



**RUBBER
SUIT
COMIX**

A CHARMED LIFE

NUMBER FIVE
BY PETE TRUDGEON
MATURE READERS

\$2.00





RUBBER SUIT COMIX PRESENTS

A CHARMED LIFE NUMBER SIX

WORDS AND PICTURES BY PETE TRUDGEON

special thanks to Dave Asman and Mike Ortiz

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Toronto Journal

I awoke with snap at 8:30 Saturday morning, quite alert but with a bit of dryness in my throat. Spent the night watching T.V. on an ancient black 'n' white that I'd set up on my big brother's basement workbench. Earlier I'd been upstairs watching Crumb, which is my pre-show superstition, but later I moved down to the basement so I wouldn't have to walk on eggshells. There I was, feet propped up watching the tube all the while being eyeballed by a little orange cat. Not sure when I sacked out, maybe 3:00 or 3:30. Not yet hungry so I drink coffee while, we, we being my big bro and sis-in-law wait fro Susann, another of the mini comic folk, to show up. When she finally arrives it's off to Hamtramck to grab Matt, king of the stick figures, and perhaps the biggest indie in Michigan.

Across the bridge to the border hoping the border patrol doesn't inspect us like the last time. They, don't I almost regret not bringing any pot, but I also know I'm not the big risk type, so I trash the thought. We exchange our cash, the rate is good, \$150 American becomes \$200 in Canuck funny money. I just know the next stop, one of those Tim Horton's donut joints that dot the landscape like pimples on an ass. I buy a sandwich that has a name which sounds like a ski lodge, some juice, and even some bottled water.

We hit the road, serious this time. I'm in for the long haul, no Americana billboard blight to eyeball, just flat land and the occasional moo-cow. Sue reads road signs aloud, it's all idle chit-chat, but I don't join in cause I don't chit-chat nor do I chat-chit. The road dummies me up. I wonder why others fear silence, not that these folks aren't chummy, cheesy types. But they are vice less, so I am the only sinner on a church picnic, left to count cows and rest stops until we reach downtown Toronto. As we drive down Bloor Street all funky with various shops and places to get eats. People are everywhere, J-walking bravely between cars driven gloriously insane. The concept of Saturdays off being just a fucking grand concept turns over in my brain.

Finally, when we make it to our hotel, I'm informed that because of a snafu, we're getting an executive street on the eighth floor. Standing in front of the elevator doors of shiny gold I stare at our reflection. The room is better than swell, mini bar, snacks, and a fax machine. All too damn expensive to be fun. Big bro and sis-in-law are tucked out so it's nap time for them. Matt suggests a trip to The Beguiling, king of the Canuck comic book stores, so famous that even americanos know of it. This means my feet will be treading on Bloor Street, a joyous thing.

Look, the shoe museum, people everywhere a huge billboard of a female model looking down on us puny mortals. Bum types sleeping in phone booths or rum-maging in the bushes, and lord o' mighty, hundreds of fresh faced beauties strolling all about, carefree, confident, of all colors of the rainbow. All knowing they're knock-out gorgeous and not afraid to let this little comix americano know it. Crisp razor air mixes with busy buzz into an environmental martini. After much brows-ing, I snatch up some comix and yet another tome to conspiracy theories. If my

strings are being pulled, I want to know the bad guys who are pulling them, a twisted fascination. Then it's back to the wonderous streets. We're all hungry for eats, so in the middle of Chinatown, Sue spots a pizza joint. We order a large pie with pepperoni and sausage, a bit salty, but it's okay. We're soon approached by a salt of a different kind. He's drinking a dark beer, must have a buzz on cause he's chewing the fact like we're chewing our pizza. He's on about calligraphy and politics, but I decide to turn invisible because I want to read an interview with Pete Bagge. It works, sort of. He yaps to Matt and Sue. I try to be polite. My cloak drops some when he drops dime on me for being so tight lipped, but he doesn't bust my chops too bad over it. Before he exits, he tips us off telling we three that life is a beautiful adventure and that we should enjoy it. Damn skippy, me thinks, but sometimes the rat bastards just won't let you. I wonder if I'll age so well and be able to hang out in pizza parlors, drinking dark ale, philosophizing. Shit, like I don't think too much already. Will there be any topics left for me to ponder when I'm a geezer?

Back on the concrete, down an alternate path through side streets, just observing the great old houses, wishing I lived in one instead of my shit shack back home. These domiciles have got character, the type where you just want to park your butt, have some rounds with pals, smoking your cowboy killers while you yak about comix, flicks, and that sweet female you saw walking out of the used bookstore.

After we get back, we discover big bro and sis-in-law have stepped out, but they soon return. The four of them decide to hit the streets again, but I stay. I take a quick trip to the hotel gift shop for some smokes and a ginger ale. It's good, but it sure as shit ain't Vernors. So I know there's at least one thing us Yanks do a bit better. Back to the room to read about conspiracies, covers-ups, and crimes. A lot of big bad shat the big baddies do like fun'n'games—nasty bits of cloak and daggerisms. I realize it's a big ol' world of alternate history and that once and a while I wish I could be one of the many, the ignorant, the not knowing how screwed up and manipulated this whole sicko world is. Be like my big bro, thrust that the big daddy Jesus will handle it all and make the villains pay in the end.

