

(ATROPHY ZINE #10)

every day is my

every day is my

Birthday

birthday

BY COLIN ATROPHY

LISTEN:

THE MARGINS ARE BIG &
ALL ELSE IS SMALL, BUT THE
WRITING STILL RULES SO FUCK
YOU. I WOULD LIKE TO
EXTEND MY MOST HEART-
FELT THANKS TO BILL & SAL
FOR ASSISTING IN MY FIRST
FORAY INTO ILLICIT, BLACK
MARKET PHOTOCOPYING.

LOVE, x
COLIN
ATROPHY

THIS IS THE INTRODUCTION.

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This zine should not have cost you more than \$1. If it did, get violent. I recommend arson or if that's too much just a sever beating. Unless I sold it to you for more than \$1. In that case you're probably a jerk and you deserve it.

The front and back cover photos are all of and by me. This was made in February 2002. All writing is mine. I don't like copyrights, so take what you like when you like. But please tell me first. Or second.

love, colin



I'VE SPENT THE PAST FEW YEARS TRYING TO SURROUND MYSELF WITH AMAZING AND EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE.

I think I've succeeded. Each of my close friends possesses traits that I admire, traits that I believe are necessary for any well-rounded individual. Over the years we've been through a lot together, and we've come to mean a lot to each other.

Juan was the first new friend I made in high school. We both wore punk rock t-shirts all the time. One day we just started talking and we clicked. We liked the same bands, we both played guitar and most importantly, we were both fond of causing a ruckus in gym class.

Juan and Camilo had been friends since second grade, and towards the end of our freshman year, Juan and I started a band with Tom and Nabil. We all hung out all the time. We were inseparable. After four years of constant companionship, Juan was the first to go. We tried to celebrate his birthday nonchalantly—get some beers and go bowling. We went to the bowling alley to see if we had to reserve a lane. After stepping a few feet into the place, we turned around and fled. The walls were black and painted with neon paint. There were a number of black lights and some rat bastard had the audacity to play derivative, soulless techno music through the establishment's incredible sound system. So we decided to play pool instead. The pool hall is full of lowlives and drunks. We'd been going there forever and we had our own table. They had put punk rock records in the jukebox at our request and the owner was willing to keep our beer in the fridge so it would stay cold as long as we didn't bring too much. Bowling is a farce and should be left to Fred Flintstone.

After getting disappointed at the bowling alley, we went to the store and got a thirty pack, a twelve pack, and a six-pack, all of Heineken in bottles. We realized we had way too much beer to bring into the pool hall discretely, so after we left our cars at Tom's house, we walked to the church up the block to drink our beer before the real events of the evening began. The church is a very important place. It's where all the school-night pot smoking and Friday night beer drinking took place. Plus, each of us had separately gone there with girls to make out. It's sanctified land, but it's holy to me for more secular reasons.

"So we're finally done with high school." I said as I cracked open a beer.

"Shit man, I been done with high school for four years!" Camilo shouted. "I was done with high school before I even set foot in the place...those motherfuckers...That's why I don't understand why you guys are all gonna go to college. Man, I'm a plumber now. This is real fuckin' life, kid. None of that college bitch shit. I've had teachers boss me around long enough..."

"All I'm saying, is that when you're out plumbing or whatever the fuck it is you guys do, I'll be sitting at college with a beer in my left hand, a blunt in my right hand and a girl on my lap thanking whatever God there is that I haven't joined the real world." Tom's an asshole sometimes.

"You little muthafuckin'..." Camilo started.

Luckily, Nabil chimed in, "Tom...shut up, stop being a dick. Camilo, listen dog, I respect what you're doing, so you've got to respect me too. It's cool that you're a plumber and it's cool that I'm going to college. We're different people." Nabil's always been a source of reason.

"I guess I can respect you...even if you are a pussy

bitch." Camilo answered as he threw Juan another beer. "And why the hell have you been so quiet?"

"I just been thinking, dude. About the future and shit. Tomorrow I'm leaving. I'm gonna... Not even tomorrow, man. In eight hours...eight fucking hours...I'm taking my shit and I'm moving five fucking hours away. We're not gonna be able to practice anymore. I'm not gonna be around the corner from my fucking boys, man. I'm gonna be on strange soil..."

"I heard there's a bunch of fuckin' patchouli-smelling hippies in upstate New York! You might as well start to grow your dreadlocks now, dude." I broke in.

"Shut the fuck up man, this is important... I mean, you guys have meant a lot to me. More than anyone. You guys are important to me. Like family, except different because I didn't choose my family." He turned to me. "Colin, man, I've known you for four years. We've cried together and we've laughed together, we've kissed the same girls, sometimes on the same night, we've been through some shit, and what you need to know is that you've never let me down. Not once since I've known you. Even when you've had your own problems, you always came through for me. And I want noticed it, and I'm grateful."

At that moment, my eyes began to well up with tears. I tried to choke them back so I could respond, but they fought their way out. Luckily, Juan had already turned to Camilo to say his parting words, so he didn't notice me off to the side. As Juan moved around the circle from one of us to the next, each of us shed a tear or two after he finished speaking. When his speech to Tom



was through, Juan turned around, satisfied to have said his piece, to find the four of us balling. "You guys are a bunch of fucking pussies!" he laughed as the first tears graced his cheeks.

