterna-rock than punk rock, which ends up working fairly well for them. Melodic vocals, and lots of other rockish melodies make for a surprisingly interesting sound. I didn't have to read the bio sheet to know that these guys had punk rock influences. Some





of the guitar lines reveal a study in faster, more chaotic riffs. If there was a direction that television- and radio-friendly popular rock was heading in the grunge aftermath, I would likely guess it would be along these lines. And when it comes down to it, I'd almost hope it would be.

**Kill Your Idols - Funeral for a Feeling**

**Side One Dummy Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

My first experience with this band, and it proves to be a pretty good one. These guys play fast, melodic-but-gruffy hardcore with some solid punk tendencies as far as the melodies go. The vocals are screamy and quick, the guitars punchy and thick. Though I can really only consider their record a novelty at this point (since it's something I'll likely just pop in the stereo every so often), their music seems fairly well-refined (after six years, to be exact) and tight. Kill Your Idols is tough, energetic, and powerful. And I really love the way the guitar leads push into the melody all nice and gritty and high - tough to pull off just right in front of stuff that is so rough.

**Kite Flying Society - cdep**

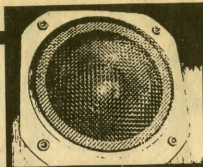
**Goodbye Blue Skies Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

I'm not quite as excited about Kite Flying Society as I thought I would be. This record consists of seven songs of dynamic and rough-around-the-edges hardcore influenced rock. There are ups and downs everywhere. Some sections are more melodic than others, and some are a lot more screamy, and all songs are backed by pretty intense melodies that follow the same melodic/chaotic alternating pattern. For the most part, I love this kind of music and I think Kite Flying Society is pretty good, but not good enough to make my palms sweat. It seems like I hear the word "broken heart" in the vocals too much and I don't particularly care for the layered vocals. One scream behind a more vocally melodic part can really throw it off. There is definitely some talent here, and the possibility of me really liking a full-length from these guys is pretty high. So keep your eyes out.

**Last Days of April - Angel Youth**

**Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXXX**

When I first heard *The Wedding* EP from Sweden's Last Days of April on Bad Taste Records a few years ago, I knew I'd like them for a long time. And I've been right. And so when I found out they'd be releasing with Deep Elm, I got pretty excited. So this is a milestone record because it may very possibly mark a point in Deep Elm's discography that signals the beginning of releasing records that stand out a lot more. Compared to *The Wedding*, *Angel Youth* comes across as significantly thicker, punchier, and a little bit more American-sounding. Whereas "The Wedding" felt slightly melancholy overall, *Angel Youth* is a little bit more spirited. This all mixes well, because with the band's new characteristics comes also a slightly higher level of innovation. It seems like they have taken their fairly simple and melodic indie rock sound to a vocal-centered array of rock backed by technical and poppy guitar lines with added keyboards and fancy effects for all instruments. But, best of all: strings. Yes, a full



quartet plays on a number of songs. It's exciting when you can actually witness positive change occurring, knowing that it is exactly that.

**Lazy American Workers - Another Half-Assed Job**

**Well Done**

**Biscuit Scrubbers Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

I'll have to admit that this is a lot cleaner and a lot higher quality than I expected. Lazy American Workers definitely play a type of punk rock music that I haven't been as into lately, but they also definitely do a pretty good job. Pretty fast, loud and beer-oriented newer sounding punk rock with a lot of guitars and drums. They get fancy here and there and play something that sounds a little bit new and different (punchier beats and more melodic), so they prove that they can mix things up. Not too bad. I'm pretty sure they have a nice following too so if you're into old-school influenced fast and noisy punk rock, definitely check this out.

**M-80 - Don't Take It Away**

**Jumpstart Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

Though these guys are pretty tight, loud, and thick, I can't really get excited about the record as a whole. It seems like they can't quite find a happy medium between ska and skate punk. Either they're playing one or they're playing the other - hardly ever is there an attempt made to mix the two styles at the same time. It seems like they play the skate punk side of things a lot tighter, and when it really comes down to it they focus on that side a lot more so that is definitely to their advantage. If the entire record consisted of their powerful and drum-heavy rocky punk, I might feel better about it, but the one or two songs with ska sections are a downer for me.

**Marion Delgado - an unfocused lense serves a purpose after all Bug Records | RATING: XXXX**

Following the release of their three song demo CD (see SORE #12 for review), Marion Delgado has put out an eight song CD on their own label, Bug Records. Continuing on with the sound and style found on "three songs," this new record contains all three of the songs found on the demo, as well as five more that follow along the same melodic punk-influenced rock lines. Their sound continues to be surprisingly clean, with melodic guitars and cymbal-heavy drums, as well as a very vocal-heavy sound overall. On the new songs, I definitely have picked up on a more evident harder edge -- they seem to rock out a little more consistently, though they do it so cleanly that sometimes I don't realize that it's happening. This is good stuff, but for me a little bit anti-climactic seeing as how there is no improvement over the demo I got this winter, even if there was little room or necessity for improvement.

**Moment - Songs for the Self-Destructive Epo Records | RATING: XXXX**

Moment is strong, melodic, aggressive, and punky. Moment is good. The Boston five-piece has been together for about three years, and the experience gained has an obvious impact on the quality and dynamics involved with this record.

With a hard rocking front and a melodic punk rock back, Moment both pumps you up and then awes you with gritty melodies and quick drums. The guitars overall are very thick but also nice and hooky



MOMENT

while the bassline pretty much consistently pumps up behind. The drums are worth mentioning; pretty dynamic throughout most songs, with good use of cymbals. Worth checking out. Definitely a band to keep an eye on.