Strangely, all this thought of black-ops and oak bombs makes me sleepy. I stab out my smoke and cat nap a bit. Twenty minutes later, I'm snapping up again, throwing on my black jacket and heading back to those Toronto streets now cloaked in night, bathing in neon glow which is surely one of the single greatest advancements in mood setting.

Going downstairs, I figure, well shit, every big city has its own bar, wouldn't it be an awful shame not to grace it with my humble self? For no better reason than to say I tipped with some loonies I make my entrance. I'm not surprised by the pure mood of the place; it's dark enough to make everyone in the bar room attractive. Hell, a fella could fall in love here.

I take a seat at the bar, because no one else has, wouldn't want it to get lonely. The barkeep looks like a silent film star with slick hair and slicker movements. Heiniken my good man, \$4.75 a bottle, but money is no object, not tonight, anyway.

This barkeep is one suave guy, he actually presents me my beer, as if to say, "We're all class ladies and gents here good sir." The he pours. Yep one suave fella. I flare up a nail, taking a look at the display of fine expensive booze behind the bar, all those soldiers standing at attention. Middle agers drink seven dollar glasses of wine while listening to a piano player sing old standards. Just as I'm thinking some of Mr. Sinatra would do nice, the piano player starts to croon "Young at Heart," which I surely am, but it's also kind've sad cause I realize that I'll never see ol' blue eyes perform live on stage. No, not ever. So, Cheers Frank, on the last of the cool, the real cool like Bukowski, Kerouac, and Bruce Lee. It's a crying shame that they don't make cool like that anymore. The tykes today will never know what they missed. But it's soon after I've finished my second Heiniken that I know it's time to shuffle off, hit the bricks for real cause this is a gentlemen's place and I, being no gentleman, know it's best to be where something's a happening. Since Mr. Suave was so good at not being a nosy Susan as to why I'm alone and tight lipped I tip him a big blue Canuck fiver.

Outside, it's as busy as ever. The air is buzzing. I'm feeling swell so I give a bum a loonie, he gives me thanx. I bop down aways, till I find a new establishment. My soaked mind can't recall the name exactly. Bob's Benny's, I just don't know, but it's not important to my tale. So again i st and order a pint of Fosters. As I look about I see the place is identical to most. The folks are my age, all good, clean Canuck kids unawares they've got a sinning comix yank in their midst, traveling incognito, even using their Canuck funny money. All the ladies lovely as can be and up to the moment fashionable. But while the bar of name forgotten is fin'n'all I scam after my second pint.

Pavement cnce more and shit, I realize I haven't seen a cop since I got here. Sure is damn fine when a Yank tipper like myself can walk down the street without any fear of his beer money being swiped. It's than, that I notice there's a place around the block from my hotel. I staked it out earlier in the day. I always make sure that I know these things, so as not to waste time.

Amblin I go feeling fuzzy, but in a good way.

Not sloppy drunk or sick drunk nor mad bad drunk.

The Ol' Tap Room lies snug as a bug in its own plot of the world. It doesn't shout at you like the meat markets back home, instead it invites you in splendid calm, telling this tipper, please come in cause you've found shelter land. Soft lights glow warm like a fireplace blaze. I like it already.

Big time buzz hits me, I've stumbled into something. This isn't the idle chatter of strangers, it's family and friends. Most everyone's dressed in his or her best. As soon as I see all the young gents wearing the same outfit of a tux jacket, kit, and feathered cap, I realize I'm sure as shit landed my Yank butt right smack in the middle of a wedding reception. A stool lies unoccupied, almost as if it was waiting for me, a base camp next to hanging glasses. I hear busy barmaids chatter in brogues, making me which I had a girl with an accent like that so I could have her tell me rude jokes and her voice would make them seem that much funnier. I order a

Guinness cause if this place doesn't serve it, there's not a hope on earth. Soon I'm sipping and that ol' cloak becomes active. I'm the invisible man, playing fly on the wall, listening in on bits of conversation. This being a festive occasion, the booze flows, the talk becomes introspective about all things near'n'dear like love, life, family friends. I can't help but think that I wish I'd found this place earlier. If I was a man of means, I'd build a place like this back home, cause there's no place like this place. When a traditional song begins to play on the juke, a couple starts to dance. The man is wearing a tux, the gal in a little black dress, which gives me the honor of seeing her shapely powerful legs as they rise and fall, the heels of her shoes, clop, clop, clop with a loud strength. The woman can sure dance. Where did she learn, who taught her, how long ago? It makes me a bit blue cause I think of the Yank equivalent being some 'burb broad shakin' her booty to Bob Seger. So I try to soak up the beautiful poetry of the moment until the dance ends. Everyone applauds, I clap just as heartily, maybe a little more so because I've witnessed something rare and glorious. Yep, if I was only a man of means.