And then, in a moonlit churchyard strewn with empty beer bottles, five eighteen-year-old boys opened up to each other for the first time. We wept and we laughed all at once. We shared things with each other that we had never shared with anyone. We shared our hopes and our fears; our successes and our failures. It was as if, for a few hours, the five of us were one.

It was then that I realized for that first time that a chapter in my life was over. Sure, the five of us will continue to be friends, probably even for a long time. But there are certain elements that can never be replaced. The naivete guised as machismo, the self-exploration, the four kids sleeping on one futon--all of the staples of teenage life--were enormous influences on our interactions. We may still know each other in five years, but there won't be that same camaraderie, that same feeling.

When everyone settled down, we cleaned up our empties and walked to the diner. We sat there for a few hours drinking coffee and sobering up. Then we walked back to Tom's house. Tom went in for the night, Nabil started his walk two blocks home, and Juan, Camilo and I got in my car so I could drop them off on my way back. I walked Juan into his house so I could pick up some records of his. In his bedroom, I noticed that it was 4:30 am. He was leaving for school in half an hour. We said a final goodbye and then I left.

As I drove Camilo home, neither of us said a word. The only sound came when he lit his cigarette. Camilo

turned to me to ask if I wanted a cigarette and noticed the tear rolling down my cheek. That was the end. He let loose all the frustration and all the anger of a boy who was losing his friends. Camilo was the only one of us who didn't go to college. He felt like we would all lose touch with him once we each reached our respective schools. I dropped him off, somehow made it home, and went to sleep.

ITS SAD TO WATCH AN IMPORTANT FRIENDSHIP CRUMBLE.

It's like one of my closest brothers is only an acquaintance now. I just don't know what I did. Or what I didn't do. Maybe I just wasn't an adequate friend. But friends are fucking important to me, the community of folks I surround myself with matters. And if my circle of friends is analogous to some kind of super-secret religious cult with me being the God-on-Earth (maybe this isn't such a good analogy) then this kid was a high priest. Maybe make the Happy Medium the God-on-Earth and say that we were both high priests. Whatever.

It just hurts to see someone you love walking away without looking back. And you call out to him and you call out to him, but he never hears you. And you realize that he's either too caught up in his destination or he's intentionally ignoring you, you realize that your efforts are futile, but you keep calling out. Because you hope beyond hope that he will at least give you a proper farewell.

I NEVER THOUGHT ID BE WRITING ABOUT THIS.

I mean, I was obviously affected by September 11th, but

for a while I didn't realize it. Until recently, actually. The thing is, I slept through the attacks. At 11 am I was startled awake by a frantic ringing at my doorbell. I opened the door to find a man I had never seen before.

"The World Trade Towers were hit by planes. They both collapsed!" He shouted hysterically.

"Yeah sure. Wanna try some of my mom's explosive chili?" I asked. He looked at me in disgust and walked away. I figured maybe someone was trying to involve me in some sort of bizarre role-playing game. I just wanted to go back to sleep before German class. Then Josh came in and put on CNN. The shit hit the fan.

My Uncle called me and said I was coming to his apartment whether I liked it or not and we were getting out of Manhattan together at evening. I didn't argue. He came and picked me up and we headed back to his place. We got there and immediately left on bicycles with his girlfriend Karena and her friend Veronica to give blood at St. Vincent's.

When we got to St. Vincent's, they sent us to mid-town, where they sent us to Harlem, where they sent us home. I didn't think about anything relevant while any of this was going on. All I thought was that I probably couldn't give blood because I just pierced my lip and that there should be this few cars in Manhattan everyday.

Once we realized that volunteer efforts were out of the question, Karena and I drank a few Red Stripes, smoked a few cigarettes and watched the rubble smoke. Things started to seep in but it all still felt like I was in the movie Brazil. Or really high. Nothing was happening and nothing was real.

I got inside and fell asleep. I woke up and fell asleep and woke up and fell asleep in a constant cycle for the next 12 or so hours, thus maintaining that 'I just woke up' view on reality. The bicycle ride, the time spent at my Uncle's, the car ride to the suburbs, the frantic phone calls, the frightened family members, *everything* is a blur. All I remember really clearly is talking and yelling and crying on a payphone outside my ex-girlfriend's place. Talk about misplaced emotions.

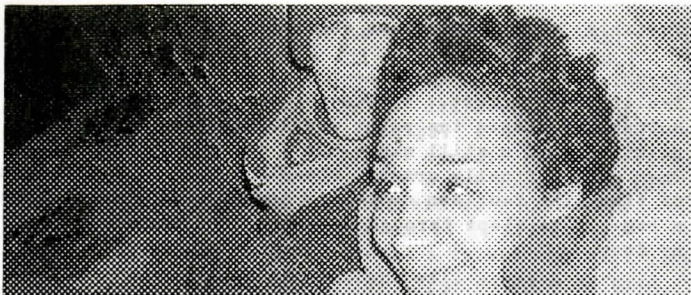
On the evening of the twelfth, I had to get out of my house and go back to school. But when I got there, there were police barricades on every corner. I had to wear a bandana around my face to avoid breathing in dust. There was only one solution—head to Mya's in Brooklyn.