**New End Original - Thriller**

**Jade Tree Records | RATING: XXXX 1/2**

Put this on the list of really good records that I've gotten my hands on recently. New End Original is what you get when you take an all star cast, and give them some great new music to play. Two bandmembers are previously from Texas is the Reason (Norman Arenas, Scott Winegard), Charlie Walker from Chamberlain, and Jonah Matranga previously of Far. This record is strong and dynamic. Combined are the best parts of mellow, vocals-heavy rock, and powerful drum-driven punkier rock. Don't think for a minute this isn't a good record, because it is. I dare say these guys know what they're doing.

**Novillero - the brindleford follies**

**Endearing Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

This is a pretty interesting project, for sure. From Winnipeg, Novillero consists of six people playing all kinds of different instruments. The overall sound is somewhere along the lines of ska and mod-influenced pop with some general "old school pop" elements here and there. There are both male and female vocals, and a slew of different kinds of percussion, keyboards, and brass instruments. The recording is also good; everything is crisp and balanced well. Anybody looking for something upbeat, poppy, and new will definitely dig this, especially if a past interest in jazzy ska-type stuff exists.

**ONQ - The Supreme Weight**

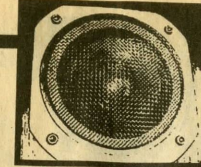
**Ouzel Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

This is a full length CD of an Italian solo project done by a guy named Luco Galuppini. A couple of other people play on the record as well, I believe, but since it was recorded over a seven-month period, I'm assuming that it is fairly sporadic. The music comes across as fairly experimental, sometimes-synthesized, and mellow melodic stuff, that is recorded surprisingly well for an eight-track. The drums are very light, as are the guitars for the most part (though they do break down in places, but without distortion). The vocals are also probably put through some sort of effects processor because they sound different on almost every song. My favorite parts of the record are when the tempo is picked up a little bit and the drums and guitar play a more steady beat - with heavy emphasis on the ride cymbal. I'd recommend this to anyone who was really into Mineral, The Gloria Record or any of those other super-mellow rocky bands. If you do check this out, don't worry; the second half of the record is better than the first.

**Operation: Cliff Clavin - Who Needs Electricity?**

**Geekcore Records | RATING: XXXX**

This is my first experience with Operation: Cliff Clavin, and it is a very good one. This is an all-acoustic release, and Operation: Cliff Clavin has apparently been broken up for a while, but this CD is supposed to be just for fun. And it is. Chris and Hannah play guitar and sing on the record, and Hannah also plays violin on a few songs, which sounds really cool. I'm definitely going to make an effort to check out their stuff after hearing this record. The lyrics are youthful, positive and refreshingly aware. This is a good record, for previous and potential fans of Operation: Cliff Clavin. But act fast, only 100



were made.

**The Overdrives - Too Far to Turn Back Jumpstart Records | RATING: XXX**

The Overdrives play pretty solid, straightforward punk rock with some very good elements, including a pretty obvious hardcore influence. The songs are fast and powerful, with the occasional group chorus, very tight and punchy drumlines and consistently chunky and catchy. The record as a whole pounds through all twelve songs with force and rarely lets up. This record is definitely worth checking out for anybody who is very into west coast punk rock bands. Unfortunately, the band broke up in mid-September. Hopefully they will focus their talents on a project that will better reflect their abilities. I'm getting tired of saying things like "they're not doing anything new, but they're doing it well," especially when the band members really could be doing something new.

**Owen - Owen**

**Polyvinyl Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

Regardless of how good or how bad this record is generally perceived to be, it should be an inspiration to a lot of kids in the indie scene. Owen is the solo project of Mike Kinsella who has played in American Football, Cap'n Jazz, Joan of Arc, and Owls. All nine of these songs are entirely performed, written, recorded and mixed by Mike in his home studio. Do I think that's impressive? Well, yeah, I do. I know it's done a lot, but every time I'm just as impressed. This self-titled record delves into very mellow, vocals-centered harmonies with sweet guitars all with a very sleepy, weak sound. This is great for nighttime listening, and should sit well with fans of Rainer Maria, AM/EM, and any of Mike's previous projects.

**Pirx the Pilot - s/t CD**

**New Disorder Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

These guys have sort of an old school punk rock sound but not in the scratchy street punk sense. They almost have a grungy punk sound. With dual male and female vocals, and up-and-down guitars, the record is pretty interesting to listen to. The music seems fairly simple altogether, which is a pretty nice quality when most punk bands try too hard and end up being too bad. My complaint with this band lies in the vocals, though. They're really stretchy and more sing-songy rather than melodic. Sort of like they are spoken to rhythm or meter. This isn't that bad of a record, but I'm holding out to hear what they can do on future recordings.

**Projektor - Red Wolf Glass**

**Endearing Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

The bio for Projektor that was sent along with the CD said that Projektor plays "intense, dark, and dynamic music." I definitely wouldn't go that far, but these guys aren't bad. But think of something more along the lines of spacey, soft (though thick and at times pretty deep) and sluggish melodies. The vocals stick out a lot and are sung with a melodic force, but save for a few sections and a few songs, they pretty much sound the same throughout. The overall product is a project in melodic, pop rock. It all sounds very solid altogether, and is well-played, but I just can't get very excited about it at all.

**Readymade - On Point and Red**

**Endearing Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

Their bio sheet calls them atmospheric and melodic. Pretty true. Somewhat similar to their label counterparts, this Vancouver band plays a sort of spacey, mellow and dream-like music that



drowns itself out, but not in an annoying and monotonous way. To add to the effect, there is also a fuzzy sound mixed into the background of some of the melodies. These guys are not unlike Appleseed Cast, but they have a less dynamic approach, and could probably be considered more mellow. All in all, pretty good stuff for the spacey side of things.

**The Real Enemy - too little...too late 7"**

**Underestimated Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

This is some pretty thrashy, speedy straightedge hardcore.