After a while I'm not only juiced on brew but on the atmosphere as well. If it's possible to fall in love with a place than surely I have here. But one can't run and hide from the sad inevitability that is the empty wallet. I've been throwing around dough around, but fuck it, I said money was no object. Besides, I've got more cash up in the room. I take my final sip, inside my head I bid farewell to the Old Tap room, which I really would take home if I could. Promise I'll visit next year if I can, but in the meantime I'll try my best immortalize you. Sure, I'm buzzed but don't worry, I'm not going to forget. Only a punk would and I'm not like that. So goodbye men in kilts, dancing girls, and my new favorite watering hole, which is only a few thousand miles from my front door.

On the way back to the hotel I smoke my cowboy killers, teetering just a bit. The air has gotten chilly so I hunch my shoulders; my journey is not long. I straighten up when I hit the lobby, fancy pants hotels don't like buzzed Yanks a'stumblin' in their halls. Up the elevator, it's empty which is good. I reach the room, everyone is already in the sack, looks like it's the floor for this sinner, but it's thickly carpeted so I swipe the top cover from sleeping relatives. It's not long until I'm off in slumberland.

The next morning it's snaptime again. I'm feeling no pain. Must be that fine Canuck air my lungs have been taking in. It's all shower, shave, and dress time. I don't have to rush 'cause lo and behold the ol' sinner is up first. I look out our window, which really does have a fine view, matched with the swell weather, it's really picture perfect so I grab my camera and snap a shot.

Once we're out and about for our pre-canzine breakfast. It's the hearty, stick to your ribs kind of chow. I'd like my eggs sunnyside up please with some bacon, spuds, and toast. Don't forget my juice, coffee, and water, I gotta rehydrate this sinner's body. I finish my meal so I grab some discrete smokes while watching three cutie punkettes drink their cappuccinos. Gazing at the urban funk of these streets, they'd make a great backdrop for a flick. We bum around a little more, but soon we have to get over to the show, so we all hop into big bro's van and motor

over to Chinatown.

Actually, there are seven Chinatowns but this one is the biggest and man does it show. All the shops are lettered with Chinese characters. We pass two large, red dragons perched on high looking down at the mad rush of people. Tons of folks, the buzz here is more intense than on Bloor St. I really feel it after we park. Someone has spray painted "Dog No Good" on an alley wall. We walk a block and pow, that mad rush will swallow you if you let it, gotta play human dodge 'em or else you'll run into folks. I really feel like I'm in Hong Kong or China, so many people, so few round eye to be seen. The show is being held at a large nightclub, next to an open air fruit and vegetable market where people chatter away in dialects I'm never going to understand but it's cool sounding anyway. Time to go inside, I try to take in as much of this scene as possible, cause it's golden.

We take an elevator to the third floor where we register and then we grab our tables. Mine happens to be next to the huge picture window that gives a bird's eye view of the streets below. Across from me is a framed movie poster from a flick called "Calypso Girl Goes Bop," really gaudy but that's cool. The whole show is sort've like any other except there aren't any major companies, just us dirtbag undergrounders. I'm able to sling a few more books than usual but all the same trying to get the Canuck folks to buy is just as difficult as getting the Yanks to buy back home. Strangely, that old sadness that comes from being ignored doesn't hit me all day. I resolve to say fuck it, I'll sell what I sell and even minor victories are still victories.

When I get bored with sitting on my tail, I venture outside for a smoke. But I stop cause I have to keep taking that creaking elevator. Besides, you can smoke upstairs, strange that rule being relaxed. I mingle about, buy some books, hoping this positive karma I'm sending out comes back to me. I bus some Red Baron beers and listen to a panel discussion on how 'zines are the new literature and is success really selling out. Same old yakety-yak.

Later on two lesbians, I think this 'cause of the intimate way they pass a cigarette between each other, pass my table. The one with a red and black mohawk almost buys something but her luv distracts her. Oh well spiked dykes go bop.

Eventually the sun hits that certain spot in the day, the room is flooded with rays. Folks are getting blinded, good thing I brought my shades. Sure enough though the day has gotta close. I'm happy with my little wad of cash, safe in the knowledge that some folks will be reading my shit. Some of them may even like it.

Since the capitalist phase of this thing is winding down, it's decided that we're eating Chinese in Chinatown with pen-pals of my big-bro. Matt and Sue decide to stick around a bit, so the rest of us go ahead. Along the way, I take snap shots of the great red dragons. It's getting dark now, neon begins to glow. I hope that these pictures turn out.

The place is only a few blocks away so we make it in no time. It's cool cause I can eyeball china girl cuties and listen to all the chatter swirling together into its own

rhythm. After we're seated one of bro's pals tries to teach me in the way of the chopstick, but it's a disaster. Guess I'll just have to stick the fork. Matt and Sue eventually turn up, so we order. Pork dish, beef dish, chicken dish, and vegi dish plus plenty of rice. We proceed to chow down spinning wheel style.

Big bro's friends are big time Christians, but don't seem like the preachy type, even though they did a comic on the book of revelation, which is pretty ambitious. Unfortunately they can't find decent distribution, not even from Christian book-stores. They don't seem down about, just in love with each other and Jesus. I think they're fine folks. The whole feast is topped off with fortune cookies and snap shots.