Mya is amazing. She's incredibly spiritual without being dogmatic, she's beautiful and strong and just generally wonderful. She's been playing a sort of maternal role in my life lately. She's the wise woman.

There was a hold-up on the subway. I started thinking the tunnel had been gassed and I was gonna die. But I gave that up quickly. There was no sense in worrying too much.

Mya greeted me with a glass jar full of weed and the request that I roll a joint. It was an easy task to fulfill. She introduced me to her friend Matthew, a real nice kid from Chattanooga. She said we were gonna go over to his place and sit on his roof. Walking through Crown Heights that night, terrorism was the last thing on my mind.

We picked up some forties and walked up to Matt's roof.



We sat on the roof until sun-up drinking Colt 45, smoking joints and countless cigarettes and getting accustomed to the new Manhattan skyline.

At seven or eight we headed inside and started making a mix-tape. Matt picked the first song, I picked the second, Mya picked the third. Then Matt picked the fourth based on what he thought might sound good after the first, I picked the fifth based on what I thought would sound good after the second, etc. It was like three different mixes going on at once. I still don't have a copy.

We walked to this nice little diner and got some breakfast. Then we went to Mya's friend Ernie's house. Me and Matt took a nap on his roof under the sun. Then everyone came out and we bullshitted about radical politics all the while smoking R.J. Reynolds affiliated Camel Cigarettes. I only hate hypocrisy in other people.

At some point in the afternoon I went home and slept for some time. It was bizarre. There had been a pervasive feeling of unrealness about the past couple of days. Everything seemed slightly off. Like Magritte paintings. The fireplace looked perfectly realistic and

feasible, as did the steam engine driving out of it.

Anyway, ever since those couple of days that surreal feeling hasn't left. I tend to stay awake drinking coffee far passed the point where I get manic, to the point where I'm still manic but I don't feel like it. Then once I finally crash I sleep for some absurd amount of time like fourteen or twenty hours. And I sleep like a log. I've slept through at least four fire drills in my dorm.

(Which reminds me, if I may digress for a moment, that I have to get the fuck out of dormitories. For one thing, I need to move in with Tom, Charlie and Juan. For another thing, I need a cat. I definitely require a feline presence in order to stay sane.)

Even right now, I've been awake for what seems like forever. And I'm feeling that unrealness. Just like I felt this evening eating dinner with Juan and my sister and just like I felt tonight at the pool hall and at Nate's house and at the diner. The only time in the past four months that's felt real was our first band practice in forever a couple days ago. I don't even know what day it was. I just have no track of time. But that hour, I felt it. I felt alive.

So apparently things blowing up fucked me up a lot more than I thought. And apparently I need to play a lot more music with my best friends.

HERES WHY ALL MY RELATIONSHIPS FAIL:

every girl I meet wants a boyfriend who fills a boyfriend role. She believes that she, in turn, will fulfill the girlfriend role. But I don't want a girl-

friend and I don't want to be a boyfriend. I want a friend. Period. Well, a friend I kiss a lot. But that's not the point. The thing is that I don't want my romantic relationships to be any different than my other inter-personal relationships. I'm aware that every friendship has a different dynamic with different factors involved, so obviously I'm not gonna have the same relationship with a girlfriend as I have with Carly or Tom. But everyone seems to be all about drawing lines. I am not. I want a friend who will kiss me when I need to be kissed, who will scratch my head and let me fall asleep holding her... Who will let me make her things and be silly and sappy and romantic. And who will prioritize friendship FIRST.

And this is exactly what I continually swear I won't write about.

I DONT TEND TO HAVE OVERTLY SEXUAL DREAMS ABOUT GIRLS IM CRUSHING ON.

Usually they involve me being a wounded soldier, tended back to health by my kindly, nurturing crush. Real corny, one-dimensional Ernest Hemingway shit. It's not something I'm proud of.

But I've had two dreams about my most recent crush and neither of them were anything like that. In the first, I was flying to Miami with a stolen credit card. I ended up sitting next to her on the plane, but she was going to Key West. The seats of the plane were set up like an auditorium. I gave her a real sweet smile and handed her this package of Catholic Flash Cards that I knew would win her heart for sure. I woke up before I could see her reaction.

In the next dream I was driving a wood paneled station wagon in circles in a parking lot. Finally, I remembered that I was supposed to meet people inside. As I parked the car, this effeminate boy with a ponytail came out the door and apologized for giving me bad directions. We walked into what turned out to be a pub and headed for a table where many of my friends, including the crush, were sitting. She was uncharacteristically dressed much like Kimmy Gibbler from Full House. Despite her horrible fashion, I asked her if she'd like to go on a date to the library to read Anais Nin. I woke up before she had a chance to respond.

TIM WAS A KID I KNEW I WOULD BE FRIENDS WITH FROM THE FIRST TIME I TALKED TO HIM.

He was standing outside talking to someone I knew. I had seen pictures of him in Liz's room so I knew he was an ally.

"Hi. I've seen pictures of you." I said.

"Hi."

"Don't worry. It's nothing weird. They were Liz's."