There isn't really anything new and interesting going on on the record, and it sort of lacks some of the better qualities that have been heard before on other hardcore records such as group sing-alongs and dynamic melodies. The whole thing sounds just so fast and fuzzy that it loses touch with a lot of elements that I'm sure really are present in the music. It's probably something I would have liked a lot more during my bigger hardcore phase a few years ago, but at this point, I'm definitely holding out for something new and fresh.

**Red Animal War - Breaking in an Angel**  
**Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXXX**

This is probably one of the best records that Deep Elm has released, to be honest. This pretty much breaks all the molds that one would assume seem to pump out the majority of the Deep Elm roster. Red Animal War come from Dallas, Texas and play a great type of dynamic rock with a punk rock influence. These guys are melodic yet rhythmic, raw yet so well refined that everything seems to come across exactly as planned and planned. The melodies are stop-and-go, yet include segments of build-ups and break-downs that mix well and even spice up transitions and create more dynamics. Ballsy rock that I haven't heard from Deep Elm since the likes of Planes Mistaken For Stars, and the White Octave (while both acts were still there). I'm impressed. [www.redanimalwar.com]

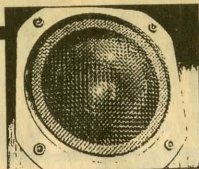
**Red Martian - The Coil**  
**RATING: XXX**

This is really nothing like the Red Martian I used to know, who played an almost youth crew style punk. They now put together a grittier, more mellow, experimental, and electronic rock with some leftover punky beats and vocals that really make it all the better. There is definitely some innovation going on behind this record as well - there are samples and other mood-enhancing sounds thrown in the mix. Sure, the repetitive drum machine beats drone on so much that they almost drown everything else out, and a few of the songs are so long that they are exhausting to hear. But, despite this, *The Coil* is just as interesting of a record as Red Martian is a project. Check it out if you are into the electronic, the d.i.y. and the different.

**David Singer - the cost of living**

**Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXX**

The record comes across as a solo project, and it is in theory - but upon reading the credits, I realized there were a handful



of others who recorded with Singer. This takes nothing away from the novelty of a solo project. The songs vary a little bit, but the overall sound lies somewhere between mellow vocal-heavy rock, and sweeter, cleaner pop. My biggest problem with this record is the drum machine that is used heavily. It really takes away from the raw sound (as most drum machines do), and makes the music sink into a near-catatonic state. It's obvious which songs use real drums and which don't, just by the feel of the melody. But in the end, the record comes across as an intelligent production with well-sung vocals and nicely arranged melodies.

**Sloppy Meateaters - Forbidden Meat**  
**Orange Peel Records | RATING: XXX**

You wouldn't expect it from the album cover or the album title but this CD is fairly decent. These guys play pretty basic west coast punk rock, but they play it pretty well. The whole record seems a little bit pop/rock influenced, so the end result is a sound somewhere between NOFX and Saves the Day. There's one really great song called "Give Me Something," which is a very melodic punk ballad. The CD is pretty long, and so it has its fair share of ups and downs. Some of the material sounds distinctly older than the other, which creates for a somewhat uneven collection. And of course, I'll admit to judging this band a little bit before I heard them. After all, their name is Sloppy Meateaters.

[www.sloppymeateaters.com]

**Sorry About Dresden - The Convenience of Indecision**  
**Saddle Creek Records | RATING: XXXX 1/2**

This record is definitely one to include on my list of favorite records for this issue. Take one part melodic and sweet indie rock played with precision and talent, and mix it with two parts gritty and punchy punk-influenced rock. The vocals really are fantastic - so good and so dynamic. They never sound bad. Softer parts aren't sung all wispy and choirboy - they're strong and soft. Sorry About Dresden is from Chapel Hill, a city where a number of other good bands seem to be popping up from recently (White Octave to name one). Another interesting fact is that the vocalist and guitarist for Sorry About Dresden is Matt Oberst, brother of the very talented Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes. Granted the musical styles are both very different (and both very good), there seems to be a similar musical taste that pulls through on both bands' music. Any fan of Bright Eyes will likely enjoy this record as well - it's definitely worth checking out.

**Strike Anywhere - Change is a Sound**  
**Jade Tree Records | RATING: XXXX**

This is probably the best melodic hardcore record I've heard since Fastbreak's *Fast Cars, Fast Women*, though I am aware that the two are completely different bands. Strike Anywhere, hailing from Richmond, creates a type of melodic and thick punk/hardcore that gets me excited about music like this again. And it's perfect timing, for me and for everyone. Just when it seemed that rock was



Sorry About Dresden

taking an unavoidable turn into a bowl of mush, Strike Anywhere comes through and proves that intelligent and heartfelt hardcore is still in existence, and still good. All elements on this record are good, from the thick guitars and bass, to the equally clean and strong vocals and tight drums. I'm impressed.

**Supperbell Roundup - At Station Four**  
**Side One Dummy Records | RATING: XXXX**

This record actually came out a couple of years ago, but I wanted to review it because it's very cool. Supperbell Roundup is the young Brendan Massei's creation. Massei plays progressive, folk western acoustic music with banjos, harmonicas, and soft vocals. There's a strong Nick Drake influence, and this will fall happily into hands of open-minded fans of Bright Eyes, the above-mentioned Drake, and other singer/songwriter acts. Most of the eleven songs included are very mellow, but some are more upbeat than others, so the mix is pretty even. This is worth checking out, for the most part.