It's almost time to hit the road home, which is worse at night, but maybe I'll get lucky and nod off. One more ride through the magical Toronto streets. See you next year. If only Canuck folks would smarten up and get proper beer stores, I'd jump countries, like that. I'd move to Chinatown, start writing novels or take up painting.

The road is nothing but inky blackness and fits of sort've sleep. the beginning process is reverse, but eventually we're over the border, back in the good ol' USA. I weasel a ride to my home from Sue. Back at the ol' shit shack, which now looks so bad, I think about how tomorrow is gonna be back to work and much that convention in Dearborn is gonna be braindead fanboys. Sure as shit if I don't turn out be correct.



Marty

We picked him up around 11:00 a.m. Preceding this was a joint, followed by a thunderstorm, life paging us boys. He kept his things in a plastic milk crate, on his person a half full jug of Carlo Rossi red that he began to drink from a coffee mug, which had a crocodile on it. An hour later we're stopped at a liquor store so he can buy a pint of whiskey, which he drank mixed with diet seven-up. Later while eating at McDonalds, he becomes annoyed over a missing section of his newspaper. After eating, we find it in the car, where he had left it. Meanwhile he's gone back to look for his pint.

On the road, my lunch is taking its revenge on me. Fortunately the Indian Travel Bureau is close by. I dash into air conditioning and glossy pamphlets. The women behind the counter don't bat an eye. This must happen a lot. While sitting on the can, Mike comes in to relieve himself and informs me that you know who is wandering around the parking lot holding a joint.

Sure enough there he is, with the grin of a ten year old on his face. For some reason, I decide to accompany him down an embankment to what looks like a drained swamp, all mud and knocked down trees. Reluctantly I smoke the dope with him and wonder if the women up above are feeding the cops Mike's plate number.

Eventually I coax him back topside, all the while trying not to track mud on, he isn't. At last we get back on the road again. I'm a little buzzed but not enough to notice. Things are calm, we stop once, so he can piss and chase a butterfly. But once in Chicago, he informs us, in voice that sounds like he's talking in his sleep, that he's got to pee, again.

We pull into a gas station, with some effort he crawls out of the car, his shoes streaking mud across the front seat. Once he stumbles to the building, he passes out standing up. Eventually he returns, his shirt wine stained, whiskey drying on his pants.

In downtown traffic he slips in and out of consciousness. The panic button is almost pressed when he asks Mike to roll down the window. Fortunately, he just needs air. Finally the alcohol wins and he passes out curled into a ball.

We reach our hotel, nicle place. Mike and Damon go into register. I guard the car while smoking. He sprawls out, more mud streaks. By now he's completely in dreamland. I tell the fellas that I'll meet them upstairs.

In our room we try to formulate a plan. We know that eventually we'll have to get him upstairs. There's a side entrance we can use but we'll have to pass by both the pool and the exercise room. Simple, fuck it, we'll carry him.

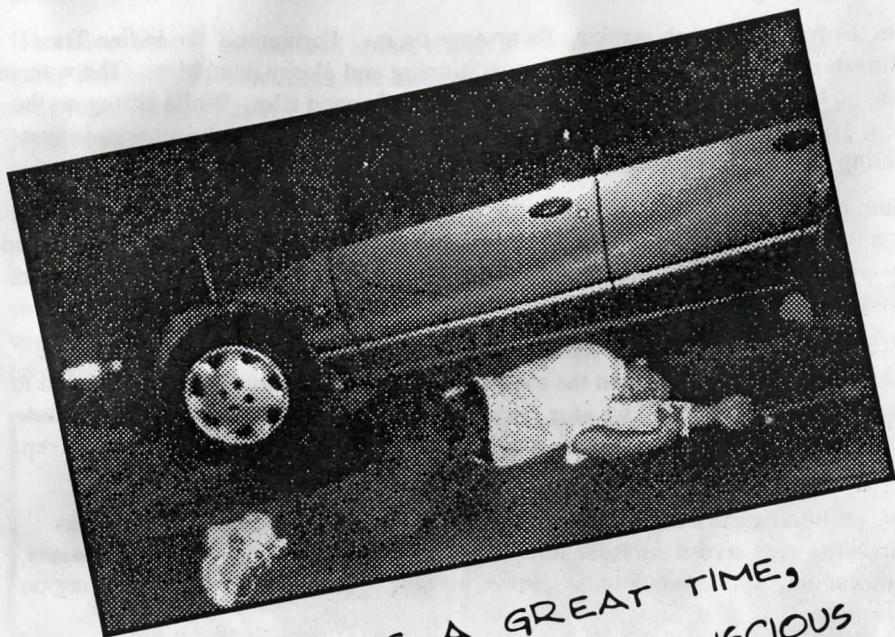
After two passes where we pick up our bags and attempt to wake him up, with no luck at the latter, we arrive for the third time.

Damon yells, "He's out've the car!"

Damn right, unconscious, on the floor of the parking garage, smack on the top of a

puddle. I snap a picture for posterity.

We're able to get him on his feet, barely. With Mike and Damon holding him, me on doors we get him into the building, down the hall, and into the room. By the way, his fly is open. He collapses on a bed muttering to himself and proceeds to sleep for the next seven hours. Later, Damon will remark that's the drunkest he has ever seen anyone. It's the first day of a five day trip.