"Okay."



"But I masturbate to them all the time. You're the alpha male."

"Thanks a lot man." He was not in the least disturbed by this.

A few weeks later I was in the dining hall at 8 am after being awake for two and a half days. I had long since reached psychosis. I was eating plate upon plate of lettuce and drinking water in an attempt to rehydrate myself. Tim walked in and I moved my seat next to him. I had been up a long time alone and really wanted to talk to a friendly face. We ended up smoking cigarettes and listening to records until noon. It was officially decided that Tim is good people.

Then I ran into him last night. We were coming back from Cafe Figaro at about 3. Everyone was pretty drunk. We saw Tim in the lobby and invited him upstairs to smoke a joint. At 5 we moved to Greg's room. We decided to go to PS 1, the museum in Queens as soon as it opened at noon, but we needed something to do until then. We drank coffee and listened to music and smoked bowls until Greg fell asleep. It was about 6:30 and there was time to kill, so Tim and I decided to ride our bikes over the Williamsburg bridge.

We bundled up tight, filled our thermoses with hot tea and headed out at 7. We rode down the FDR to the bridge and went halfway up the bridge when we decided to stop for a tea break. We didn't end up riding over the bridge because we didn't wanna ride back up the incline so we turned back towards Manhattan.

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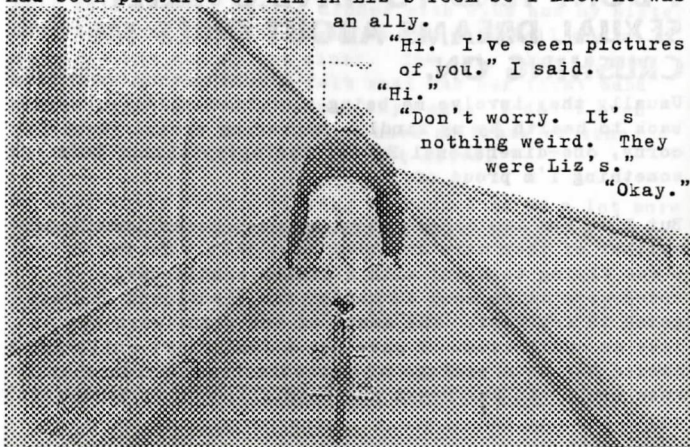
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building and see if we could convince them to give us press credentials so that we could go on the roof of Grand Central.

When we arrived at the Village Voice office it was closed. But what's to be expected of a weekly paper at 9 am on a Saturday? We headed to the Starbucks on Astor Place to use up the last of the gift certificates I had stoled during the time that I worked there. (Thanks Los!) Directly to the left of the entrance there was a stack of New York Times. A daily paper! Tim checked the inside cover and found out that it's printed on W 43rd st. We finished our coffee and pastries, got back on our bikes and headed to midtown.

The ride up to the New York Times HQ was nice. We took Lexington all the way up to 43rd and then took a left and headed West. We passed the building that me and Tre always wanted to sled down. Rock'n'Roll. We got to NY Times and figured our best bet was to say we worked for the college paper and wanted to talk to a reporter to get career advice.

The guard at the front desk was really nice and gave us a number to call. The operator was really nice and gave us the number of a reporter. But we can't call until Monday. We're gonna get into the building by giving the same story we gave the guard, but when we get to the reporter, we're gonna tell him that we're taking part in a scavenger hunt to win a motorcycle and we need to photocopy a press pass. Then we're gonna forge new ones based on that.

And now it's 10:30 on the dot, we're back home, Tim's working on a webpage and I'm writing and we're listening to Gang Starr and things are just feeling

really productive and good.

I HAD JUST FINISHED NARRATING THE STORY OF MY NIGHT AT THE BAR WITH CHARLIE AND GOKU.

It was a starry night, pretty warm for January, and we were out at the reservoir enjoying a couple blunts and a tequila bottle that had been refilled with a mixture of two-thirds Jack Daniels and one-third Johnny Walker Red. Juan said, "Drinking till eight in the morning is punk rock, dude."

"I thought you didn't like to label things punk." Tom sneered.

Juan stuttered "Well, I mean, drinking until eight is taboo. And punk rock is..."

"The thing is," I broke in, "it's okay to label something punk rock, to say '...is punk rock.' You only run into problems when you say 'Punk rock is...' Because in the first case, you apply the term punk rock to something-drinking until eight in the morning, making out in the bathroom at Coney Island High, putting out a D.I.Y. record-but you never define what punk rock is. Because when you define punk rock you limit it, and it means so much to so many people."

"But all those things are taboo." Was Juan's reply.

"Is putting out a record taboo? No. But it's punk fucking rock." I screamed. I was a little drunk and overly passionate about my argument.

"Well I think punk rock is just a style of music." Tom threw in.

"But every music has a distinct culture that goes with it, Tom, you know that. And gimme that fucking bottle!" I was shouting. "Where was I?"

"Every music has a culture."