**Tension Wire - Explicits**  
**Seymour Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

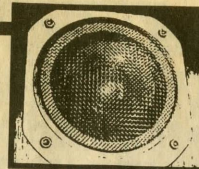
This is a pretty weird little record -- mixes musical styles and becomes very hard to describe. The overall vibe is one of sort of a slower-tempo hard rock mixed with some punk rock influences. I'm not sure if the combination goes over well with me. Sometimes it sounds too much like stadium rock for me to get really into it; sometimes it feels a little too plain. On the other hand, these guys can do a nice breakdown here and there, nice and melodic and punchy. I am pretty sure this is these guys' first full-length, so maybe some of these kinks haven't been worked out yet. There are high and low points throughout, so maybe it is more of a trial run. We'll see what comes of them.

**The Tie That Binds - Half Past Heroes**  
**Arms Reach Recordings/ REDLINE DISTRO | RATING: XXX**

This is pretty well-done indie rockish stuff from Texas. This sounds a lot like something that would fit in well at Deep Elm Records, on the better half of their roster. The guitar lines are crunchy and the leads are prominent and well-done for the most part. The drums are pretty tight and the vocals harmonious. The artwork on this record is pretty cool as well, though that speaks nothing for the material. They have that whole deep and mellow rock thing going on pretty well. Definitely a good find for fans of the rockier side of Deep Elm material.

**Topaz - Listen!**  
**Velour Recordings | RATING: XX 1/2**

This is the kind of record that I like for what it is. In this case, that's a jazz record. But, seeing as how it falls somewhere between bar jazz and stale smooth jazz, I'm also taking it for what it's worth. This band Topaz comes from New York, and is named after the tenor saxophonist/founder of the group, Topaz McGarrigle. The result of this large line-up is really a salad of all jazz, blues, and even funk influences imaginable. Vocals exist on only a couple tracks, and though their existence adds some flavor, it makes the music sound slightly off, in my opinion. Perhaps, though, that is merely because the great majority of the songs are played without vocals. This is a



record that I would probably keep around, just for the sake of it. Everyone needs a record like this at some point, don't they? I just wish it had a little bit more umph, maybe something that would just stick out as being completely new, incredible, or shockingly well-done. Instead of just solid music.

**VIA - Don't Be Scared... Fearless Records Sampler**  
**Fearless Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

This record has three songs each from some of Fearless' best-known bands, including At the Drive-In, Junction 18, Glasseater, Dynamite Boy, Bigwig, Lonely Kings, The Aquabats, and 30Foot Fall. Pretty much all of these bands are good - and there's definitely some continuity among the songs. All these bands are very good at playing a guitar-heavy and melodic punky hardcore sound. Those who are already fans will benefit from knowing that there is a previously unreleased song included from both Dynamite Boy and Junction 18.

There's also a very rare song called "Doorman's Placebo" included from At the Drive-In. Pretty impressive sampler, but I'm not too into 30FootFall and The Aquabats.

**VIA - Initial Records Punk Rocker Sampler**  
**Initial Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

This is a pretty strong compilation; twenty-five songs strong to be exact. Included among almost all well-known bands are By A Thread, The Get

Up Kids, Grade, Hot Water Music, The Jazz June and No Motiv. Also noteworthy are songs from Silent Majority and Time In Malta. I'm pretty sure that this is a re-release of a sampler that Initial sent out only with mailorder catalogs some time ago. Again, a pretty strong compilation -- better than many that I could name right now -- but still a compilation nonetheless. You've got your hits and your misses, squeezed onto one disc of punk, hardcore, and rock bands.

**VIA - New Disorder Soda**  
**New Disorder Records | RATING: XXX**

Another twenty-five song compilation CD. Seems to be a popular track number these days. This one is good; there are a lot of different-sounding acts on here but most with a strong old school punk rock sound or influence, and most seem to be from California. The second half of the CD has more bands that stick out on it, including The Cost (a nice little sporadic hardcore bit), The Harbinger, and Staircase (another chaotic and dynamic hardcore band) and J Church, who stand out among twenty-four lesser known bands. Also good is Quest for Quintana Roo, a fairly chunky rocking hardcore band. Pretty good compilation, worth looking into if you are interested in any of the bands above or want some new music to listen to. The record also comes with a thick insert with a page devoted to every band featured - contact information and everything!

**VIA - Sound Spirit Fury Fire - Sampler No. 3**  
**Deep Elm Records | RATING: XX 1/2**

The thing about this record is that there's nothing unexpected going on, even in nineteen tracks. This sampler contains



Strike Anywhere



previously released songs from the current Deep Elm roster, such as The Appleseed Cast, Benton Falls, Last Days of April, Cross My Heart, Seven Storey Mountain, Pop Unknown, and more. The impressive parts are sort of hard to come by, but they are there. Camber's song on this record is pretty punchy, and tends to stand out from everything else on the record. Also good is Dead Red Sea (ex- Cross My Heart, I think) who play a heavy and mellow type of rock that has enough flavor to be better than the rest. Also, Slowride, a band I hadn't heard before, has a good song on the disc that is powerful and melodic. I'd look forward to hearing more from those guys for sure. If you think you're interested in Deep Elm bands, this is the best way to find out for sure.

**V/A - The Centre of the Universe, Book II**

**Owned & Operated Records | RATING: XXXX**

This is a very solid compilation record from O & O Records. The bands included are, in this order: Someday I, Tanger, Wretch Like Me, Armchair Martian, Bad Astronaut, Season to Risk, Pavers, Shiner and ALL. This is really right up there with Polyvinyl's "ReDirection" comp as a great way to sample some of the better hardcore influenced indie rock that is out there right now. All of the artists on the CD stick out in one way or another, there really seems to be nothing that is surprisingly bad. I wasn't quite as impressed with Bad Astronaut as I for some reason thought I would be. However, Someday I, Tanger and Wretch Like Me are very, very good. Check this out if you're into tough and solid rock and roll.