HAVING A GREAT TIME,
WISH YOU WERE CONSCIOUS

A Charmed Life in Ohio

June had arrived, and I just knew life was about to throw me into a whirlwind. It all began while I was driving home from a buddy's house, a black cat dashed out into the path of my truck. From that moment my fate was sealed.

This couldn't have come at a worse time. I was all set to attend the Underground Publishing Conference in Bowling Green, Ohio, and I was going to need all the positive karma I could muster.

I put into practice every good luck ritual I had in my possession to try to tip the balance in my favor. Even in the last hours of Friday night before my departure I was still working the mojo. This included watching "The Crow" at my favorite dive. It's a comic related flick and I figured every little bit helped.

Then came Saturday. At first, things seemed to be going well. I'd awakened at 6:30 a.m., well before my alarm, got to my brother's house, and we were on the road by 7:30. The drive to Ohio was uneventful, with only one stop for a late breakfast. We made it there in less than three hours.

The show was being held on the sprawling campus of Bowling Green University. The first thing I noticed was Oak Grove cemetery, which likes smack dab in the center of this institute of higher learning.

The second thing I noticed was that there weren't any flyers announcing the show, probably because of it being summer and classes were over for the semester. Still, I didn't know how much off the ground advertising had been done. Meaning this could go either way.

We made our way to Olscamp hall, sight of the show. After checking in I began setting up at my table. Looking around I saw all the various factions of underground comic culture in attendance.

There they were, the punks, anarchists, vegans, the teenage zinester brats, all sporting bad haircuts and thrift store clothing. Me in my Joker/Harlequin t-shirt—I was a bit too corporate for this group.

The show itself was uneventful; I sold some books, traded with a few folks, and bought some stuff. It occurred to me a lot of these people are rather cheap, or just broke. Also the anarchists seems to like writing about anarchy, but don't practice any. Perhaps that mess in Seattle wore them out.

The whole affair ended 'round six. My brother took note that a vegan dinner was being put on at St. Thomas church. Since it was only \$2.00 and he, himself, is cheap, we decided this would be a good idea.

Sitting on the church's gymnasium floor, surrounded by all that humanity, I came to realize I could never convert to vegetarianism. All the chow tasted like cardboard, I'm just too much of a carnivore.

Even though it was hot outside, that was where I retreated to catch a breeze and

have a smoke. It seemed I was the only future cancer patient in the lot.

I still had a rare Saturday night away from work ahead of me and was determined not to let it go to waste. There was a rock show happening at a joint called the Easy St. Cafe, but since it didn't start until ten, I had some time to kill.

The plan was for my brother to return to the campsite, where we were staying, than meet me at the club around 11 o'clock. Until then, I was on my own.

I decided to bum around the campus taking snap shots of any interesting architecture and watching rabbits bound across lawns.

Around eight, I made my way over to South Main St. where the club was located. Since it was still early, another two hours until show time, so I stopped at Trotters tavern. The heat was getting to me and I needed a place just to sit, have a brew, and go over the events of the day so far.

I didn't stay long, instead I walked across the street to a different place. I can't remember the name, it didn't seem important at the time. From the outside it look like an old man bar. A good place to have a drink in peace.

Turns out to be just the opposite, it was meat market. I loathe this kind of joint and since it was practically empty, only three workers and two fat chicks, it took on a depressing air.

I sat there, drinking Heiniken, listening to the soundtrack. Non-stop 80's metal. They all played in succession, Ratt, Poison, Motley Crüe, one after the other. Songs about screwing and almost no one to hear them.

I had to do something. I'd brought some boo to smoke and had even considered lighting up on campus, but it had been in broad daylight, and the smoker's paranoia had been too strong.

But now I was braver, thanks to the alcohol. I kept my stash, along with papers, and a small pipe in a metal can that was big enough to hold everything, yet small enough to carry in my pants pocket.

After my second Heiniken arrived I went into the john, found a stall and began my mission. Since the stall had no door, the danger of being busted was increased. The whole scenario was a stealth affair: pot out've can, pack bowl, return my shit back to can. It was one of those strange things, it happened quickly, but seemed to take forever.

I finished my beer, than got out've the bar of the damned, back onto the streets. Buzzing and bolstered by a certain I don't give a fuck spirit I stepped into a space between two building, turned my back to the street, lit up my pipe and took three successive hits. The shit hit me like a shot.

I was glowing as I strolled over the East St. The show was upstairs so up I climbed. Handing over my ID the doorman didn't buy that I was legal. This happens all the time as Look younger than my years. Finally I convinced him, but only after reciting nearly every scrap of info on my license.

I cozied up to the bar, ordered, than set about surveying the scene. I recognized several faces from earlier in the day. One thing I've learned is that anarchist, vegan, or otherwise, all women a little black dress and a pair of fuck me heels.

The first band to the stage. Called Stylex, they consisted of three guys: a vocalist, bassist, and a fella who alternated between keyboards and guitar. Surprisingly they're able to make a fairly big sound. It's not bad, but I can't make out a word of what the singer is saying.