"Oh yeah. And punk rock has a culture, man. Culturally, I identify as 'Punk Rock.' On my SATs, when it



(HAPPY BIRTHDAY COLIN)

said race, I checked Other and wrote in Punk Rock. It's what I was raised on and it's all I got. I don't have religion. I don't have a unified ethnic background. But I've got Punk Fucking Rock. And that's all I fuckin' need!" The only reply was a sarcastic "amen" from everyone. But I continued. I was on a roll. I stood up for dramatic effect, but stumbled from the liquor. "And that's the beauty of America, man. When you look past the fact that the country is run by corporations, past the fact that we fight wars over oil, you see a nation where people of different cultures come together and create new cultures. Everything that more than one person does has it's own culture, and that's beautiful. Man, I mean, like, fuckin', you know, before America, cultural affinities were based on stupid qualifiers like religion and ethnicity. But now, man, cultural affinities are based on common interests like Dungeons & Dragons, Sexual Fetishes or the fuckin' Ramones, man. Don't you fucking understand? I FUCKING LOVE THIS COUNTRY! And if you don't like that Juan, you can go back to Mexico where they speak your fucking language."

THIS WAS WRITTEN ONE YEAR AGO, TODAY.

I heard my mom's footsteps coming towards the door and quickly hid my Easter basket under the table. She had told me not to eat near the computer. She came in and said, "Colin, I told you not to eat near the computer." Feeling confident in my subterfuge, I lied, "Mom, I'm not eating near the computer. You should know by now that I obey your commands absolutely, as if they were the laws of god." She chuckled and walked away. I continued to type my far-below-par essay on James Joyce when I had to go to the bathroom. It was then I

noticed that I had chocolate all over my face. Such is to be expected in the presence of chocolate bunnies.

TARA,

Yo, your zine fucking rocks harder than gravel. I was incredibly pleased and humbled. It's magnificent. My next one should be done soon, but to tide you over, I'm gonna send the last one and a Valentine's Day card since I lost all the grocery lists I was saving for you in a freak coffee spill.

And I've turned nineteen recently, and frankly, it feels about the same. But it was nice to have a weekend where it was cool for me to just celebrate myself and where everyone else just celebrated with me. Because I think I'm worth a celebration every once in a while.

love, colin

(for the record: Tara is from california and she and I had a very flirtatious exchange of ja rule lyrics. In fact she may have joined the ranks of 'zine crush.' You should order her zine, AndSheGoesOn from: Backyard Press / 1222 Bowen Ave. / Modesto, CA 95350. I would think a dollar or two would be sufficient.)

**WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN, MY FRIENDS
MOM USED TO USE THE WORD
BROTHERS TO MASK HER
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACK
MEN.**

She'd be dropping us at the mall and she'd say something like, "Now boys, be careful where you wave

your money. There's a lot of brothers out today." It always made me uncomfortable, but when I was thirteen, although I was beginning to question the legitimacy of my authority figures, parents where not to be argued with.

But she still made me feel disgusting, so to ease the tension in my gut, I would pretend she was talking about priests. I would imagine gangs of priests riding skateboards through the mall. Smoking cigarettes, spitting and cursing like sailors, they would lay waste to The Galleria one store at a time. I would imagine them approaching me in the food court. They'd circle around me. The shortest one, obviously the ringleader, would tip my tray onto my shirt and then mock me in a Dee-Dee Ramone Queens tough guy voice. He'd pull a switchblade and say, "Run your pockets, chump." I'd give him all my money, which he and the other priests would use to buy a new stained glass window.

YOU WANT TO MAKE OUT WITH ME FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- Intellectually, I'm at my best during moments of post-hot'n'heavy, full-bodied clamminess.
- If I could make my kisses taste like anything it would be Summer Peach Snapple.
- Making out is best when both parties involved are thinking equally about their partner's and their own satisfaction.
- Rachel says I'm grapes.
- I need hickies I can be proud of.
- We'll take naps in the sun and have picnics.
- I'll cook you feasts. Or maybe we'll just listen to the stray cats and dance around the kitchen and cook feasts together.

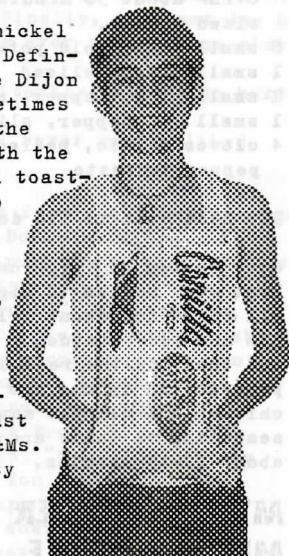
- All the other girls will be jealous.
- I wanna make out with you.

ROCKNROLL COOKING

I've been all about sandwiches lately. Because there are so many kinds of bread and so many kinds of things to put in between that bread. Plus I haven't been having much sex lately so I have to substitute by sticking things into other things. That's why pitas are good. But I don't know what the hell I'm talking about. Here's something I've been digging:

- The Poor Tony Danza -

Get real drunk. Toast a pumpernickel bagel and make some tuna fish. Definitely use Mayo. I sometimes use Dijon mustard in my tuna instead (sometimes =always) but in this instance, the mustard would probably clash with the M&Ms. After you have your bagel toasted and your tuna made, look into the living room and notice that Tony Danza is hosting the Miss America Pageant. Drop to your knees and scream to the heavens, "Poor Tony Danza! To what depths hast thou sunk?" Remove all blue M&Ms from your pile since the blue ones are responsible for the genocide (or at least forced relocation) of the tan M&Ms. Put all the rest of the chocolate goodness with your tuna on your bagel. Bite it. Yum.