**V/A - The Silence in My Heart - Emo Diaries Chapter 6**

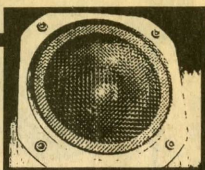
**Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXX**

The sixth installment in the Emo Diaries compilations proves to be very similar in style and format to the previous five. I was struck immediately by the fact that I had not heard of more than two of the bands on the compilation - this is probably a good thing because mixing in some new bands helps to balance out the sometimes homogenous Deep Elm roster. So bare in mind, this record does not contain songs from only Deep Elm bands. Impressive bands seem to include Hangin' on a Thread, who play thick, faster-paced pop rock with an emphasis on the word rock. Also good is Honeysuckle Serontina who play bigger, more echoic and punchy rock. Naht is also interesting, playing an eclectic style of also bigger rock with more breakdowns, interesting parts, and overall thicker than the average Emo Diary band. The people that will dig this a whole lot know who they are already. For those people: the record's out. guys.

**V/A - Warped Tour 2001 Compilation**

**Side One Dummy Records | RATING: XXX**

Man, this record is going to sell well. With twenty-six different bands, all of which played this year's Warped Tour, this is definitely going to be a hit. Some of the bigger names (though they're all relatively big) include Rancid, the Bouncing Souls, New Found Glory, AFI, Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Sum 41, Deviates, and more. The thing about this record is that enough people like at least one of the bands featured that they'll buy it almost without doubt. This is definitely a well put together compilation, but I dislike quite a few of the bands included so my opinion is slightly biased. I'd recommend this to anyone who went to Warped Tour and had a great time, or anyone who is into almost all of the bands that played Warped Tour. A highlight is that twenty-one of the twenty-six tracks are unreleased



**Velvet - Where Are the People?**

**Eskimo Kiss Records | RATING: XXX 1/2**

This is a pretty musically fresh indie pop/rock four-piece. The thirteen tracks that Wilmington, North Carolina's Velvet put forth on the record are diverse enough, thick enough, poppy enough, and interesting enough to hold attention well. They definitely have a radio-friendly, snappy sound which can be interpreted for the good or for the bad. As for me, I'm impressed to see an indie rock band that hasn't fallen into the same bowl of grits that produces the wimpy and musically un-interesting acts that seem to be popping up lately. The dual vocals (male and female) are well-sung and really don't let me down except on maybe one song. Some tracks have the female vocals as lead, some with the male. Though the overall sound is good, I don't think it is completely up my alley. But it is refreshing, and if you're into indie pop, this is definitely recommended.

**Vitamin X - See Thru Their Lies**

**Underestimated Records | RATING: XXX**

Vitamin X is a cool political hardcore band from Amsterdam. This four piece is definitely straight edge (look at the name of the band) and it shows, but as they say in their insert "we don't" expect anyone else to be sXe and we don't feel better than anyone else." I'm going to come right out and say I believe them. They've got a very big sound, all fast and thrashy with sustains and breakdowns as well as drum- and bass-only sections. There's definitely a lot of punk influence in the guitar lines, seeing as how they have great little leads that are both melodic and tough enough to fit in with the music. All of the elements in the music seem to be played with talent, and I can only see them getting better with time. With intelligent lyrics and lots of vocals and group choruses, anyone who is a dire hardcore/post-core fan will definitely be into this record.

**White Octave - Menergy**

**Initial Records | RATING: XXXX 1/2**

Probably one of the best records of this summer. A move from Deep Elm (who released their first full length, *Style No. 6312*), also brought for Chapel Hill, NC's the White Octave a musical move into rougher, more innovative and ballsy sounds. *Menergy* takes on more dynamics in the melodies, and a punchier and harder sound overall. The drums are rich, the guitars grindy and strong, and the vocals have a very distinct sound that matches perfectly with the music: strong, dark but melodic. Well recorded, well executed, and well arranged. Forget the sophomore slump, this record is leaps and bounds above anything that happened on their first one.

**send your records for review!**

I'm desperately trying to get my hands on music that I like, so I get to write more good reviews than mediocre reviews. If you have something you think I'd like, send it over, please! Hell, even if you're not sure...

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# record label

## DIRECTORY

below is a list of the record labels that provided the items reviewed in the previous section. contact them through any of the addresses listed to inquire about purchasing what was reviewed, or pass the info on to your local record store with a big fat request for them to carry whatever record or band it is that you are interested in ✈.

biscuit scrubbers records | p.o. box 6487 | toledo, oh 43612 | [www.biscuitscrubbers.com](http://www.biscuitscrubbers.com)

bug records | 824 w. 47<sup>th</sup> street | richmond, va 23225

deep elm records | p.o. box 36939 | charlotte, nc 28236 | [www.deepelm.com](http://www.deepelm.com)

endearing records | p.o. box 69009 | winnipeg, manitoba | canada, r3p 2g9 | [www.endearing.com](http://www.endearing.com)

eskimo kiss records | 144 ne 29<sup>th</sup> street | oak island, nc 28465 | [www.eskimokissrecords.com](http://www.eskimokissrecords.com)

espo records | p.o. box 63 | allston, ma 02134 | [www.esporecords.com](http://www.esporecords.com)

fearless records | 13772 goldenwest st. #545 | westminster, ca 92683 | [www.fearlessrecords.com](http://www.fearlessrecords.com)

geekcore records | 126 parker ave. | hawthorne, nj 07506 | [geekcorerecords.cjb.net](http://geekcorerecords.cjb.net) | [geekcorerecords@hotmail.com](mailto:geekcorerecords@hotmail.com)

goodbye blue skies records | p.o. box 1306 | tavernier, fl 33070 | [www.emote.org/goodbyeblueskies](http://www.emote.org/goodbyeblueskies)

initial records | p.o. box 17131 | louisville, ky 40217 | [www.initialrecords.com](http://www.initialrecords.com)

intelligent records | 203 washington st. #102 | salem, ma 01970-6500 | [www.intelligentrecords.com](http://www.intelligentrecords.com)