Around the time the second band gets onstage, and four beers later my brother finally shows up. It's 11:00, the place is so packed they've stopped letting people in, but somehow my bro convinced the doorman to give him entrance so he can fetch me.

We return to the campground where there's a bonfire already burning. We sip beers, take hits from my pipe and stare into the flames. For some reason I take a picture of the fire. Than, I unfold the conference schedule and throw it on the fire where it's consumed instantly.

The spontaneous bit of documentation slash sacrifice must have accidentally opened some sort of gate. In the middle of the night I was awakened by the sounds of something outside the camper. It was ominous but unidentifiable.

I was overwhelmed with fear and it wouldn't go away. Whatever it was seemed to know I was awake, so it continued to taunt me. I realized that this is how a trapped animal must feel. Somehow I was finally able to fall back asleep.

The next morning I woke up in my brother's van. Somehow I had moved from where I had originally laid down. I got up, put on some clothes and walked over to the edge of the campground's lake. There I sat down in a lawn chair smoking while enjoying the breeze coming off the water.

I still don't know what those noises were, perhaps I dreamt them, but that didn't explain my body switching act. Over time I decided that it was a demon. It has names like fear, doubt, and failure. But I had faced them, kept my sanity, and made it through another show. My books had made it into people's hands, would be read, perhaps enjoyed.



Square Deal Marble Memo

The title of this bit refers to a 4 ?" by 3 ?" notebook I've carried on my person from time to time, mostly to jot down any ideas or observations that might come to me at the spur of a moment. Not surprisingly, I've been in various bars around Michigan, Chicago, and even Canada, when the inspiration has hit me. So, if when reading this, my lucidity seems to from one end of the spectrum to the other — blame the booze.

P.S. Everything was transcribe as is, no corrections of any kind were done.

Looking for something to remember, talkin' about memory and drinking shitty beer out've a plastic cup when you know you are fucked up Bars like this are the drive-ins of the 90's.

They're dying might as well enjoy it Kevin talks about fuck sluts and Jimmy has no experience.

Here at Bennys you'll find them all, bikers, ex-biker drunks, wanna be writers, bus stop boys, the unemployed, and all focused on the barmaid, a little brunette pony-tailed girl, but never try and pick-up the barmaid cause this one looks like a little child and Kevin is singing a golden oldie and the drunks are a-talking.

Inevitably everyone leaves it's all bullshit after a certain hour.

Beer mirrors and the TV droning on, the goose is dressed like a dork for certain this is a no hope buzz each sip leads to nothing but queasy stomach and spinning bed and bad dreams. I am lost lost in a fog a fog of unknown of being lost in a field of nightmares no hope no love no respect

"Fuck all this shit"

—Kevin

Not a statement more truely said.

I have 4 pages to finish and 1 day to do it.

Bathroom smells like shit but at least I got to spread my own personal graffiti

Finally in Toronto, unfortunately the same highs and lows repeat themselves, not to mention the first bar I come to I'm forced to sit in a no-smoking section which means this'll be a quick one unless of course a seat at the regular bar opens up. What a stroke of luck the prick across from me just lit up, therefore I will also.

We left late thru fault of Aaron's alone. The trip itself felt long, but not as long as last year. Dinner was good, chicken fried steak, my first, very good as well as the annual trip to the Beguiling and found *Barfly* on video.

Just for the record the name of this place is the Wheatsheaf and hopefully this journal will get more interesting with time. As most Canadian bars there's a lot of hockey memorabilia and the classic rock in the background. The standard rule applies, where there's neon, there's a bar, and I'm sure to find it like second nature.

Something about rain soaked streets brings out the romantic in me. As usual I can't get over how fresh faced and healthy the people my age look, yet I stare at myself under the fluorescent light in that motel mirror and I can't help think, cancer patient, every flaw blaring out at me. It'll be the same tomorrow who knows if I'll sell anything, only thing I can do is try and not get morose about things. at the very least there'll be many beers and a pint of rum waiting for me at home. Unfortunately I'm nearing a temporary last blast meaning moving in with Jimmy. Anyway as of this writing I've got 12 days until I have to be out. \$3.00 for a frickin' budweiser, a guys gotta be independently wealthy to get drunk in this country. Well I've the option of staying here or going back to the motel, grabbing more money or striking out and constantly having mathematical problems circulating in my head. Here's one:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 4.50 \\
 3.05 \\
 \hline
 3.05 \\
 10.60
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{r}
 15.00 \\
 \\
 \hline
 -10.60 \\
 4.40
 \end{array}$$

Here's another:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 3.05 \\
 \times 3 \\
 \hline
 9.15
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{r}
 15.00 \\
 \\
 \hline
 -9.15 \\
 5.45
 \end{array}
 \begin{array}{r}
 9.00 \\
 \\
 \hline
 3.05 \\
 10.05
 \end{array}$$

But enough math, it is after all, my worst subject and I think my writing is becoming sloppier. Heres hoping that the barmaid comes back, I could use another, unfortunately my bladder could use a release as well. I must be getting older.

Fuck it, I don't have the strength to walk around just stay here and blow my last \$10 and pretend to watch hockey.