Now a list of all the things I've been dipping in (or smearing with) Peanut Butter in the past month:
Ritz (duh), Oreos, Chocolate Cake, Pretzels, Chocolate

Covered Pretzels, Ice Cream, Donuts. All with ice cold milk.

And finally, a recipe my mom gave me that I fucking love...

Chicken & Sausage Contadina

1lb. Boneless chicken breast, cut into bite sized pieces

4-6 italian sausages, whatever combination of hot to sweet that you like. (Precooked either in pan or in oven- about 30 minutes at 400 degrees) Cut into bite sized pieces.

8 small Yukon gold potatoes, halved

1 small onion, sliced

1 small green pepper, sliced

1 small red pepper, sliced

4 cloves garlic, peeled and halved oregano, salt & pepper to taste

Pre heat oven to 350 degrees.

Coat bottom of large cast iron pan with olive oil and heat over medium to high heat. Brown chicken pieces on all sides for about 7-10 minutes. Remove chicken from pan and add potatoes. Brown potatoes for a few minutes and then add the rest of the vegetables. When the peppers and onions are getting soft, put back the chicken and add the sausage to the pan. Add the seasoning to taste and place pan in preheated oven for about 10-15 minutes.

MY DAD NEVER REALLY GAVE ME MUCH ADVICE.

I can think of four distinct father-son chats in all my nineteen years. The first one came when I was pretty

little. Pops bought me a baseball mitt, we oiled it up and stuck it under a leg of the couch to get it ready. About two weeks later, he approached me while I was playing with some Legos, mitt in hand. "You wanna play catch, son?"

"Not right now dad."

"Alright."

The next day I was reading a book and we had a similar exchange. It went on for a week, him asking me if I wanted to play catch and me turning him down because I was busy looking through a telescope or learning about dinosaurs or building things. Finally, the last day he said "Colin, do you think you're ever gonna wanna play catch?"

"Probably not dad." I said hesitantly, afraid to hurt his feelings.

He breathed a sigh of relief, "I never really liked catch anyway."

In the seventh grade I came home from skateboarding one day with a NOFX tape I got from Dominick Rizzo. I played it for my dad. "This is punk rock, dad. It's a new thing and I think it's really cool."

"You call this pussy shit punk rock?" He asked in shock. "You stay right where you are. And think about what you've done." I was really perplexed. He ran down the stairs. He came up from the basement ten minutes later with a box of records containing everything by the Clash and Fresh Fruit For Rotting Vegetables among others. He said, "Son, you saw the Clash from your mother's womb. You danced to the Specials and Tom Waits growing up. And now you're calling this garbage punk. Sit down and listen to these records." And that was that.

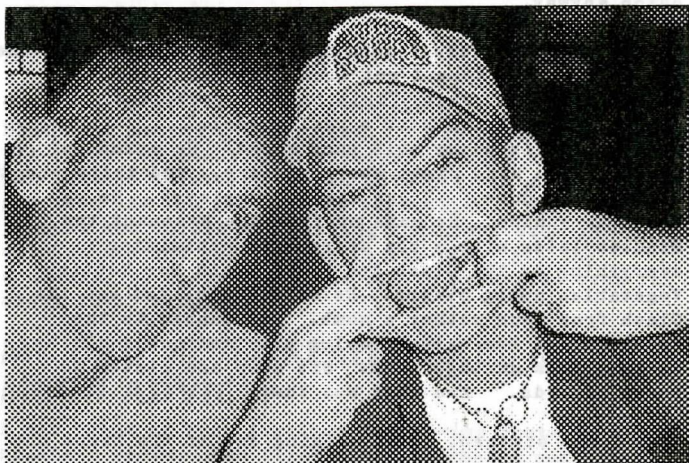
When I was sixteen, I was walking out of the house one

night and my Dad was at his chair in the living room listening to Bitches Brew on headphones. He pulled the headphones off as I walked passed him and shouted that he had to ask me something. I walked over to him and knelt down. He put his hand on my shoulder. "Do you wear a rubber, son?"

"Yeah, dad."

"Alright, Colin. Have a good night." And he put his headphones back on and I went out the door.

But the Oreos incident, that was the best by far. For years, my father and I had a tradition of eating cookies and milk while discussing philosophy. Usually I'd argue the subjectivity of morals and he would keep saying, "But it's never okay to eat your babies!" We'd talk for hours and usually end up finishing a gallon of milk and an entire box of cookies between the two of us. But once I started going out on weeknights my



often, I found myself with less time to argue existentialism with my father.

And after a few months I started to miss it. So on a Thursday night, when I spied my father at the table with a glass of water and pretzels, I grabbed the cookies and two glasses of milk and walked in to have talk.

"Damn, you're getting boring." I said as I pushed aside the pretzels and water, replacing them with milk and Oreos. "How about some cookies."

My dad got defensive. "What do you think you're doing Maybe I don't want cookies."

"C'mon, man, I've known you for years. You want cookies."