jade tree records | 2310 kennwynn rd. | wilmington, de 19810 | [www.jadetree.com](http://www.jadetree.com)

jumpstart records | p.o. box 10296 | state college, pa 16805 | [www.jumpstartrecords.com](http://www.jumpstartrecords.com)

new disorder records | 115 bartlett street | san francisco, ca 94110 | [www.newdisorder.com](http://www.newdisorder.com)

not bad records | p.o. box 2014 | arvada, co 80001 | [www.notbadrecords.com](http://www.notbadrecords.com)

out of step records | p.o. box 509 | vineburg, ca 95487 | [www.oosrecords.com](http://www.oosrecords.com)

orange peel records | p.o. box 15207 | fremont, ca 94539 | [www.orangepeal.com](http://www.orangepeal.com)

ouzel records | v. moro 13 | 19020 prati (sp), italy | [ouzel@libero.it](mailto:ouzel@libero.it) | [www.ouzel.3000.it](http://www.ouzel.3000.it)

owned & operated records | p.o. box 36 | ft. collins, co 80522 | [www.oandorecords.com](http://www.oandorecords.com)

polyvinyl recording co. | p.o. box 1885 | danville, il 61834 | [www.polyvinylrecords.com](http://www.polyvinylrecords.com)

redline distribution | 5420 s. bishop | chicago, il 60609 | [www.redlineditribution.com](http://www.redlineditribution.com)

revelation records | p.o. box 5232 | huntington beach, ca 92615-5232 | [www.revelationrecords.com](http://www.revelationrecords.com)

saddle creek records | p.o. box 8554 | omaha, ne 68108-0554 | [www.saddle-creek.com](http://www.saddle-creek.com) | [info@saddle-creek.com](mailto:info@saddle-creek.com)

seymour records | p.o. box 56738 | chicago, il 60656-0738 | [www.seymourrecords.com](http://www.seymourrecords.com)

side one dummy records | 6201 sunset blvd. | suite 211 | hollywood, ca 90028 | [www.sideonedummy.com](http://www.sideonedummy.com)

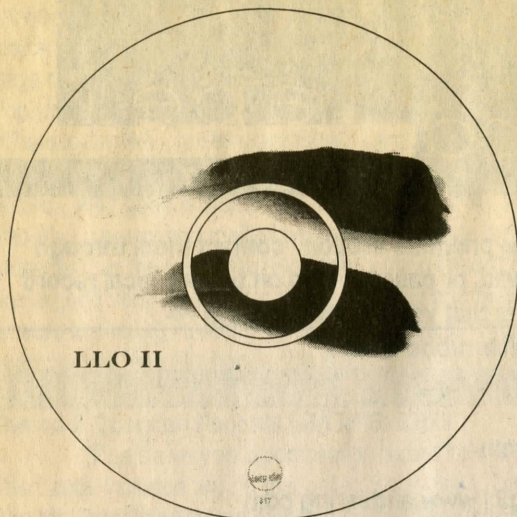
top quality rock and roll | p.o. box 1110 | southgate, mi 48195 | [www.topqualityrockandroll.com](http://www.topqualityrockandroll.com)

underestimated records | p.o. box 13274 | chicago, il 60613 | [undrstim8d@aol.com](mailto:undrstim8d@aol.com)

velour recordings | 47 murray street | penthouse floor | new york, ny 10007

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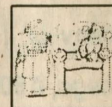


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## In driving

- 
1. I drove down the longest road I can find in Virginia Beach where you can go fifty-five miles an hour. I flew down the stretch that cuts through farmland left fallow, and through dunes that fell back to the heart of the land. I talked to myself, trying to write stories inside of the car. This is what happens when I have nowhere to go.
2. I drove his car through my favorite spots to drive. Pitch dark, so cold and empty outside. I had to hear his music and impatiently wait until he had determined that I was allowed to make a rational decision for him. I felt imprisoned under that winter moon with a distasteful mess beside me. Top ten list of most miserable experiences.
3. We drove through somewhat uncharted neighborhoods, I steered off of a premonition and toward vague memories of relatives' houses as my planned destination. Lost, naturally, we'd left behind our planned night for at least a couple hours and talked each other through the minutes, music as background to giggles and nice words, the fall moonlight striking through the window of my car and tapping her right cheek.
4. A long one, and I was late for it. We pumped through the woods around the interstate, headed north to see a friend. Conversation was cautiously comfortable, unending, and needed. It was late and when we got there we spent night under stars with friends and talk. I almost wanted the roads home to stretch out like rubber, and the drive to last longer.
5. One of those lonely and awkward but exciting nights we spent happily together when we were younger, before messes. We took his tank out of city limits, young with happiness and daring action. A week after a flooding nor'easter, we charged into a lake of a puddle of unknown depth, choking with laughter and disbelief. The engine roared, the tires obviously our only source of buoyancy, not touching solid ground at all. Momentum saved us and we emerged, like a prehistoric amphibian, up the incline on the other side of the road. Top ten funniest experiences.
6. Every morning and afternoon for nine months in confused silence. Any want of conversation or question blocked by blaring music. Top ten most regretted experiences.
7. Two and a half hours curled in a back seat, under a crisp darkness, a deep black darkness that emanate from the road and the thickness beyond. Four people, so close in quarters. Time passed with embers glowing in the car, and stories made up and ridiculous. Top ten funnest road trips ever taken.
8. Long and deep into the old unknown of town. Farmlands and general stores, so foreign to the mile block considered home, only a zip code away. So warm with the windows rolled down. Pure youth, ridiculous and on the edge of innocence. Worth the exploration and worth the inside jokes that came of it.
9. A drab summer of confusion and disputed loneliness. Alone in her car in a familiar neighborhood, the fireflies disappearing at the first sign of black night, so late in this month. Awkward and mysterious conversation. Fragmented talk. Stale air, sticky and thick in July's humidity. Top ten most regretted experiences.
10. Home from a communal memory, we tired quickly. Blankets all over. The night sat on the roof and the windshield, and hung down over the windows around us, heavy and quiet. We talked each other awake deep in the backseat, the air sandy, next to ass prints on the windows left from the hysterical night hours before. Top ten funnest road trips ever taken.



some scraps written by Taylor

the beauty of excitement.