Someones signing "Glory Days" by Springstein, and you wonder why, in the good ol USA no one under 30 thinks he's relevant.

When you think about it Canadians and Yanks aren't that much different, we both like to catch a buzz and listen to worn out classic rock we both rabble incoherently to our girlfriends

It's 1:16 and I'm watch *Bride of Frankenstein*

Subject: Demon

Emotions v. No Emotions

In a grounded boat that rests in a port of stripmall surrounded by men watching B-movies with only one light - like moths to a flame we suck down cheap draft and recall her name. The world seems to be a collapsing, it all remains the same but I know this one little desolation angel who will step back and rest on his perch, being content to sit and watch this ol' movie called life roll on and roll on whether with

me or not so heres you all angels who tend to my needs, my hears is with thee even in these dark times, in other words appreciation is not lacking I only wish we could all be free, but hell I just one on a lush trip scribbling random thoughts and don't really count but I'll keep scribbling anyway, who knows maybe a pearll will drop and then, finally, I can rest.

The guy sitting across from me looks like William Gaines (EC tycoon and co-creator of MAD). The Gaines double keeps lookin' at me so I gotta draw him.

If your birthday land on today in 1978 menu drawn on chalk board, exit sings and ashtrays pale beauties on TV half empty glasses dirty sinks Talking head dispensing bullshit hardwood and wet napkins burning cigarette nice legs blondes with open shirt neon stainless steel

How many times have I been here sittin' in a fuck bar – I suppose is my fate and I gotta live with it cause here I ain't no one god damn special.

Guy currently sittin' across from me.

I am forever sitting in a draft winter is here for real and the ol' snow queen hasn't wasted any time, sendin' chills up my backbone. And me, hoping against hope, the mild stuff would hang around a spell.

Cheerleading barmaids, what more could you ask for? Monday night Football, whats that fucking novel I read, can't recall. Doesn't matter, must always remember. I'm a member of a secret society. Dam, the labatts goes down like water, but I'm driving on homes so this boy's gotta be careful, a DWI would be one hell of an inconvenience.

Bubbles, the egoist in me wonders if anyone's curious. I don't even care about football. just sittin' in the dark, beer standin' proud. I'll die in a place like this, that or the green death of course the wisdom teeth always stand a chance of crushing my brain, quick moment, then it's off to meet my name sake at those pearly gates. The rock and the water.

Watching TV adverts looking' for subliminals, really kinda obvious, dig on technology. Whole new type of human comin', if at all. Makes me feel cold, the cold of being among the soulless.

Sadness, glorious sadness, there's always an air of mourning, lost lives, lost dreams, lost love or just plain lost. The darkness causes a kindve respect. We're familiar strangers.

We're all Jack's Desolation Angels living in desolation city looking for communion, in the dark, in here or there. Pretendin to give a shit about the gridiron. Winter chill brings desperation in desolation.

I have a craving for one of those gas station microwave cheeseburgers.

I'm startin' to melt, time to go soon.

At home it's wednesday Dec 1st 1999 sometimes your not happy or sad Awake nor tired, just sitting among glass soldiers all empty and hope for dreams.

Again I sit, here on the blue velvet evening, post first snow. The cold has turned razor, theres going to be nothing but the same for awhile. Again in the dark the geezers here don't give a fuck for literature, suits me just dandy, for privacy is desired. Again back in the familiar sadness of love from afar, the wood of the bar and a dirty ashtray.

No matter how hard I try I cannot muster enthusiasm for the gladiators on the television screen.

Empty glasses, cocktail napkins, simulated wood finish, spare change and singles, cigarette machines, disposable lighters, Xmas decorations and four lonely souls or four souls alone. My tiny notebook and my pen, I ain't alone after all.

Places like this are my sanctuary, they have all the trappings of a place of worship. This is where the monk seeks his solitude, even here God is everywhere even in the presence of angels and devils. They work in calm unison, and it's a strangely pleasing view.

Man how I love the look of a stainless steel grill.

Watching the home and hearth ads on the box, is anyones holiday really that golden? There is something deeply wrong in me wishing this time year goes away but quick. I wonder what Christmas is like in Vegas.

There is no one sitting across from me, hence no drawing.

Two 40s in the truck, gonna be so frosty I may have to wear gloves while I down them.

Cleanliness is next to Godliness. I feel the green death urge crawling towards me.

I now have proof there is a soul.

Dec 13, 18 Days till the great end, and me, another monday. Let me reiterate, I hate football but this gives me the illusion that I'm bonding with the other guys. You have to understand, in this age of the pussyfied man that is the most this holiday blues boy can ever hope for. And blue I am. rather strange, considering my life as it is I'm in the catbird seat yet I can't lift myself out've this funk. I'm in a large mass of the don't give shit type and fell no motivation to dig outta the grave.

In a bar shaped like a ship, ships are shaped like coffins, am I the deceased who don't know they're dead or am I just in a coma? Semi conection is all I get, good enough. On thursday suits will make a decision that could throw me out've work, no worry, no fear, fear is my friend, pal, buddy, companion. I love it. I love everyone.

I am love, I love everyone here, love is the answer to the supreme riddle its like sharing buried treasure, people naturally get greedy and greed is evil.