"I can't." he practically whimpered, a sad look in his eyes.

I sat down across from him. "What's wrong?"

"Well, it's past ten. If I eat cookies now I'll be up

all night, doubled over in pain, farting nonstop. I'll feel like hell and your mother will hate me."

"What's going on? Why can't you eat cookies?!?" I was shocked. I was scared. This wasn't the man I'd known all my life. This wasn't my father.

He rose, strode around the table, and sat down next to me, placing his hand on my shoulder. "Son," he said, "When you turn forty, God forces you to make a choice. A choice between Oreo cookies and sex. I think I made the wrong decision."

A VERY LATE VALENTINES DAY POEM FOR MS. LIZ DEFIANCE:

(I mailed Liz a Valentine's Day card about a week and half late last year and it got sent back, so I decided to save it for this year. But this year, Valentine's

Day came around and I hadn't mailed it yet. It was in my bag when I accidentally tripped on my untied shoelace and gave Liz' card to this really pretty cocktail waitress named Katie. So I wrote Liz this poem to make up for it and decided that it would be more Valentinesie if I declared my love publicly.)

I really like the way you smell
It makes me swoon, you dress so well
You even have a nice shaped skull
(Phrenologically speaking, you're the perfect girl)

But it's your mind that really gets me
Cuz radical politics sure are sexy.
Mr. Belvedere and Wesley
Please don't laugh, my mother dressed me

I'll write a country song for you
I'll crack my voice and sing real blue
I'd like to take you to the zoo
If you don't mind I don't shampoo

And as crazy as it seems
You're in my heart and in my dreams
I've pitched a tent inside my jeans
Cuz we could make the greatest zines

I'm not really one for zine reviews, but everyone should order Liz' Death of a Psyche. Her address is:
4839 East Crocus Drive / Scottsdale, AZ 85254

**I FINALLY SMOKED POT WITH MY
LITTLE SISTER, ON THANKSGIVING
NIGHT NO LESS.**

There were butterflies in my stomach like there hadn't been in years when I left the house with Nate, Juan,



Tom, Steve and Emma (the little sis) in tow. The Boys had come by for dessert, and after my entire extended family left we decided to head out to the pool hall. As I was leaving Emma tapped me on the shoulder, "Can I come?"

"If it's okay with mom." I said. I really was down with it. Now that I'm not living at home my sister and I get along excellently. But it mostly started with Canada. At the end of last year, my dad decided that we would take a family trip to Canada. Why Canada? "Because it's right there and... I think I left the oven on."

So we went to Canada. It was hellish spending all that time with just my parents. It's not that they're bad people, but they're too much sometimes. Plus, I try not to smoke too many cigarettes in front of them,

because it really makes them sad to watch me murder myself, so I was grumpy as fuck a whole lot. But Emma came through in the clutch. Everywhere we went she would act like an annoying, snotty brat. She'd wine and moan and ask my dad to buy her everything until he would say, "Alright, Colin, take Emma somewhere else, we'll meet you for dinner at such and such a time." As soon as we were a block away from the folks, she'd smile at me and punch me in the arm and say, "You can smoke now. Aren't I a good sister?"

One night I was sitting in the hotel lobby talking to Nan on the phone. Emma came down and sat next to me and I told Nan I had to go. "Have you ever FUCKED?" she asked me.

"WHAT?"

"Have you ever fucked?" she repeated with much less emphasis on the "fuck."

"No."

"So you've never had sex?"

"I've had sex, but I've never fucked. I may have made love, and I've definitely had sex, but I've never fucked. Because fucking implies objectification and fucking implies lack of respect, and I don't want to mix those with what's possibly the most glorious act I'll ever be involved in." I was starting to feel like a big brother and it was great. The only advice I had ever given my sister prior to then was "to rock more and suck less" and she didn't take it very well. Now she was looking at me with respect and admiration, like she was really thinking about what I said, and I was loving it. "I don't really wanna know about your sex life," I continued, "but let me give you one piece of advice: Most boys are scum. Make sure you come first."

When I got home from The Great North and told a few of my female friends what I said, they all told me that I

was a horrible person for saying it. Which told me that I had the wrong female friends. Because I didn't want to vilify sexual activity for my little sister. I didn't want her to feel dirty or wrong, EVER. Because sex and sexuality are fucking incredible. But I also wanted her to be wary and to understand that some sex can be bad. I just want her to maintain her self-respect. But back to Thanksgiving.

My mom lined up The Boys and said "Listen, I'm trusting you with my baby. I don't want any of you to do anything to influence her negatively." So we left, piled in Nate's tiny car and sparked a fat spliff.

We drove around and smoked for a little bit and then went to the pool hall, where we rock'n'rolled to the Rancid, G'n'R and Thin Lizzy they had put on the jukebox for us. And we drank a couple bottles of wine. And I guess we played a little pool too.

After the poolhall, we decided it was time to introduce Emma to Davenport, the greatest smoke spot in all of Now Rule. You have to climb a fence, jump off a ten foot wall, and then climb rocks to get there, but you get a beautiful view of the water and the boats and the dumb people in their mansions.