And when I drove home the car shot through the night with the same measure of energy and excitement I myself was emanating. For it was fall and life felt new again and the disruption of pattern, of weather, of scheduled habitual events lead to a thrilling new emotion - happiness. And I knew it wouldn't last, it would maybe disappear by January if not by Monday. But it was Saturday and I knew I had tonight left at least.

So my car pushed steadily underneath of me; it'd seen my favorite places tonight. It had parked on its favorite streets and in front of its favorite houses.

I'd made an exception this night. While finally (for it had been a week, and absence, well absence makes presence all the more sweet) in the company of friends, we drank spirits and sat at our kitchen table, a game of Trivial Pursuit in progress.

We're young, we're happy, and excited by the disruption that has caused our Sunday afternoons to consist of leaf-raking and the occasional football game.

These great friends and those spirits both ran so strong. And reminded me that fall is for excitement.

Around two my night got even better.

My best friend of all my eighteen years had a house, a porch, and more spirits. We sat for three hours together, time completely frozen in conversation, alcohol, and the cold wind that blew around our bodies as we sat under the strong moon - almost a halloween moon - and the great big black sky that blanketed us.

We entertained each other like we've found no one else can do. Eighteen years of getting to know each other breeds a great deal of comfort so it was not unusual that when the spirits slid through our bodies, we peed off the side of the big porch. Ah, we're young, and it was fall, and fall is exciting and new.

And I've been told I'm a Romantic and I know it's true - these seasons mean enough to me that my moods, my experiences, my actions and thoughts revolve around them. I'm aware of all of it. I know I make a habit of documenting it all, and that's why I know how to live it. This is time for excitement and experience. I can't dwell on any vices or mistakes I make in passing on nights like these. There doesn't seem to be any consequence for anything, when Saturday is frozen between moonshine, moonlight, and excitement.



Poison.

I sat on a covered styrofoam couch, right beside the stairwell. The night was long and late and the spirits high. I heard you sick upstairs, powerless and confused and it made my stomach knot up and I sucked in harder than normal.

As often as we've shared deep-drawn, raspy, and worried conversations, I was left relatively shocked. But not angry. I just build you up and up, and weakness --weakness is for mortals.

Later I hear of your babblings. These I never want to hear. I don't know whether to believe they are chemical-induced truths or if they are merely disjointed words, thought fit to be together. You "never lose," then fell into yourself across porcelain, purging the night violently.

We charged out of the front door, past your brother, and walked the three blocks solidly and in stern silence. We said little, but knew what we were doing, and where we were going. A bottle in each hand, we pushed on.



(scraps continued)

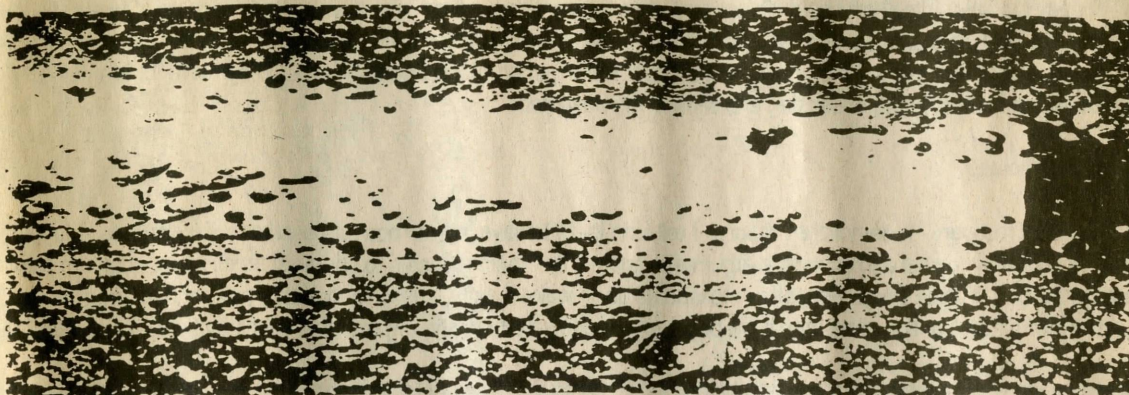
In those meek and fall woods, under that air of chill and flush of anger, behind the church. The church, an ironic destination to many a midnight walk, alcohol-driven on the stalest, newest nights of winter. This time we launched, backed by strength, hurt, nostalgia, and many memories, the last two bottles of liquor into the trees, listened to them bust blunty and fizz around the leaves. And then we left. Our only conversation being:

"It's poison."

"Poison."

And I know I speak of spirits, I tell myself later. But, I speak of them like conversation, like a late-night boardgame on the back porch in the middle of summer. It takes all my effort to convince myself that there's a very clear difference.

Back home, you're sleeping sick. Morning will hit you like a train. And it does.



#### Secret spot

Tucked back behind the big houses, back near where the soil gets sandy and the trees are pine, there's a secret spot that deserves no such title, for it's well known- though quite special enough to be a secret.

So in the depths of the neighborhood, the one that used to be a farm (where my brother and I would play in the hay loft while our mother visited with a friend) is a small pier, shooting into a sharp, blackwater and starry piece of the Lynnhaven- perfect for clear nights with good people, or bad nights with no people.

On a clear night, I took two people.