The world is a book, and the devil is writing it.

A reminder, just in case I ever get back into the romance game, stay away from women who say fuck a lot..

A Man Alone In The Universe.

I am insane, and I am my insanity.

I have inherited the void from St. Jack and Im facing it as I write this. The void neither demands nor offers, it is. Infinity. Armageddon on the horizon and it will happen even if it has to be engineered.

Robots watch over me. They smile warmly from above.

I suppose here in the land of twilight people Im meant to be the fly on the wall, I guess Ive turned invisible again.

I desire a quest or a mission.

When there is bulletproof glass, there is no relationship.

The void is all enveloping, especially now. That'll learn me, should've never reread the dark soul of man. Secret knowledge should perhaps remain that way. To late for me. Whichever this old world goes there aint spit I can do.

Don't thru the looking lass, a warning to us all.

Waiting, waiting, waiting.

Actually, its pretty sick (theres that word again) when you await disaster if only to prove your own paranoia.

The only writers who think this skill is a blessing are the hacks.

Hope for insanity.

Back to the Salty Dog, I quietly sit and await apocalypse in this place, all the while Bobbi makes merry.

Watching Black & White, the waste basket in the join is overflowing with cigarette boxes and butts.

Chicago 2000 11:13 am On the way to Marty's saw a cloud that look like a dragon.

1st day of the con, since the maid is in our room, I might as well write something. Got all the shit I intended and then some. This whole thing is overwhelming. So much shit.

Band after band its all the same!

All the same

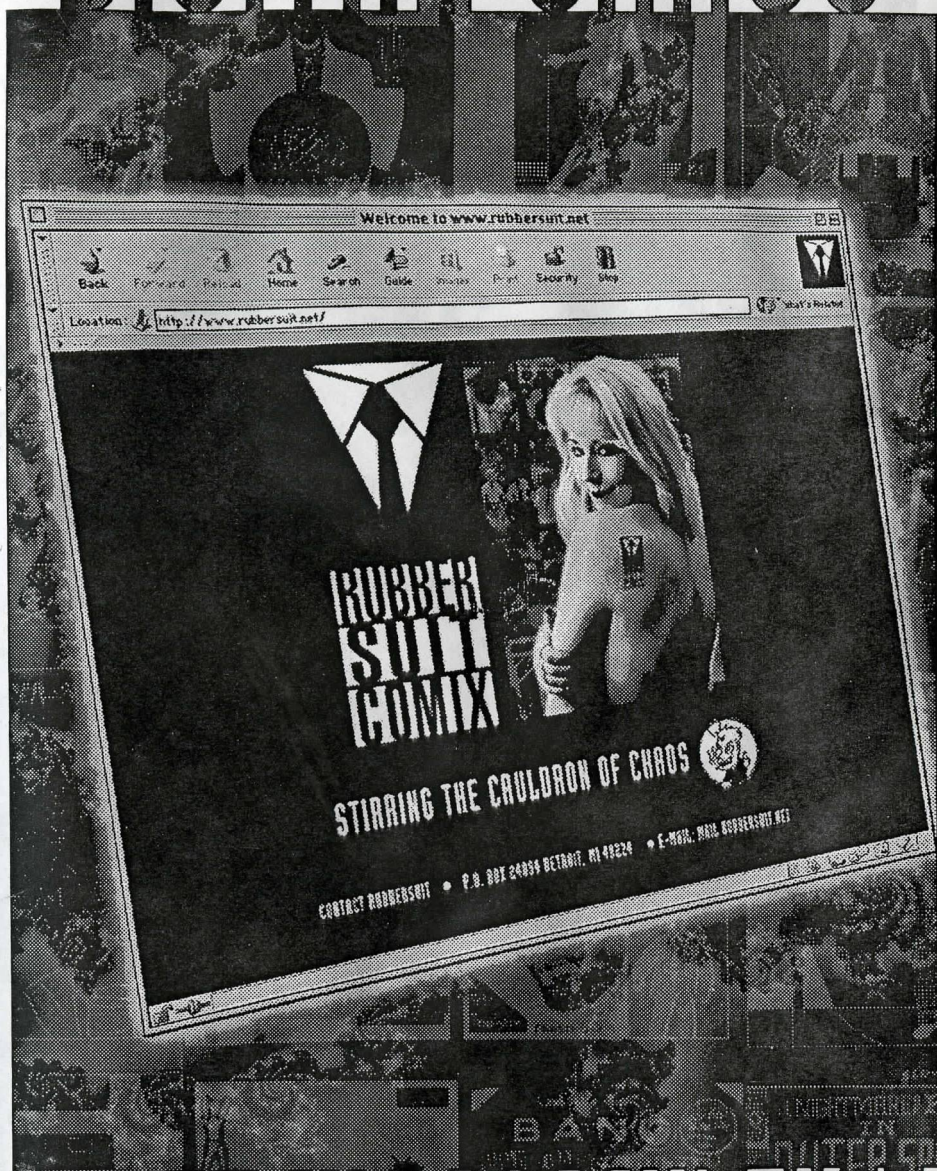
All the same

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