We got there and we were smoking and drinking and talking. "Mom doesn't let me hang out with Trisha anymore because she's a slut." Emma said.

"Mom's such a puritan." I replied, disgusted.

"Actually, you should hear this. About a month ago mom read a study saying that more girls are sucking dick at younger ages. So she comes up to me and she's like, 'Emma do you suck penis?' all stern and shit. So I was like, 'No, Mom, of course not, but I know some kids who do.' In my sweet little angel voice. So, get this, she

says to me, 'Well, dear, I can't do anything if you're lying, but all I can say is that if you ever decide to, make sure you get yours too.' So take back what you said about her being a puritan."

My mom is the fucking coolest.

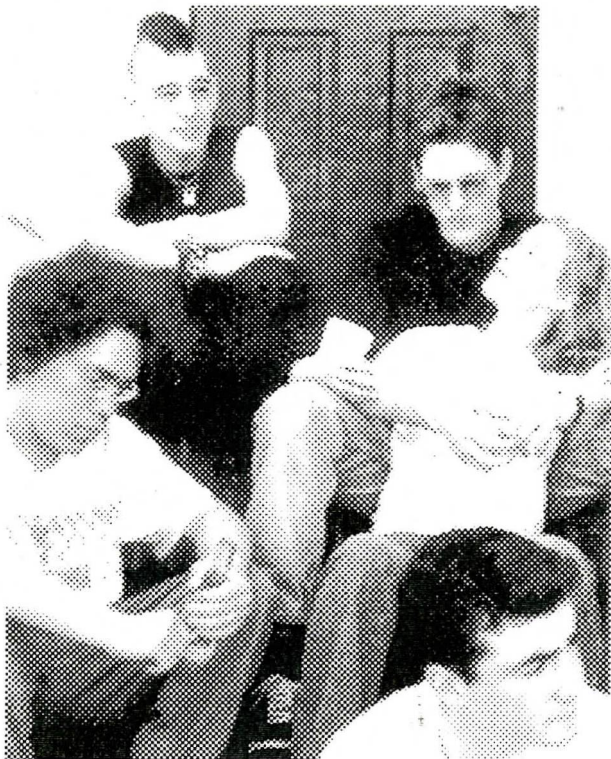


PHOTO CREDITS

charlie, arthur headless,

me & juan at the church

(me)

juan looking nostalgic

(me)

mya and noah at hudson

park around christmas

(me)

tim on the williams-

burg bridge

(me)

the birthday cake madeline &

jane made me

(me)

me and rice

(liz)

dad and i

(mom)

me and emma on easter lookin'

like punks

(dad)

more me

(me)

me, tom, dara, juan, nabil

on the stoop next to Sorellis

in boston

(jon)

juan, tom, steve and charlie

at the church

(me)

thanks yous to:

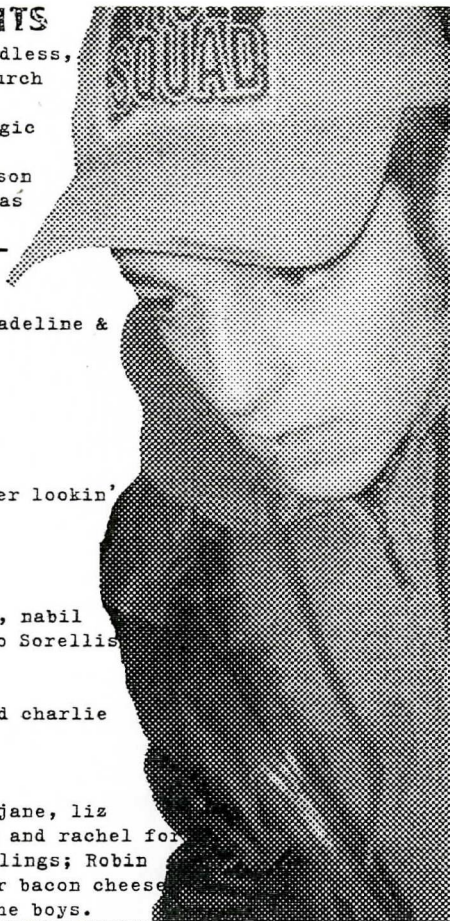
carly, nate, greg, jane, liz

for proofin'; megan and rachel for

being surrogate siblings; Robin

Raj 24 Hour Deli for bacon cheese

burgers at 5am; & the boys.





YOUVE COME TO THE END.

That's it. I started this thing in february, and now it's april and I'm finally done. But if college has done anything else, it's begun to make me forget what's important.

So I'm gonna take some time off. All of next year, as a matter of fact. I'm gonna write and read and make music and make art and then I'm gonna tackle college on MY MOTHERFUCKIN' TERMS.

Because right now I'm wasting away. I'm time and money and effort and I'm making myself miserable. A few weeks ago I was really sick. During the walk to the emergency room I found myself wishing it was something BIG and uncomfortable and long-lasting so that I could get some time off school. Talk about forgetting what's important.

All the contact info is in the front, but I have the AIM which is YoButtShtank and I'm a turd with an online journal which is www.livejournal.com/users/yousmell.

Love, Colin

ORGANIC MARKET!
ORGANIC MARKET!
CELERY 'N' CARROTS.