I had to tell them the story of how I found the place. I explained how it was once barns and fields, nothing more and just as perfect as you wanted it to be. But then I told them the second truth, that being after this became a neighborhood, a girl I try to forget brought me and we stayed a while.

But tonight it was us. Us and the small fish that jump through the crisp night together, and splash softly back into the beautiful murk near to the shore. Us and the ducks that sang songs about the perfection of such nights - making stories to tell of their summer home, soon to be abandoned.

Unless you were us, or any of the other people I have hesitantly disclosed the secret spot to, the whole thing would mean nothing. But to us we were happy being together. We were happy for my secret spot, and we were happy for the coolness of the night, and the calmness of the air.

What was remarkable, even to me, was that no conversation existed after we set foot on the pier, almost like words were frozen, mouths locked shut as a preventative measure so as to not ruin the event with bad jokes or sappy observations. (We save those for writings).

Nothing too shocking or remarkable has happened there since I've been going from time to time (and I can remember each and every time). Just typical events that are remembered but not quite agonized or romanticized over. More than anything that actually happens there, I can't knock the separate and distinct smells of each time. Number one, thick, damp smell of summer sweat and mud from the bottom of the inlet. Number eight, the icy fresh bite of the winter air, and the staleness of the grasses and sand on the slope down. "The memory of odors is very rich."



# assorted shorts.

## This Is

by Zach Savich

1.

She said to drown the flowers. I stood with the hose, rolling up the pyjama bottoms as the ground began to squish beneath my sandals. Tom and Greg and Dawn came back from apartment hunting. Told they can't rent without proof of employment or six months cash up front. It's okay though, since Greg can probably get the bartending job and Tom is sure to talk his way into throwing fish at the market.

He sits with the Seattle Times classifieds spread on the table. He leaves a dozen messages.

2.

I headed for the river, to say goodbye. As happens, I only made it to Rich's house. He and Ranny are going to start giving guitar lessons. R and R guitars. I tell him about the surgery while my parents wait for Uwe, the German, to come for the car. The house is in boxes. I have my dad drive past Erin's street, past where I used to work. You expect it to be dramatic, but the ceremony takes care of itself. However it happens, that's the story. I say goodbye in the garden of the Seattle house. They leave for Maryland as Lois and Tom whisk me downtown. I bus home exhausted and slink to the basement.

I just called here home.

3.

It is humbling, this recovery. It demolishes theory. I tell Erin that I believe in truth now. She asks for an example. Hunger, I say. I could disprove it, I could offer logical and economic arguments against it, I could reduce it to chemical reactions or quantum mechanics, but I would still be hungry. This is where Descartes messed us up. I wake hungry, I gasp for breath, I pull my hand from the burner, therefore I am. This is more than a game. And from it we begin to move toward honesty, toward other truths that we know better than we can say.

Tom knocks on my door at noon. "I'm going to McDonald's," he says. "Can I get you a shake?"

## Short #2

by Julianna Dawn

Saturday, February 18, 2001. 8:27 pm.

I'm in the last row, window seat, trying not to move too much. These seats should be wider. I've been looking around thinking...Am I the only one with this problem?

I keep looking out the window, but it's dark, so all I can see are the tiny orange lights from the wing of the plane. I don't like the fact that I am on this plane. I should be in my car- I'd probably be in Georgia or at the Florida state border.

This should have been our road trip.

The one we excitedly talked about, the one we both needed...(or the one I excitedly talked about and needed)... but you had other "obligations."

I think I've been lying when I said that I wouldn't be angry if you didn't come. Because I am. I'm angry because I feel so betrayed. You stayed to party with boys who didn't respect you at all. You stayed to make out with a girl who you thought would be a decent replacement for the girl you truly loved. I'm angry because you've changed.

Everyone else is disappointed and fed up. Not me. I'm a little confused, but mainly, I'm hurt. The people who care about you the most, you take for granted. There have been few people who extended to you their friendship without passing judgement. I have cared about you more than you will ever know or even care to realize. But then, aren't I part of the reason you are the way that you are?

I envy those who can blow your reckless and thoughtless actions off. Those who can take you with a grain of salt. Those who wish to treasure and value a friendship with you. Not me. I no longer have the patience or the energy. I no longer want your friendship, for fear of being let down again. I realized that when you did not come home last night or this evening (not until well after I was gone) that you felt the same way. That's what hurts the most.

Friday, August 24, 2001. 2:14 am.

I know it's a little late, but happy belated birthday...

(I never forgot)

The house has never been quieter. No more parties, no more drama, or drama queens. Oddly enough, I miss it sometimes. Fortunately, the guitars never stop strumming, the dishes are still piled up, and the late night talks ranging from the label to colostomy bags still exists on a regular basis.

...even now, with all as it should be, I can't help but miss your laugh...





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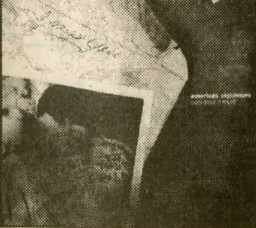
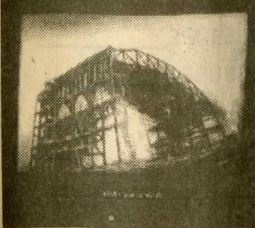
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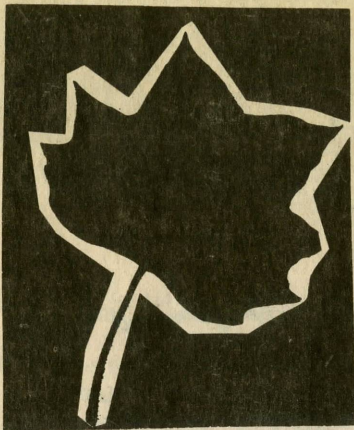


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